

## Comments Section

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### Putin's Nuclear Blackmail

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*The article revealed the scientific nature of Putin's nuclear blackmail. It has been proven that the democratic world community cannot succumb to Putin's nuclear blackmail. In fact, he carries it out not for the purpose of actual use, but as a means of further aggressive actions to intimidate politicians and people around the world. It has been stated that the measures to prevent Putin's nuclear blackmail are*

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*the maximum defeat of the Russian terrorist forces by the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the introduction of an oil and gas export embargo so that Russia cannot restore its military potential for decades. The conduct of legal measures to ensure that those involved in the entire synchronous chain of nuclear weapon activation, deliberately fail to comply with Putin's criminal fatal order to use nuclear weapons.*

*Keywords: aggression, military potential, democratic community, application, crimes against humanity, Putin, blackmail, nuclear weapon; US instruments of deterrence.*

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## Introduction

Paradoxically, the rapid development of humanity and social progress lead to the advent of new challenges and exacerbation of the old ones. The following problems are becoming more and more relevant – overpopulation of the planet, increase of the greenhouse effect, global warming, floods, malnutrition and famine caused by the reduction of agricultural land area.

It is worthy to take the stagnation in fundamental discoveries in physics and chemistry into consideration. Practically, in today's conditions, mankind uses technologies that were developed on the basis of natural laws discovered in the XVI-XX centuries, i.e., the laws of thermodynamics, electricity and electronics. The breakthroughs of the XX century include the DNA discovery by famous biologists, the development of electronics and humanity's reach into Space. Furthermore, the formation and rapid development of progressive social humanitarian theories led to the establishment of the United Nations, the creation of dozens of sovereign states (former colonies of large countries), as well as the prosperity of the European Union.

The first category of challenges cannot be solved without the colonization of outer space on space objects adapted to terrestrial life (Musk, 2020) or (and) on artificial space islands. In order for the cradle of humanity – the planet Earth, to become a green-blue oasis, a place for pilgrims from all corners of the space mastered by humans. Primarily, all harmful production must be removed from the planet Earth (Halunko et al., 2021). These processes require legal regulation of space law.

It has already been mentioned that a bright future awaits humanity if scientists offer humankind new materials with properties that are often superior to modern ones. However, the main breakthrough will be made only when theorists of mathematics and physics reveal the latest mathematical formula, different from the classical Einstein  $E = mc^2$  equation (Stan, 2021). However, all these scientific dreams will remain only dreams if humanity destroys itself as a result of nuclear war. In this respect, another question arises: would it be equitably fair that primitive dinosaurs ruled the planet Earth for more than 160 million years and Homo Sapiens less than 200 thousand years?

Nowadays, the main threat to humanity comes from practically one person – Putin (Cowen, 2022), who is supposed to be supported by the majority of the Russian population. Thus, as of March 24, 2022, after the start of Russia's large-scale war in Ukraine (Russia's, 2022), the approval of the activities of the President of Russia increased significantly up to 83%. The share of those who believe that things in the country are going in the right direction has increased. The rating of Putin's United Russia party reached 54% (Approval, 2022).

Based on the current state of affairs, it should be emphasized that:

1. Putin's mental health is a matter of concern to the world community (House, 2022). Since 2008, he has been making political decisions that not only harm Russia, but also threaten the possibility of its continued existence (Fried & Volker, 2022);
2. In accordance with Russian law, the president decides on the use of nuclear weapons. According to the Military Doctrine, the Russian Federation reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction against it and (or) its allies, as well as in the case of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons, when the very existence of the state is threatened. However, the same doctrine states that the prevention of nuclear military conflict, like any other military conflict, is the basis of the military policy of the Russian Federation. However, there is no trust in the following document. After all, according to the same document, the decision to use nuclear weapons is made by the President of the Russian Federation alone (Military, 2014). It is horrible that one mentally unstable person with the anti-human values of the "Russian world," with all the dictatorial power within the state (Klimentyev, 2022) has the opportunity to start a nuclear war.

Thus, in today's conditions (April 2022), the main threat to humanity is not objective. Surprisingly, it is not global warming, which may lead to adverse consequences for humanity in a few decades. The main threat to humanity is subjective – the leadership of a dictator (Putin) in the nuclear state with the largest number of nuclear warheads (Russia). He flagrantly violates international law, blackmails the world community, and threatens with the use of nuclear weapons, not to mention the fact that his mental health raises suspicions in the international community.

One part of the world community mistakenly believes that the catalyst for Putin's use of nuclear weapons is the victorious war of the Ukrainian people with Russian terrorist forces. For example, on April 15, 2022, CIA Director William Burns warned about a high risk of a Russian nuclear strike due to failures in the war against Ukraine (The head, 2022).

