

Briefwechsel Diem-Sharikov

Dezember - Jänner 2022/23

Ukraine War: Possible Peace Scenarios (eingefügt am 15. Jänner 2023)

1. Unlikely: Ukrainian Victory

With the help of the West, Ukraine achieves a complete victory. Russia must evacuate eastern Ukraine, possibly even return Crimea. Ukraine remains a sovereign state and an ally with the West (EU membership? NATO membership?). Ukraine implements a total de-Russification policy in the Eastern provinces as it did before the war.

2. Likely: Russian Victory

Russia brings the entire Ukraine into her hands after a major spring/summer offensive. The capital city Kiev is occupied, the present politicians have fled or are arrested. A pro-Russian administration is installed. Possible consequences:

- a) The entire Ukraine is re-integrated into the Russian Federation
- b) Russia keeps the eastern provinces (as well as Crimea) under its full influence.

3. Realistic: Ceasefire

The war stops without a decisive victory. With a view to elections in 2024, the US terminate their support of Ukraine in mid 2023. Peace negotiations start on the following assumptions:

- a) Ukraine becomes a neutral, non-aligned country. It still has a small chance to join the EU after many years but will never become a NATO member.
- a) Ukraine is divided into an Eastern and a Western zone which – like in Korea since 1953 – are separated by an [armistice line](#) controlled by Russia and the US plus possibly some UN forces. The four Eastern provinces come under full control of Russia. Crimea remains Russian or:
 - b) The Eastern provinces become an entity *sui generis* under international control – on the model of Kosovo or:
 - c) Ukraine keeps the Eastern provinces but guarantees them full autonomy on the model of South Tyrol.

P. Diem / 8. Jan 2023

Lieber Sascha,

6.1.2023

heute hatte ich ein hochinteressantes Gespräch mit einem ehemaligen ORF-Kollegen, der mir als bisher einziger ein realistisches Szenario für die Ukraine nach einem Waffenstillstand beschrieben hat: Teilung einer künftig neutralen Ukraine durch eine demilitarisierte Zone nach dem [Muster von Nordkorea/Südkorea \(Waffenstillstandsabkommen 1953\)](#). Die Ostprovinzen erhalten einen Sonderstatus. Kontrolle der Waffenstillstandslinie durch die USA und Russland, eventuell unter Mitwirkung der UNO. Wiederaufbau der Ukraine allein mit westlichen Mitteln.

Was meinst Du zu diesem Szenario?

Lieber Sascha,

5.1.2023

im vergangenen Dezember habe ich versucht, eine Friedensinitiative Österreichs zum Ukraine-Konflikt auf die Beine zu stellen. Daraus ist leider nur eine Diskussionsplattform geworden, die einige relevante Dokumente enthält. Besonders interessant aber war der in dieser Zeit zwischen uns beiden und dem Salzburger Völkerrechtsprofessors Michael Geistlinger geführte Briefwechsel. Ich habe die 10 Seiten dieser Mails in aufsteigender Chronologie zusammengefasst.

Wie Du dir leicht vorstellen kannst, sind die Inhalte dieser Briefe für den Westeuropäer, der durch die bespiellos dicke Wolkendecke der Mainstream-Medien nicht über den Tellerrand des amerikanisch-westeuropäischen Narrativs von den bösen Russen und den guten Ukrainern sehen kann, ein echter Schock. Wir können nur hoffen, dass die jeweils „milderer“ Entwicklungen Platz greifen werden.

Danke jedenfalls für Deine Mühe!
Peter

SASHA: THREE SCENARIOS TO FINISH THE WAR IN UKRAINE

5.1.2023

I want to clarify a few points of my letter yesterday. Firstly, when I wrote about Ukrainian dialects, I gave a very rough picture. In fact, there are much more Ukrainian dialects. Experts distinguish at least 15 types of Ukrainian dialects. I was talking, rather, about identities based on cultural and historical foundations, which are based on groups of such dialects. Secondly, this rough division makes it possible to assess the scenarios of the collapse of Ukraine as a state if the authorities do not want to build it on a federal basis.

Below I have prepared a map of Ukraine (within the borders of 2013), which demonstrates the idea of disintegration based on the cultural and historical identities of the regions.



