

The West's Last Or Penultimate War?

The Danish Government's Last Visit to Ukraine

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The West/NATO has always lacked a long-term strategy. After all, it was militarily, economically and politically superior and could impose its will. Didn't have to think.

Hoping Ukraine would join NATO without fuss was hubris-ridden wishful thinking, and stupid to boot, in that it's been convincingly [documented](#) that Russia's leaders, from Gorbachev to Putin for the past 30 years, have said that NATO expansion was: a) a clear violation of the promises made by all important Western leaders to Gorbachev – and it's true; b) a humiliation and counterproductive if you want common security; and c) that if it could be no other way, then Ukraine would be Russia's definitive red line.

No one listened. Because, as former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen [so aptly put it](#): Putin knows NATO can beat him to a pulp because we spend ten times more on weapons than he does.

So, as some of us have predicted, it went wrong – which is not a sign of support for Russia's invasion. I [distanced myself from that](#) the next day. But neither do I support the West's response to this invasion, the rearmament of Ukraine, and the anti-intellectual narrative NATO countries are running, including the claim that NATO is not responsible for anything and that Russia's invasion was 'unprovoked.'

Then, on 30 January 2023, the [heads of the Danish government visited Ukraine](#). One understands from the Danish Broadcasting's (Danmarks Radio) report that there was no attempt to push President Zelensky towards a negotiating table. No, Denmark comes with promises of more weapons and aid to its twin city. To that I wrote immediately on my Facebook page:

"Holy simplicity!

Surely it makes an impression to see the horror of war. Some of us have done that more

times than these three put together.

But then Denmark will have to supply even more weapons so that there can be even more suffering, death and destruction.

The conflict between NATO and Russia in Ukraine must be settled on the battlefield and not at a table. More than usually short-sighted and, well, foolish...

It's almost unbearable to watch Løkke Rasmussen bombing in Syria. Today 12 million – half the population – are starving there, over 300 000 have died and 12 million are refugees and internally displaced persons, IDPs.

But that war – the war of the West – is not to be talked about.

And no government delegation will visit Syria and see the results of the West's – failed – war of regime change there from 2011-2016. With Denmark's full political support and military contribution.

The absence of any moral thought is palpable. Far into the heart. In some of us, but not in these people for whom sacrifice can apparently be categorized in two:

The worthy – victims of Russia's wars – Christians

in contrast to:

The unworthy – victims of NATO countries' wars – Muslims."

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An imminent Russian major offensive and what do the US, NATO, the EU – and Denmark – do?

It's a strange war, the one in Ukraine. In the picture above, the Danish ministers are talking to President Zelensky in the street, none of them wearing bulletproof vests and no military protection to be seen. There are large areas of Ukraine that are not affected at all by this war, which is otherwise being blown up to be the most horrific proportions in living memory. But it is good PR for Denmark's increasingly militaristic and anti-intellectual foreign and defence policy – with photo opportunities like few.

With sadness in my heart – because I am Danish-born, it could all have been avoided *and* it will get worse – I would say that this will probably be the last time they can visit Ukraine.

More and more articles are now appearing in international media – written by independent and self-reliant civilian experts as well as by experienced soldiers – arguing convincingly that time is running out for Ukraine, and that Russia has now mobilised for an imminent major offensive. You can find many of them at [The Transnational](#) and at [TFF 2 – the online magazine "TFF Peace Affairs."](#)

So reverse beating to a pulp? Putin's pluck fish? After all, the logic and rules of war dictate that you don't just sit idly by while third parties spend years arming your opponent – just in the last year, to the tune of at least US\$150-200 billion, or more than twice Russia's entire defence budget. Instead, you try to get ahead of them.

Putin still has time, to some extent, *because* all the hardware the West is pumping in takes a long time to learn how to manage, repair and operate effectively, *because* the leadership in Kyiv has obvious internal conflicts and extensive corruption, *because* the fighting spirit is wearing off over time, *because* Ukrainian human and material losses are probably far greater than we are told in Western media, and *because* the NATO side so wants to win but does not have the courage to deploy its own troops and more advanced weapons. It will only fight to the last Ukrainian – sacrificing nothing itself in this cowardly and strategy-less proxy war.