Nevertheless, this is not the case, because the theory of the imperial expansion of the "Russian peace" is directed not only against the people of Ukraine. Its real and potential victims are Japan, Ichkeria, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Syria, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland, Poland and Romania. Through the agents of influence: Germany, France, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Slovakia and others. What is more, Putin is not to blame for the imperial expansion of the "Russian peace." The majority of the Russian people are accountable. The deep-seated Russian, who lives in poverty and is humiliated by internal police terror, has a psychological need to remove the accumulated aggression. He cannot remove it on the territory of Russia. The Putin regime gave him the opportunity to do so in Georgia (2008), in Ukraine (2014) and in Syria (2015). If the Ukrainian people do not stop Putin's Russian terrorist forces on their territory, nuclear blackmail of the EU's eastern member states, Kazakhstan, Finland, Sweden, Turkey, and so on to the English Channel and the Mediterranean will begin. This deep psychological understanding of his role in the world order is expressed by the profound Russian in the slogans "We can repeat" and "To Berlin," implying the occupation of more than half of European states by Soviet Russia in 1945.

Citizens of the EU and other democracies need to know that the rude Russian tourists they have encountered are Russia's elite, so to say, "cultural figures." In fact, more than 70% of

Russian citizens do not have foreign passports, which means that they have never been abroad. The degree of propaganda prevailing in their minds and decision-making mechanisms is much higher than that of Russians who have visited Europe at least once in their lives. Exactly the following stratum of modern Russian society is joining the army. As absurd as it may sound in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, the dream of looting rich European cities, raping European women and heroic returning home with looted property is the main meaning of their lives. The vast majority of Russians are brainwashed servants of their leader that Ukrainians were called upon to stop and protect the European democratic community.

Thus, Ukraine's victory is not a catalyst for Putin's use of nuclear weapons. On the contrary, Ukraine is a subject of international law that bravely protects the democratic world from Putin's exploratory nuclear blackmail and occupation of other democracies. As long as sovereign Ukraine keeps repulsing Putin's attack on its territory, other nations are safe and sound. Hypothetically, imagine that such a large and powerful state as Ukraine would not exist. Initially, Putin would occupy Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia, and the armed hostilities would now occur in Poland. The world community must develop a technical, organizational and legal mechanism to reduce the possibility of Putin's use of nuclear weapons to zero. The following article is devoted to the analysis of the last two factors.

### **Russia's war in Ukraine and Putin's nuclear blackmail**

Practically, in February 2014, with the annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the Russian-Ukrainian War began, which in Ukrainian legal literature was called the Patriotic (People's) War of the Ukrainian people (Halunko, 2022b).

However, much earlier, in 2007, Putin officially declared a hybrid war on the Western world and neighboring countries in his speech delivered at the Munich Conference on Security Policy. Putin's essential statement included the following points: 1) the liberal international order led by the United States, also known as the "Free World," is of no interest or value to Russia; 2) the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century. Putin's speech came as a shock to those who have made significant efforts to connect Russia to the post-Cold War global stability system. According to Kurt Volker, it was misleading to assume that despite Putin's unequivocally stated imperial values and Russia's numerous practical actions over 15 years, the West could somehow cooperate with Putin's Russia. In fact, the West has provided significant financial and technical assistance to Russia. Therefore, the European countries, the United States, Canada and Russia have signed numerous agreements that had to comply with key principles, including refraining from the threat or use of force (Fried & Volker, 2022).

Nevertheless, on August 8, 2008, the Putin regime launched armed aggression against small sovereign Georgia, marking the beginning of the first war in 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe. The conflict itself ended in a few days, but the consequences of the Russian-Georgian war continue to affect the present, forming a broader geopolitical environment. The international response to Russia's military campaign in Georgia has been extremely weak. Unfortunately, Russia has faced minor negative consequences for the committed crimes. On the contrary, EU leaders have called for a ceasefire that favors Russia's interests. Moreover, under the Obama Administration, the United States disclosed a clear interest in "resetting" U.S.-Kremlin relations. Moscow interpreted the West's accommodating approach as an informal invitation to further acts of aggression. According to Peter Dickinson, the ceasefire, mediated by French President Nicolas Sarkozy,

was in Moscow's favor. In the meantime, Georgia was accused of the first shot in the EU report on the five-day war. It is assumed that six years after the Russian-Georgian war, Russia launched a much larger military campaign against Ukraine, where Putin occupied Crimea and large areas of Eastern Ukraine, such as Donbas (Dickinson, 2021).

In other words, the West's indulgence in Putin's aggression in Georgia led to the logical annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the Russian-Ukrainian War, which began in early 2014.