The arrows indicate the gravity of the regions to the centers of attraction. Novorossiya (east and south of the country) gravitate towards Russia. These regions were built back in the XVIII century during the reign of Catherine the Great and are inhabited mainly by Russian-speaking subjects. Western Ukraine and Transcarpathia were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the First World War. There are many Hungarians living in Transcarpathia who have dual citizenship, and Hungary has expressed concern about the infringement of the right of these citizens to use their native language. Another region - Northern Bukovina - is now part of the Chernivtsi region. A significant number of Romanians live there. Yesterday, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis expressed dissatisfaction with Zelensky's policy towards the Romanian language in Ukraine. In particular: "The president of Romania referred extensively to the recent law on national minorities adopted by Ukraine, which created concern and discontent among the Romanian authorities and representatives of the Romanian community in Ukraine. President Klaus Iohannis called on President Zelensky to quickly identify solutions to address and address these concerns. In this regard, the two presidents agreed that in the immediate period the foreign ministers of the two countries will have discussions on the bilateral settlement of the above-mentioned issues" (<https://www.presidency.ro/ro/media/comunicate-de-presa/convorbirea-telefonica-a-presedintelui-romaniei-klaus-iohannis-cu-presedintele-ucrainei-volodimir-zelenski>).

Both Russian, which is spoken by the majority of Ukrainians, and Hungarian, and Romanian are discriminated against. Poles generally consider Western Ukraine their ancestral lands, which they call "Kresy Wschodnie" (Eastern Kresy).

Hence, there is a possibility of, at least, **three scenarios of the collapse of Ukraine**. I'll limit myself to three.

1. **Four states - Russia, Poland, Hungary, and Romania - absorb various regions of Ukraine.** Only the Central Part (Malo Rossya and adjacent regions) remains from Ukraine within the borders of the Ukrainian SSR of the 1991 model. At the same time, Ukraine acquires the status of a neutral country within the new borders.
2. The United States is preventing such a development. **Russia continues military operations in Ukraine and conquers all territories. They hold referendums on joining or non-joining Russia.** Depending on the results, some of the regions of present-day Ukraine are joining. **The rest are united into a new state.** If at the same time there is a guarantee that the new state will be neutral and will not join NATO, then Russia will allow this state to exist. Otherwise, Russia will be forced to keep the occupation troops. But that would be a bad scenario. For Russia, both options are undesirable. There will be no reliable strategic solution without the participation of the United States. The state of Ukraine, with the huge support of the United States and Western Europe, is doomed to be a springboard for an attack on Russia - this is what the authorities of my country believe. And, by the way, it's not about Putin. If Putin leaves or dies, nothing will change. His place may be taken by a less far-sighted politician with tougher strategic attitudes. Now there is a consensus in Russia on the issue of Ukraine.

3. **Finally, the worst-case scenario.** Russia continues its military operation. The United States and Western countries are increasing military and financial assistance. The degree of hatred (unfortunately, I see it even among some participants in our discussion) is increasing, and the **Third World War will break out**. The exchange of nuclear strikes will begin. Then everyone will get it. I don't know who will survive. But for sure, the countries that have come out of the neutral state will suffer. Most likely, UK, France, a significant part of the USA, maybe some other countries will disappear from the map of the Earth. A significant part of Russia will also disappear. But the state of Ukraine will definitely cease to exist. As much as I would not want such a scenario to develop - after all, I myself will disappear in this case.

The last thing I would like to say is about **who will pay for the restoration of Ukraine** in the cases of scenarios 1 and 2. In the first case, Russia will take the main burden. Huge funds are already being invested in the restoration of destroyed cities, in particular, the long-suffering Mariupol. The Western press does not write about it. In the second case, the same will apply to the regions that will become part of Russia. As for the new Ukraine, if it takes place and assumes a neutral status, Russia can provide it with such assistance. But the responsibility for the war lies not only with Russia. More suffering was brought by those who incited Ukraine against the Russian-speaking population, starting in 2014. And these are the USA, UK and other NATO countries. So, they would have to pay for the destruction.

One piquant detail. In Donetsk, on December 22, 2022, former Minister, head of Roscosmos (Russische Weltraumbehörde), **Dmitry Rogozin**, was wounded: <https://nypost.com/2022/12/22/russian-ex-deputy-pm-wounded-in-ukrainian-shelling/>.

The hotel where he was staying was shelled by a French howitzer. The shell fragment was removed, and Mr. Rogozin sent it to the French ambassador in Moscow with a request to hand it over personally to President Macron. And after that, does anyone doubt that NATO is at war with Russia?

