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## *Ukraine, between the transatlantic and Eurasian projects*

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The war in Ukraine puts into question, in the complex world that touches us, the possible extension of NATO, the role of Europe with Germany at the head, and the dispute of the West with Russia.

It defines the extension of NATO in Europe, which this time meets the red lines set by Putin. Before, the power vacuum after the fall of the Soviet world was filled in Eastern Europe with a rapprochement with the West, the European Union and NATO. Ukraine points to the limit of that expansion.

The war in Ukraine also highlights the limitations of Europe, mainly Germany, in building an independent US power bloc. It is that the possibility of a Germany-Russia axis, and Eurasian unity, must be prevented from being carried out by NATO.

If Europe loses even the decision to buy gas from Russia, in Ukraine, in addition to more loss of territory, the idea of a country anchored in the project of the European Union transforming itself into a Western country, and of course, a member of NATO, is blurred.

Russia militarily manages to resist Ukraine's withdrawal from its space of influence, sends a signal to the world that its security justifies even the use of atomic bombs, but neither can it close Ukraine politically in its main civilizational space, along with Belarus.

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## **Moscow's reasons**

What we now call Ukraine was part of the "Kievan Rus", a federation of Slavic tribes that occupied the region that ran from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. Vladimir I of Kiev will be responsible for the Christianization of the region, starting in 988, the year of his conversion to Orthodox Christianity. For Russia, Ukraine and Belarus are part of the same civilization.

In 2019 there is the separation of the Orthodox churches. Politics often dismisses these movements, downplays them. However, pro-European Ukraine needed to break with its past. The Moscow Patriarchate loses Kiev through the Patriarchate of Constantinople. After more than 300 years came the "autocephaly" of the Ukrainian church. Orthodox unity, to history.

Thus, the sector that pushes Ukraine to the West decides to ignore its Christian history and the Russian project of geopolitical territorial unity based on Slavic roots, Orthodox Christian church and Russian language.

Let's review. In 2012, an association agreement had been declared between Ukraine and the European Union. The following year Yanukovich suspended the agreement. In 2014 Yanukovich was overthrown, with the support of "pro-European" sectors in the streets: Euromaidan was in elected name – it was wrong to put a revolution of another color.

Russia strikes back with annexation-recovery? of Crimea, which has a referendum of its inhabitants. It is worth remembering that in 1954 Nikita Khrushchev had transferred his sovereignty to Ukraine, a country that only declared independence in 1991 with the defeat of the Soviet bloc. Putin publicly considers crimea to be returning to its true place of origin. In addition, Crimea has the main Russian naval base, with its Black Sea fleet. The Response of the West is not long in coming, Russia is expelled from the G-8 and the European Union joins sanctions against Moscow.

From the events in Crimea to the current military intervention, the population historically linked to Russia suffers from the war in Donbas (eastern Ukraine), which caused 14,000

deaths and more than 1.5 million displaced. As we know, and as a reaction to the NATO offensive, Russia finally recognizes the Donetsk and Luhansk republics.

Russia had declared that Ukraine's entry into NATO could not be allowed. The red lines were marked for the West. Already in 1999, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary joined NATO. In 2004, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania joined the Transatlantic Alliance.

The security threat Moscow denounces is real and serious. The US withdrew on 1/2/2019 from the Treaty on the Elimination of Nuclear Missiles (INF) and there are currently MK-41 launchers in Poland and Romania – as we just mentioned, NATO countries. Putin believes they could use the MK-41s with nuclear-capable Tomahawk missiles. Recently the Russian Foreign Ministry asked the US to withdraw its nuclear weapons from Europe.

A European Ukraine, in alliance with NATO, is unacceptable to Russia. First for historical reasons, then for security. Putin, with the war in Ukraine, resists NATO's advance to the east, demanding in the negotiations the recognition of Crimea from Russia, the demilitarization of the entire country and the elimination of neo-Nazi mercenaries. Ukraine's neutrality is fundamental to the security of the Russian Federation.

However, it is undeniable that Russia is at stake. Perhaps Putin's public challenge to his intelligence chief perhaps has to do with certain differences in strategy. The costs of war are high: political, economic, financial, the energy sector, much of Western public opinion against the war, etc. The ruble has fallen by 30% and interest rates have risen from 9.5 to 30% to prevent the massive withdrawal of money from banks. The blow to the Russian economy with a battery of sanctions is intended to provoke an internal front for Putin's government, which will need more from China for its foreign trade. Hence the importance of negotiations between Russia and Ukraine to end fighting and military operations as soon as possible.

The truth is that Europe becomes more aggressive against Russia (even with the promise of arms shipments to Ukraine) in the same way that it is more submissive to the interests of the US and NATO.

## Germany and Europe's Submission

Germany misses Angela Merkel. The US has managed to break an incipient economic alliance between Russia and Germany. The geopolitics of NordStream II, an underwater gas pipeline with global repercussions, has been buried – for the time being – by the war in Ukraine.

It is that Germany has just blocked gas access to 26 million homes. A fact in passing that deserves our attention: the German "green" party rejects it for "environmental" reasons. The 1,200 km gas pipeline had a cost of 1,1350 million dollars (in euros 9,500 million) and was financed in two halves, one by Russia and the other by Germany, Austria, France and... shell in the United Kingdom.

Germany is 35% dependent on Russian gas. The same goes for Europe, by 40%. If Nord Stream II were added to Nord Stream I (both have almost the same route) Europe would receive 110,000 million cubic meters of gas from Russia, that is, a quarter of the gas consumed by Europe.