Let me make it clear here that I certainly do *not* think NATO should do so; I am simply pointing out that it will not fight (or pay a human price) for the Ukraine it holds so dear – and that that it is not particularly noble. High technology is the Pentagon/NATO weapon, not morality, courage or sacrifice.

Russia, as I said, has time, but not infinite time. What President Putin called a special military operation may, as this time passes, become more of a great new Patriotic War. Ukraine is Russia's neighbourhood and vitally important to Russia, not the US. Yet Ukraine must get into NATO by devil's force, against a host of expert warnings. The only country it did not want in was Russia, whose leaders repeatedly – including Putin – have suggested that Russia should join NATO.

I wonder if the 70-odd high-priced Leopards and Abrams tanks will arrive in time and someone can learn to operate them in time to make a difference on the battlefield? (Some say 320 tanks, but who will supply the other 250?)

I wonder if Denmark's Caesar artillery system will arrive in time. And I wonder how much longer people in Europe and the US are prepared to cough up the money and pay sky-high prices for everything – *not* because of Russia's invasion, but because of the panicky, short-sighted and self-justifying response with which the West responded to the invasion: the indefinite sanctions, the exclusion of all things Russian, the withdrawal of businesses, the loss of markets, the inflation, the armament, the Great Day of Prayer (a Danish religious holiday to be cancelled by the government on which people must instead work to collect money for the Danish military!) – and the destruction of Nordstream 2 (which you don't hear about any more in the media because it just can't be sold as something Russia did).

And add to all this the colossal misjudgment that “the international community” would follow US/NATO policy. The fact is that 85% of humanity lives in countries that either directly oppose Western policy or remain as neutral as they can. When NATO's Stoltenberg travels to South Korea and Japan to tie them closer as NATO ‘partners’ and rally military support for the war in Ukraine, it is obvious that desperation is escalating as well.

I predict a Russian major offensive very soon. When the superior party in a conflict (NATO) refuses to negotiate and only aims to become even more superior, well then it's pretty clear what the other side will think and do. The clock is ticking, and timing is essential.

Then a much larger part of Ukraine will be destroyed, and we in Europe will be forced to deal with infinitely higher numbers of refugees – and later spend untold billions rebuilding Ukraine – even more than the US\$ 300 billion it intends to take from Russia, namely its deposits in Western banks.

We're talking about ordinary, peaceful Ukrainians who cannot survive either because of the

war or because of chaos, unemployment, hunger, and cold – sick people who can no longer get help in wildly overloaded hospitals. They will knock on the doors of the EU.

I wonder what the Danish government and Defence Minister, Jakob Elleman Jensen, will say? Today he has only this – banal – to say:

“But even though the Russian bombs are still falling over Ukraine and the future may look bleak, according to Danmarks Radio, Defence Minister Jakob Ellemann Jensen is sending an appeal to the Danes:

“From the Danish side we should be proud of our contribution. For it is massive, he says. Their wish list is, by nature, endless. If they are to defeat evil – and they must – they can only do so with our help.

At the end of December, the Danish government donated DKK 300 million to an arms fund.”

Here Elleman Jensen promises “evil” – not Russia, but evil – that it will be beaten into a pulp. With Danish help. None of Denmark’s three leaders seems to have any substantial clue about either the laws of war or its psychology – much less the conflict underlying the war.

And the consequences of their actions must then be felt by others. Prime minister Mette Frederiksen does not put her own hand on the Ukrainian hotplate (a rather strange formulation she has used about Denmark needing to be at the forefront of conflicts and wars with the US).

Future issues now the Western consensus on Ukraine begins to crumble

In passing, there are some arguably big questions about the boomerang effects of NATO and EU policies: If/when the battle over Ukraine’s membership in NATO is somehow lost (because in NATO it will never be, and fortunately, there are many other viable options), will NATO be able to survive? The Alliance’s biggest blunder ever?

Can the EU, which has been there all along and, as usual, has not been able to unite around one policy, let alone a policy different from that of the US? How will the US evolve in the next few months, and will it be an ever weaker, often unclear-speaking Biden, Trump or someone today unknown who will carry out the policies of the US MIMAC – Military-Industrial-Media-Academic Complex? Will the country’s president be swept aside if he or she takes the path of negotiation and coexistence instead? (Don’t forget that the biggest winner of the Ukraine war so far is the arms industry).