Dear Peter,

4.1.2023

Many thanks to Michael Geistlinger for his article. He demonstrates a deep understanding of the problem. Most of the participants in your wonderful discussion, which I highly appreciate, most likely do not know the history so deeply. Therefore, their judgments look superficial. **Federalization in Ukraine is the only way to preserve it as a large state.** We are talking not only about Novorossiya (New Russia), that is, the Russian-speaking south and east regions of Ukraine, but also about the western parts of Ukraine, where many ethnic Poles, Hungarians, Romanians live. And in fact, the Ukrainian part of the country is heterogeneous as well, both in language and identity. There are at least three very different parts - Western Ukraine, Central Ukraine, and Eastern Ukraine. The first is genetically related to Poland, the second in Tsarist times was called Malo Rossiya (Little Russia), the third is an intermediate identity between Malo Rossiya and Novorossiya, who speak Surzhyk, a special language spread in the eastern part of Ukraine and western Russia. There are also Rusyns living in Transcarpathia (the West of Ukraine) - their language also differs from both Russian and all the listed dialects of the Ukrainian language. In fact, representatives of Western

Ukraine, which is called Galicia, won the upper hand. This territory was part of Poland and became part of the Ukrainian SSR shortly before the German attack on the USSR in 1941, and therefore has a special identity. Their ideologues have a special racism. They consider all other Ukrainians to be an inferior race - both those who live in the central part of Ukraine and those who live in the south and east of the country. Their main character is Bandera, a Nazi criminal.

The following can be predicted:

If Ukraine loses all Russian speaking Novorossiya (Odessa, Nikolaev, Dnipro, Kharkiv plus the regions that became part of Russia - Kherson, Zaporozhe, Lugansk, Donetsk), then **a conflict will begin between Malo Rossiya and Galicia, Galicia and Transcarpathia**. And only the principle of the federal structure of Ukraine with respect for the rights of all ethnic groups can balance this complex ensemble.

Russian as the strongest language plays the role of the language of interethnic communication in such a construction - everyone speaks or, at least, understands Russian. Therefore, Ukrainization became a huge mistake of the Ukrainian authorities (on a hint from Washington). Without this condition, Ukraine is doomed to collapse.

Herzliche Grüße
Sasha

Prof. Michael Geistlinger/Salzburg

Liebe Diskutanten,

3.1.2023

herzlichsten Dank für die Weiterleitung des russischen Briefes an Prof. Diem. Die Einschätzung des Professors deckt sich voll und ganz mit meiner. Alles deutet derzeit auf eine bevorstehende große militärische Aktion Russlands hin. Was in den letzten Tagen als ukrainischer Erfolg im Kampf mit (iranischen) Drohnen dargestellt wurde, war in Wahrheit ein in zwei Phasen erfolgter Großangriff von Raketen, der in den ukrainischen Großstädten, vor allem in Kiew, gigantische Schäden hervorgerufen hat, die von ukrainischer Seite vertuscht werden. Die Drohnen lenkten die ukrainischen Abwehrraketen auf sich, sodass die russischen Raketen hinter den Drohnen ihre Ziele erreichen konnten. Alle großen Boulevards im Zentrum Kiews wurden beispielsweise getroffen. Die Ankündigung von gestern, dass Russland im Jahr 2023 seine strategischen Fernbomber in die "Spezialaktion" einbeziehen wird, zeigt, dass Russland nun mit der westlichen Steuerung der ukrainischen Flugabwehrsysteme aufzuräumen gedenkt. Gestern war im russischen Internet eine detaillierte Beschreibung zu finden, welche über Polen, dem Schwarzen Meer, der Ostsee hart an der russischen Grenze kreisenden westlichen (amerikanischen, NATO-, schwedischen) Aufklärungsflugzeuge welche präzise Rolle in der ukrainischen Kriegsführung erfüllen. Das zu wissen, bedeutet aber gleichzeitig auch zu wissen, was man dagegen tun kann. Ich sehe die Kriegsentwicklung an diesem Punkt angekommen. Wie schnell das zu einer ukrainischen Kapitulation führen wird, wage ich mir nicht zu prophezeien, aber ich habe die Worte des stellvertretenden Vorsitzenden des russischen Sicherheitsrats Medvedev im Gedächtnis, der, als sich Russland aus der Stadt Cherson zurückzog, was der Ukraine damals eine neue Verhandlungschance gegeben hat, die sie ungenutzt

verstreichen hat lassen, ausdrücklich sagte: "Dahinter gibt es nur mehr die Kapitulation".

