



Eurasia Center's International Security Program

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Putin's War Comes to Ukraine



Russian Missile strike Kyiv, February 23, 2022 Photo Credit: President Ukraine's Office

The Eurasia Center

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Eurasia Brief

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Tanks move into the city of Mariupol. Photo Credit: Carlos Barria, Reuters

February 23, 2022 - Putin has officially declared war on Ukraine calling it a “special operations campaign.” He has now launched a multi-pronged invasion of Ukraine which will inflict high civilian casualties. Despite weeks of warnings from the United States and Western allies and vague promises to reach a diplomatic solution through a number of meetings with Biden, in Geneva and at NATO, Putin has created his own war with Ukraine supported by the masses of sheep in Russia he calls his marginalized soldiers and citizens that have swallowed his narrative for years. With his occupation of Crimea and shadow occupation of the Donbass region, NATO’s response was to begin to train and defend its members and Ukraine against further encroachments. Putin continued to organize mass troop deployments over the years until he was sure he had Belarussian dictator Lukashenko in his pocket to try to encircle Ukraine. He crossing of the Rubicon was carefully orchestrated with the help of his circle of advisors, a monopoly of propaganda on Russian state-run media shows and his rubber-stamped Duma. For both Ukraine and Russia, this will be the beginning of a long nightmare, for it will be not so easy to erase a country or turn back the hands of history, especially when people understand what it is like to live in freedom.

With bombs and blasts reported across the landscape of Ukraine, Putin’s armed forces are poised to try to capture all of Ukraine, asking Ukraine’s armed forces to lay down their arms. Putin’s rambling speech to the Russia nation, was a time a travesty and mishmash of history. Blaming Stalin and Lenin for creating Ukraine and being hostile to its peoples when he himself has now assumed their mantle. In the same speech he railed against oligarchs and corruption in Ukraine when he is perhaps the guiltiest of all regarding theft of state resources. The speech and the man

reflect the sad state of Russian leadership that has gone to the “Dark Side,” but yet most people do not realize that, as in Syria, there will be a perpetuation of war crimes sponsored by the Russian state. China’s support of Putin and his efforts must also be noted as being one of the key enablers in this campaign.



Wounded Ukrainian Woman Russian Airstrike hits outside Kharkiv, Photo Credit: Al Jazeera

Ukraine is now left in the position that Ethiopia when it was attacked by Mussolini, another strong man and disgruntled leader. Unfortunately, the West has ruled out supporting Ukraine with troops, as this could have possibly prevented the conflict. Ukraine can only hope to inflict the maximum damage on Russian troops to deter a full-scale war. However, with the preponderance of air, naval, and ground troops in Putin’s Russia’s favor, the situation is grim.

The Eurasia Center has monitored this crisis in the making for years and offered solutions to make Ukraine a bridge of peace between East and West. However, both sides, neglected to compromise or cover this conflict and offer solutions to this crisis. Despite waiving half-hearted sanctions over the past few days, if the US is really serious about stopping the war, it must sanction the Russia Central Bank. American economist, from the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, Mikhail Bernshtam, believes that sanctioning the Russian Central Bank is Russia’s weakest point and can convince the Kremlin that the cost of invading Ukraine would be unacceptable. “There are various ways to prevent war,” says Mikhail Bernshtam. As soon as sanctions are imposed on the Central Bank of Russia, three catastrophes occur. Firstly, the people immediately run to get rid of rubles, to take dollars, because they need to keep their savings in some way, because the ruble will collapse tomorrow. Convertibility will have to be canceled or a catastrophic depreciation of the ruble will have to be tolerated. It will freeze the Russian Bond market and force goods and services to demand dollars for transactions, as the ruble will have collapsed. This is the financial nuclear

option that must be considered if Putin's war is to be stopped. Otherwise, the West will have isolated Ukraine to be a victim to Russian aggression. It now has to defend all recent members of NATO as that may be Putin's next objective after Ukraine.

Of honorable mention was the effort of Retired Russian Colonel General Leonid Ivashov, acting as chairman of the All-Russian Officers' Assembly, to issue an appeal against Russia's war with Ukraine on January 31, 2021. According to the General, the use of military force against Ukraine, "firstly, will call into question the existence of Russia itself as a state; secondly, it will forever make Russians and Ukrainians mortal enemies." Ivashov also fears that NATO countries, in particular Turkey, will enter the conflict. "Besides, Russia will definitely be included in the category of countries that threaten peace and international security, will be subject to the heaviest sanctions, will turn into a pariah of the world community, and will probably be deprived of the status of an independent state," the general believes. He believes that Russia "provokes tension on the brink of war" to distract the population from internal problems. The appeal contains a demand for the president to "renounce the criminal policy of provoking war."

UN chief Guterres has urged Russia to end the attack on Ukraine. "President Putin, in the name of humanity bring your troops back to Russia," the Secretary-General said. "In the name of humanity do not allow to start in Europe what could be the worst war since the beginning of the century," he said, adding the conflict "must stop now."