Will the US empire, parts of the US society be dismantled peacefully or with violence, with a Bang or with a Whimper? Will the EU survive or fall apart, partly because Germany – one must assume – cannot go all the way? Will Sweden, having gambled everything, including 200 years of good experience in non-alignment, not get in after all? Will Turkey stay and prevent Sweden’s membership or leave NATO and turn completely to the East? (It is NATO’s biggest military power after the US).

Will Hungary leave the EU and NATO? And how much longer will Serbia accept to be bullied since the 1990s, NATO’s illegal bombing of Kosovo and Serbia and various ultimate demands repeatedly made of the country – in which, by the way, China is already the single largest trading partner?

Western media are not exactly beating the drum for the growing criticism of Western policy in Ukraine. [Zoran Milanovic, the president of the NATO and EU member Croatia](#), has said everything that should not be said in EU and NATO circles, calling parts of NATO's policy counterproductive and immoral.

And then, on 1 February came the [International Monetary Fund's \(IMF\) assessment, reproduced here by the New York Times](#): "The resilience of Russia's economy is helping fuel global growth, according to a new [I.M.F.] report ... suggesting ... [Western] efforts ... to weaken Moscow because of its war in Ukraine appear to be faltering. ... [T]he I.M.F. predicts ... Russian output will expand 0.3 per cent... this year and 2.1 per cent next year, defying earlier forecasts" "The sanctions are having little impact on Russia's economy, explaining that "[the West's] efforts ... to weaken Moscow over the war in Ukraine appear to be falling flat. ... [The IMF] predicts that ... Russian output will grow by 0.3 percent ... this year and 2.1 percent next year, defying earlier forecasts."

New RAND report should make all decision-makers in the West think

And as if these "cracks in the wall" weren't enough, the American hawkish think tank, the Rand Corporation, has just released a report - ["Avoid A Long War"](#) - that says in no uncertain terms that the US must take urgent steps to stop this war because it is not in the US's long-term interest. If Ukraine is to retake all its territory, it will, it says, be a much longer and more destructive war and increase the risk of nuclear weapons being used. A long war would have devastating consequences for the global economy, take US attention away from other major issues and increase Russia's 'dependence' on China.

And beyond that, RAND points out, there are plenty of difficult dilemmas - like this one: By steadily increasing arms aid to Ukraine, Zelenskyj will feel empowered to oppose negotiations; if the US/NATO cut back on arms aid, Russia could feel empowered. How to balance expectations and action/reaction?

Or: US/EU massive sanctions are imposed to punish Russia forever; it means Russia has no hope that its policies will have any effect on them, that they will never be lifted, so to speak. (They should have been conditional instead, of course: if you Russians stop this war, we will lift the sanctions, JO).

So RAND suggests that the US must say clearly what it is Russia must do for sanctions to be lifted and then negotiate from there.

RAND even says (p. 24) that Russia has already paid a very high political and economic price - NATO enlargement with Finland and Sweden, NATO rearmament, loss of prestige, Europe's reduction of energy and trade cooperation with Russia, reduction of Russia's defence capability, etc.

Finally, RAND makes it clear that Ukraine's regaining of lost territory is not the most important thing; instead, the US should give it some kind of security guarantees of neutral status and non-NATO membership, get peace talks going and discuss how sanctions can then be lifted.

If this authoritative report by RAND - which basically demonstrates how counterproductive everything the US, NATO and the EU have done so far is and also argues that a long war with nuclear risks is not in the US interest - does not make a deep impression and finally

make decision-makers in all NATO headquarters – including Copenhagen – *think*, there is hardly anything that can.

And it is interesting that RAND – of all people – says in its own way what we peace professionals have been saying all along: what is happening now is counterproductive, creates a long war with ever-increasing risks and that the only solution must come about at a negotiating table and with a clear recognition that Ukraine can never become a NATO member, but can surely gain security in other ways ([see my analysis here with texts from 2014 and up to 2022](#)).