Kapitulation bedeutet aber für einen Friedensvertrag: Es gibt einen militärischen Sieger und dieser wird die Bedingungen diktieren. Daher stimme ich dem Brief auch zu, dass Neutralität, keine NATO-Mitgliedschaft, Verzicht auf die Krim und die anderen neuen russischen Subjekte nicht mehr realistisch sind. Sie waren es am 28. März 2022 (Istanbul), als Zelensky schriftlich zugestimmt hatte, worauf sich Russland aus der Nähe Kiews und dem Norden der Ukraine zurückgezogen hat. Als Zelensky danach seine Zustimmung zurückgezogen hatte, war für Russland endgültig klar, dass mit diesem Mann keine Verhandlungslösung erreichbar ist, weil er nur lügt und betrügt. Der Mann, der in den USA als sein Nachfolger gehandelt wird, **Zaluzhny**, der derzeitige Oberkommandierende der ukrainischen Armee, ist aus russischer Sicht um keinen Deut verlässlicher. Er hat alle Schweinereien Zelenskys mitgetragen. Ich gehe daher davon aus, dass die russische Einschätzung unten, dass die Ukraine in Russland aufgehen wird, nicht daneben liegt. An eine Zerstückelung glaube ich nicht, dazu ist die Wut Russlands auf Polen und die Slowakei viel zu groß. Der Einzige, der in Bezug auf die ungarisch-sprachigen Gebiete um Ushgorod profitieren könnte, ist Orban, wenn er das für Ungarn haben will.

Vieles erinnert heute an die Periode 1917 - 1922. Ich erlaube mir daher, einen Aufsatz anzufügen, den ich im Jahr 2015 geschrieben habe, als noch nur die wenigsten ahnen konnten (ich gehörte nicht dazu), dass die Minsker Abkommen von Deutschland und Frankreich nichts anderes waren, als Russland hinter das Licht zu führen.

Michael Geistlinger, geboren 1956 in Radstadt; außerordentlicher Universitätsprofessor für Völkerrecht, Rechtsvergleichung auf dem Gebiet des Verfassungs- und Verwaltungsrechts sowie Osteuropäisches Recht an der Universität Salzburg. Schwerpunkt der Publikationen: Theorie und Praxis des Völkerrechts, europäische Integration, internationales und europäisches Umweltrecht, Russisches und osteuropäisches Verfassungsrecht in vergleichender Hinsicht; Expertenmissionen zu Abchasien, Südossetien und Transnistrien; Schiedsrichter am Court of Arbitration for Sport; Mitglied der CAS Ad Hoc Division for the Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver 2010 und der Anti-Doping Division for the Olympic Games Rio de Janeiro 2016; Visiting Professor an der Karls-Universität Prag; Ausländisches Mitglied der Evaluierungskommission der Universität Roma IV.

Letter to Peter Diem

3.1.2023

Dear Peter,

Thank you very much, indeed, for your attempt to organize a discussion about the Ukrainian conflict among Austrian intellectuals. Their reaction didn't surprise me. The world is polarized - many wish Russia's defeat, defending the unfortunate Ukraine. But these people were completely isolated from the facts that became a prerequisite for military action. I see a long-known socio-psychological pattern behind this reaction - it is impossible to break the established beliefs and stereotypes. Rational reasoning and logic almost never work. I tried to really distance myself from Russian sources, Russian propaganda, using as arguments the publications of both large western media and relatively small independent online not Russian resources.

It is significant that Colonel McGregor was immediately called crazy - this is also a typical reaction to dissidents. In my opinion, he just gives a different point of view, and

there is no way to accuse him of sympathy for Russia. He demonstrates a good awareness of the real state of affairs on the battlefields, argues not from a political, but from a professional military position, treating opponents with respect, as befits a real officer.

The conclusion that I have already recorded is that Western countries are not ready for any negotiations with Russia - this is a property of both politicians and the expert community. It will be necessary to kill another 400-500 thousand Ukrainians, another 40-50 thousand Russians, another 20-30 thousand mercenaries from 50 countries, spend several trillion dollars to understand what is really happening and finally start negotiations on peace that will really end the war. I have already given my forecast. Whether I'm wrong or not, the future will show. I will be able to correct it only in a few months.