The opening of Nord Stream II would cause the loss of 2,000 million dollars annually to Ukraine, current supplier of Russian gas to Europe. Already in 2006 the Russian state company Gazprom had cut off gas to Ukraine, due to tariff differences. The cost of Russian gas passing through Ukraine to reach Europe already bothered Moscow, which had planned an end to the transit of gas through Ukraine. In 2020 alone, Naftogas, the Ukrainian state-owned company, would lose 616 million euros for less shipment of Russian gas through its territory. In fact, the Russians publicly announced that in 2024 the agreement would be terminated, which was rejected by Ukraine.

The end of the passage of Russian gas through Ukrainian territory – GTS – had to be prevented. That is why in May 2019 the chairman of the board of Naftogas, Yuriy Vitrenko, already claimed that the Nord Stream II was "anti-American". In November 2021 Yuriy stated that "if there is no need to transport gas through Ukraine, it will be easier for Russia to launch a large-scale military operation against Ukraine." Miscalculation. The Russians care about gas, but more about their safety.

Germany, the great defeated, humiliates itself even more, announces the sending of 400 anti-tank rocket launchers to Ukraine, leaving behind its public policy of not sending armaments to countries in conflict. Admittedly, the U.S. achieves a political victory that maintains the *status quo* in Europe. Apparently, Germany's little dignity went with Merkel.

### **Zelensky and the Ukrainian oligarchy**

The Western press has invented a new hero, Zelensky. The images of Ukraine's president in military garb give more to his old comedy show than to the reality of his country. It is that, precisely, Zelensky made his political career thanks to comedy – as everyone reports – and also thanks to the multimedia of a Ukrainian oligarch – here the media count less. We are talking about Ihor Kolomoisky (or Kolomyskyy).

In 2017, a high court in London froze \$2.5 billion of Kolomoisky's assets. In March 2021 it was the US State Department that would announce sanctions. The reasons, Ihor, from 1990 to 2016, owned the privatBank. He was charged with \$5.5 billion in money laundering. Ukraine had to nationalize the bank. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that on 9/12/2019 the IMF would grant Ukraine a loan for... \$5.5 billion.

Zelensky, who campaigned in 2019 claiming that he would eradicate corruption from his country, allowed Kolomoisky to return to Ukraine and, in addition, placed in strategic places of his government members who responded directly to Kolomoisky. That is, before being invented by NATO, Zelensky was already an invention of this oligarch with his media empire.

Kolomoisky had already been governor of Dnipropetrovsk, becoming known to the Russians very quickly, he financed a private army against Russia. Banned in the US, in 2019 he met in Israel with Rudy Giuliani (who was mayor of New York). Giuliani was on Donald Trump's side to get information from Biden's son, Hunter. He wanted to know the business of the Bidens in Ukraine, being the current president of the United States, formerly vice president with Obama. The Bidens were closely linked to another oligarch, Mikola Zlochevsky, who was a former minister of natural resources. Mikola, owner of

Burisma, Ukraine's largest private gas company, seated Hunter Biden on the company's board. Guessing: Which bank did you use for your transactions?

Kolomoisky's presence in Israel is no accident. Both Zelensky and Kolomoisky are of Jewish origin in fact, according to *The Times of Israel* (7/3/2021), Kolomoisky was a high-level representative, being president of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine. It is paradoxical that Vladimir Putin denounces that he fights in Ukraine against neo-Nazi gangs, and that Israel supports Ukraine.

Before we go any further, a brief reference to Trump. Shameful defense of his foreign policy appears today in several portals. Even from Argentines, who owe 50,000 million dollars to the IMF thanks to the fact that the alleged Peronist (?) gave us his support. With the above, we believe that in Argentina any attempt to justify its foreign policy deserves no further analysis on our part. Neither Palestine, nor Yemen, nor Syria, nor Iraq, nor Iran, nor even Afghanistan, are going to claim that Trump's term in the White House was less warlike than that of his successor Biden. Nor do we remember sanctions against the U.S. and its allies for any of those wars. Some swallow any toad that is anti-globalization. We don't. Neither progressive Biden, nor Peronist Trump.

### **From Ukraine to Malvinas**

The vast majority of Western media have us used to it. Now it matters the "international community", belonging to the "civilized world", to the "international financial order", being part of the "democratic and developed countries". The hypocrisy of such media adds to a pacifist love of many analysts, perhaps afraid of being branded Russophiles. Suddenly the "systematic violation of human rights" is noted. All against Russia and its "expansionism", or against the war and its "irrationality", which is the same in this case. Putin would be the new Hitler. Of causes and consequences, only if it is to talk about a Palestinian rocket that "explains" Israel's indiscriminate bombing of the Palestinian population. Sanctions on Israel? Fine thank you.

Then, those who defend international law appear, that is, they come with "objective positions" that they always, they say, respect. But they only mention them these days. Of course, now it is easier, just coincide such positions with the US and Britain. In short,

international law, again and as always, in silence when the irons speak. Let's take note, the world already, and the one that comes to us the most, is not going to have anything peaceful.

The best we have seen have been the reactions that – of course, in the Western position of condemning Russia – have reminded us of the Falklands. Maybe we'll start rethinking our armed forces. We are not going to recover our islands and then the third part of our national territory with comunicués, much less through social networks.

If there are sanctions for Russia, where are the sanctions for the UK? And if, obviously, the West is not going to affect its ally, then what are the sanctions that Argentina establishes in the face of the illegal occupation of the Malvinas Islands? For example, breaking diplomatic relations, cutting commercial and cultural ties. We assume that from now on they will not have access to our natural resources: oil, mining, fishing, etc.

But, it happens with the IMF, it happens with the Malvinas. Again they are going to talk about dialogue and international law. Let's face it, a true national position also includes the analysis of our sovereignty. We need to start showing our muscles – that's why we equip our armed forces – and be aggressive with sanctions – in the best Western style – showing that, 40 years after our battle for the Falklands, we, like Russia, also have our red lines.

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