In parenthesis, it is then as interesting as unethical that RAND in 2019 also published [an analysis of how the West could make Russia ever weaker, unbalance it](#), without even sacrificing anything further on it.

Social and economic protests will grow in Europe

How to contain the protests of people around Europe, when the prices of energy, petrol and groceries have risen to levels that are pushing living standards ever lower – and social services and healthcare are deteriorating further? When people discover that they have been deceived by the propaganda of NATO's innocence and have to pay even more to the alliance which bears the main responsibility for the conflict and is also now engaging in a war which this so-called defensive peace-building alliance was set up precisely to avoid? Trillions of dollars extracted from the taxpayers of 30 countries over decades only to demand even more in a time of multi-crisis?

I actually think Western leaders have enough to think – deeply – about.

But today, politics is reduced to photo-ops, symbolic politics with flags, pin badges and blue-and-yellow dresses, fancy Twitter-esque statements and the total absence of an awareness of one's own professional ignorance and, therefore, also of the fact that what one is experimenting with *just to be proven right* is the possible destruction of large parts of Europe.

There is certainly no prudent statesmanship, caution or coherence between action, tactics and long-term strategy to be seen anywhere. It's helter-skelter, more or less panicking, positioning and signalling politics.

Or perhaps it *is* the megalomaniacal illusion that NATO members and partners – when on the other side of all this and when “we” have won and Russia has been chopped up like Yugoslavia was – will defeat China, expand NATO even further and liberate Taiwan... the China that in no way wants war or is waging war anywhere and threatens no one in NATO?

Weapons and armaments are, after all, the only area where the West still has a comparative advantage. There is only the *Aberdabei* about it, that the very use of this advantage, this military superiority, will with unerring certainty [destroy the West itself](#). Sooner rather than later. The pervasive militaristic culture is like cancer spreading.

But like a puppet on the strings of His Master's Voice, NATO's Jens Stoltenberg repeats himself endlessly about China as the great challenge, China's armament and provocative behaviour and disinformation, and... most recently during his visit to South Korea and Japan at the end of January.

The people of Ukraine will pay the highest price and Europe will get the boomerang of the US/NATO response to Russia's invasion

I wonder how much will be left of Ukraine and its people in a few months' time, who are, after all, innocent in the game played by their own Poroshenko and Zelensky governments, the governments of NATO countries and, last, by Russia, *full well knowing that millions of these by definition innocent Ukrainian fellow human beings could well have their lives and future destroyed for decades ahead.*

As always, it is ordinary people who pay the price for the heartless power games of leaders – including Danish leaders.

While I have no sympathy for Ukrainian leaders' interactions with the US/NATO since the 2014 US-orchestrated regime change in Kyiv, with their rearmament of Ukraine, their civil war against their own citizens that has cost 14,000 lives, or with the shenanigans called the Minsk Accords, one can only have sympathy for the innocent Ukrainians whom all sides have sacrificed like pawns on a chessboard.

And in this case, the cause of this suffering is that everyone in NATO circles denies every co-responsibility for the conflict that has sparked off the war – indeed, that there is a conflict at all, which presupposes two parties. Russia is the only party to this unique conflict and NATO, according to Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, is not even a participant in it.

No one in either the media or politics understands the essential difference between the *war (symptom)* and the *underlying conflicts (causes)*, and no one seems to possess the self-awareness and diplomatic ability to do anything other than drive ever deeper into the dead end of military escalation.

Like a lemming train towards the abyss.

It's called [mission creep](#), and it's terribly dangerous – especially when the actors are blinded by the self-righteous winner's groupthink that rejects all alternative interpretations and courses of action and day by day confirms the group that it is infallible and, therefore on the right path.

This kind of thing happens when [militarism has become a religion and NATO its church](#), the main – last – cohesive factor in the Western world whose time as the world's self-appointed leader is definitely over and a new cooperative, multi-polar world order without hegemons rapidly evolving.

One can only hope today that it will implode and not explode.

Here is President Zelensky speaking about the visit of the Danish politicians:

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Featured image: The Danish foreign, defence and the prime minister is greeted by President Zelensky

(right) (Source: *The Transnational*)

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