Sasha

P.D.: Meine Schlussfolgerung aus den obigen Ausführungen ist, dass nur ein Kompromiss zwischen den kriegsführenden Parteien möglich ist, also
– die Ukraine gibt ihre überzogenen Vorstellungen einer Wiederherstellung der Grenzen vor 2014 (Besetzung der Krim) auf.
– Russland gibt einen Teil seines Anspruches auf ukrainisches Territorium auf.

SOME REFLEXIONS ON THE ACTUAL SITUATION

2.1.2023

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your sincere attempt to bring peace back to Europe. I appreciate your efforts very much.

At the same time, I should note that the peace initiative "Peace through Neutrality" is a belated reaction that cannot be implemented at the moment. This was possible a year ago, when Russia invited the United States and NATO to sit down at the negotiating table, putting forward a number of proposals, including a proposal on the neutral status of Ukraine. In my argument, I specifically choose sources not from Russia, so that I am not reproached for using narratives of Russian propaganda.

What happened during this time?

1. Russia has lost all trust in Western countries - the USA, UK, Germany, France and other EU members. Back in 2014, Russia proposed to conclude the Minsk Agreements to stop the war in the Donbass, which was unleashed by the Ukrainian regime against the Russian-speaking population. It was assumed that Ukraine would stop the nationalist policy of infringing on the rights of Russians and change the Constitution of Ukraine from a mono-national Ukrainian orientation to federalization with broad autonomy of various ethnic groups. These agreements were signed by Ukraine, two unrecognized republics of Donbass, Russia, as well as Germany and France. However, in the past 2022, three of the six leaders who signed this document (Poroshenko, Merkel and Hollande) admitted that the real reason why the document was signed was not to solve the problem of Russian-speaking regions, but to give Ukraine time to rebuild its army with the help of Western countries to continue the war. In June 2022 Petro Poroshenko, the

former president of Ukraine, has admitted that the 2015 ceasefire in Donbass, which he negotiated with Russia, France, and Germany as president of Ukraine was indeed a distraction intended to buy time for Kyiv to rebuild its military

(<https://tfiglobalnews.com/2022/06/20/ukraines-new-masterstroke-against-russia-is-actually-ukraines-biggest-pro-russia-move/>).

In December 2022 Angela Merkel confirmed Poroshenko's statement: The Minsk agreements were designed to «give Ukraine time» to prepare for war (<https://www.thetruthseeker.co.uk/?p=262162>) . A few days later in an interview with Kiev Independent, Francois Hollande said that the Minsk agreements brought Russia to diplomatic territory, giving Kiev wartime to strengthen (<https://www.voltairenet.org/article218584.html>) .

2. What kind of peace agreements can we talk about? With countries that constantly lie, that never fulfill their obligations? Russia still has enough resources to resolve issues by force. Any negotiations with Ukraine will mean a respite and a new round of weapons to prepare for a new war.
3. Ukraine plays the role of a proxy state that has no independence. Ukraine depends entirely on the United States, and it's useless to talk to this proxy state. In addition, Zelensky issued a decree forbidding him to conduct any negotiations with Russia himself, which looks especially stupid (<https://nypost.com/2022/10/04/zelensky-signs-law-declaring-talks-with-putin-impossible/>). Negotiations can be conducted with the US and only with the US. But America is not ready to make concessions. The absolute dependence of Ukraine on the United States is also noted by Wendelin Ettmayer in his article. Russia is fighting not so much with Ukraine as with the United States and NATO on the territory of Ukraine.
4. Europe's role in this conflict is unenviable. This is the role of US vassals. Not only Ukraine, but almost the whole of Europe is extremely dependent on the United States. **The governments of the leading European countries are sluggishly watching the United States destroy their industry through the redistribution of energy resources - instead of inexpensive oil and gas from Russia, they are forced to buy expensive oil and gas from the United States. The US is simply inflating Europe.** At the same time, the entire Western world blames Russia and Putin personally, although the economic reason is the imposition of sanctions against Russia, and not the actions of Russia itself. And everyone is shouting about democracy, condemning the Russian "autocracy". I remember the famous saying of George Bernard Shaw: «I'm going to ask you to begin our study of democracy by first considering it as a large balloon filled with gas or hot air and sent up so that you continue to look at the sky while other people are going through your pockets». That's what the Americans are doing, tell fairy tales about the protection of democracy in Ukraine.
5. **Another problem is the creation of a censored information bubble in Western countries, which creates an absolutely distorted picture of what is happening in Ukraine. Only a few media outlets are trying to seriously understand this issue.**
6. Of the recent interviews that reflect reality, and do not breed endless lies, I note an interview with **Colonel Douglas McGregor**, who was a senior adviser to the Secretary of Defense under Trump. Here is a link to his interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jH3iGOPNCiM> .

7. And the last. In the Peace Initiative "Peace through Neutrality" signed by you, Austria stands as a model of a neutral state. Let me remind you that a year ago there were more such examples. This circle of countries included, in particular, Sweden and Finland as well. Now they have applied to join NATO and have lost the status of neutral countries. Aren't the same things expected for Austria? I really hope that this will not happen. But I don't think that the Austrian political elites are so independent of the Anglo-Saxons. I'm

sorry if I upset you with these arguments. Russia no longer believes in any Western country. Putin called the collective West an empire of lies.

In such conditions, no negotiations are possible. Therefore, now the full-scale Russia's military operation in Ukraine is just beginning. Russia, in fact, is at war with NATO countries that supply mountains of weapons to Ukraine, provides it with huge financial assistance, measured in hundreds of billions of dollars and euros, provides this "advanced democracy" with satellite intelligence data and hundreds of thousands of its military in the form of mercenaries, generously passing them off as "citizens of Ukraine" (<https://en.topcor.ru/28886-ozvuchena-novaja-cifra-poter-vsu-i-inostrannyh-naemnikov-bolee-400-tysjach.html>). And the longer this support lasts, the longer the war in Ukraine will go on, the more people will die in this terrible war, not only Ukrainians and Russians, but also Poles, Romanians (most of them among foreigners fighting on the side of Ukraine), Americans, British people and others. Thank you, American Neoconservatives and British Tories!

Now a few words about the article by Wendelin Ettmayer. The position of Wendelin Ettmayer is close to me. This is a serious, very deep, meaningful analysis of what is really happening. The main idea is that there is actually a confrontation between the United States and Russia, and for Russia this is an existential situation. I have already written to you earlier that for Russia it is a Hamlet's question: to be or not to be an independent state. However, there are a few differences in my position and that of Wendelin Ettmayer.

The above-mentioned Colonel Douglas McGregor in his interview says that Western countries completely misjudge Russia. I will add that the political assessment of Russia's activities and its interpretation in the media is based on some archaic stereotypes such as "colossus on clay feet", "underdeveloped economy", "gas station country", etc. At the same time, these would-be analysts forget that Russia is the heir of the USSR, which was the second largest economy in the world in time with high scientific and technical achievements, a well-educated population and a powerful army. Much of this has been preserved. It is also important to remember that the USSR, and with it modern Russia, is a victorious country in World War II. And it has deep roots.

From what has been said, it follows that Russia has a very high potential for rapid recovery. The USSR under Stalin demonstrated an average economic growth of 13% per year, and sometimes even higher. This is what allowed the country, after the devastating period of the First World War, of the monstrous revolution in 1917, of the bloody civil war, not just to restore its economy, but also to reach one of the leading positions in the world. Who said that Russia cannot repeat this path? In a situation of the need for mobilization, Russia focuses and gives a leap forward, which we are seeing now. Terrible sanctions not only did not destroy the Russian economy, but made it stronger, and in Russia in 2022 there was not a budget deficit, but a budget surplus of 2%. Yes, there is inflation in Russia, but at about the same level as the EU average. Much lower than, for example, in the Baltic countries. Huge natural resources and an educated population are the prerequisites that will ensure Russia's economic growth in the near future.

Incorrect estimates are also contained in the article by Wendelin Ettmayer. This also applies to the economy. This also applies to the popular statement in the Western press that the West won the information war from the USSR. This is nothing more than a wishful thinking metaphor. This is propaganda, the meaning of which is to emphasize the greatness of the United States and its allies. But the reality is different. The USSR collapsed not so much because of Western propaganda, but because of the crisis of public administration, the discrepancy between the real socio-economic situation and the ability of the elites to govern the country.

Who was the hero who was applauded by the West? Gorbachev? This is a man who has never been popular in the USSR. The damage done to the country was monstrous. Yeltsin? This is an alcoholic thirsting for absolute power, who derailed the country: "Take as much sovereignty as you want," is his monstrous phrase, which put the Russian Federation on the edge of the abyss after the collapse of the USSR. The most hated years by the Russian people are the years of his rule (1991-1999). The attempt to introduce the American model of democracy has only led to impoverishment and hatred of the very word "democracy" in Russia. Democracy was associated exclusively with the extreme poverty of the overwhelming majority of the population, against which a small handful of scammers and bandits fabulously enriched themselves without doing anything constructive. Democracy = poverty in the minds of a huge number of Russians. George Bernard Shaw comes to mind again: «democracy ... is a large balloon ... you continue to look at the sky while other people are going through your pockets». An extremely accurate description of what happened in Russia in the 1990s.

What is my forecast for the development of the situation around Ukraine?

Russia will build up its military power and ensure a complete victory in the Ukrainian war. The stakes for starting negotiations will be raised, and it will be Russia that will dictate the terms. We will talk about the dismemberment of Ukraine into several states, or about its full accession to Russia. The latter will happen if the United States continues to support Ukraine with the same enthusiasm as now. Why do they need this Ukraine? A country located thousands of kilometers from the United States, impoverished, corrupt, which has lost all the potential it inherited from the USSR, which is ruled by Nazis who are swayed by Bandera, a criminal who collaborated with Hitler, convicted at the Nuremberg trials. Is it possible to build a normal, strong democratic state where the main character is a Nazi killer?

The United States will surrender Ukraine, but will begin to prepare the next proxy states for war with Russia. Scenarios are possible here: from micro-wars with Moldova and Georgia, to war with the Baltic countries, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. But most likely, it won't come to that. Most likely, Americans will switch to China, because Russia is not an existential threat to the United States. The existential threat to the United States is China. But that's another story.

P.S. Recently, a statement attributed to Otto von Bismarck has been very popular on Russian online resources: "Ich kenne Hunderte von Möglichkeiten, um einen russischen Bären aus einer Höhle zu locken, aber keine, um ihn wieder zu vertreiben" (<https://gloria.tv/post/n7TzYRyNkKGd62sFywRkvq8mM>). I don't know for sure whether Otto von Bismarck said such words, but they reflect one of the essential features of the Russian character and the Russian state - a huge hidden internal energy that defies rational external management.

Peter Diem

Friedensinitiative 1

Dezember 2022

„Friede durch Neutralität“

Österreich möge zusammen mit anderen Staaten – etwa mit Irland, Malta, der Türkei oder auch Mexiko – die Konfliktparteien in der Ukraine zu einer **sofortigen Waffenruhe** und daran anschließenden Friedensverhandlungen aufrufen.

Österreich schlägt dazu vor, aus humanitären Gründen alle Kampfhandlungen auf mindestens einen Monat einzustellen. Die **Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika** werden dringend ersucht, die **Ukraine** zur Zustimmung zu dieser Waffenruhe zu veranlassen. Die **Russische Föderation** möge diese Waffenruhe kraft ihrer Stärke und strategischen Überlegenheit einhalten. Realistische und beiden Konfliktparteien zumutbare Verhandlungsziele sind vor allem:

1. Die **Neutralität der Ukraine** nach österreichischem Vorbild.
2. Ein international garantierter und überwachter **Sonderstatus** für die von Russland zurzeit besetzten ostukrainischen Grenzgebiete, zumindest aber weitgehende **Autonomie** dieser Gebiete nach dem Vorbild **Südtirols**.

Dieser Vorschlag orientiert sich am historischen **Beispiel Finnlands**, das im [„Winterkrieg“ 1939/40](#) nach dreimonatigem heldenhaften Abwehrkampf und 70.000 Opfern der sowjetischen Übermacht unter Gebietsverlust nachgab, damit Frieden schuf und seine Souveränität bewahren konnte.

Die Unterzeichneten haben sich aus christlicher und/oder humanistischer Verantwortung die Aufgabe gestellt, als Friedenstifter zu wirken. Sie rufen den Konfliktparteien das von der österreichischen Nobelpreisträgerin Bertha von Suttner 1889 geprägte Wort zu:
„Die Waffen nieder“.