Today (as of May 17, 2022), the difficult battle for the Ukrainian Donbas continues. The Armed Forces of Ukraine are repelling numerous attacks by Russian terrorist forces (Mason et al., 2022). Nevertheless, according to US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, Russia lost the battle for Kyiv. He argues that Russia is losing the battle for Ukraine as a whole. The USA claims that Ukraine has a great chance to win if there is essential equipment and timely support. The United States will do everything in its power to bring Ukraine closer to victory. The US wants to see Russia weakened to the point that it cannot commit crimes and bring calamity anymore. Russia has already lost significant military capabilities; therefore, the world community has to make sure that the aggressor country will not be able to quickly and easily restore its military potential (Piontkovsky, 2022).

However, amid the good news about Kyiv, Putin's nuclear blackmail is intensifying. The nuclear issue must concern everyone on a global basis. Because, in the absence of effective international law and relevant UN security institutions, every country needs a nuclear umbrella. The reason for this is that the largest nuclear state in terms of the number of warheads – Russia is blackmailing its use. Putin and his entourage are ready to use nuclear weapons under certain circumstances (Hill, 2022).

Russia's public nuclear blackmail began in 2014, when the propagandist of the federal state news agency with strict censorship, "Russia 1" Dmitry Kiselyov, argued that Russia is the only country in the world powerful enough to turn the United States into radioactive ash. Indeed, he is one of the Kremlin's most odious mouthpieces, responsible for propagating Putin's official opinion (Shepelin, 2014). Later, indirect threats to use nuclear weapons were voiced by many Russian politicians. Hence, the head of "Roscosmos" Rogozin, publicly highlights that Russia has a powerful nuclear strategic potential: intercontinental ballistic missiles, medium-range combat missile systems, operational and tactical means. He proclaims that the Russian Federation is capable of physically destroying anyone at any distance in minutes (Rogozin, 2022).

In essence, the official vocabulary of Russian politicians does not explicitly call for the use of nuclear weapons. Nonetheless, they denied the possibility of a large-scale military invasion on the territory of Ukraine until it actually happened. Therefore, the signals about the use of nuclear weapons, which the Russian government promotes through its associated speakers and the media, should be taken seriously. In his interview with India Today television channel on April 19, 2022, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov stated that the risks of nuclear war are quite significant. He was asked whether Russia was considering using tactical nuclear weapons against Ukraine. Although the Russian minister replied that Russia was always against nuclear war, he did not say outright that Russia would not use tactical nuclear weapons against Ukraine under any circumstances. Similarly, in 2021, Putin refused to say that his country would not launch a large-scale military attack on Ukraine under any circumstances (Yizak, 2022).

Thus, in the context of full-scale Russian terrorist aggression, Putin, along with his propagandists and politicians, has never directly assured the world community that there

is no risk of Russia initiating a nuclear war. Putin's experience of adhering to international agreements is not credible. There is no trust and confidence in any assertions he makes. In particular, Russia blatantly violated the Memorandum on Security Assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Memorandum, 1994); the concentration of Russian troops on the border with Ukraine is "nothing more than military exercises." Consequently, Putin's fruitless promises and words should not be taken into account. The order to use nuclear weapons is unlikely, but potentially possible.

## **Characteristics of Russia's nuclear potential**

In terms of the number of warheads, Russia's nuclear potential is the greatest of all nuclear powers. According to the Federation of American Scientists, Russia has 5,977 nuclear warheads, i.e., devices that cause a nuclear explosion. Nevertheless, this figure includes about one and a half thousand warheads that have already been written off and are subject to disposal. The majority of 4,500 remaining warheads are considered strategic nuclear weapons, i.e., ballistic missiles that can deliver nuclear warheads over long distances. The smallest percentage includes less destructive tactical nuclear weapons for use on the battlefield. In addition, experts estimate that about 1,500 Russian nuclear warheads are stationed at bases, airfields, or submarines (How many, 2022).

Russia's nuclear capability consists of five components: 1) Strategic Rocket Forces; 2) strategic aviation; 3) naval missile carriers; 4) tactical nuclear weapons; 5) nuclear warheads in arsenals.

Strategic Rocket Forces (RVSN) play a key role in Russia's nuclear blackmail. They account for more than 60% of missile carriers and nuclear warheads. Historically, there have been two versions of missile systems in the Strategic Rocket Forces: stationary and mobile. Stationary systems incorporate silo-based missiles, and mobile grouping comprises ground missile complexes. Stationary and mobile groups of missile systems have approximately the same number of missile carriers. Stationary systems allow missiles to be launched in a shorter period of time due to their higher readiness. However, the coordinates of all silo-based missiles are known, what makes them the target of a pre-emptive strike. At the same time, mobile complexes may be more invisible. At the end of 2021, Russia's Strategic Missile Forces were equipped with stationary silo-based missile systems: Avangard, Voevoda, Stiletto, Topol-M, Yars and mobile ground missile complexes: Topol, Topol-M, and Yars. Russia was planning to gradually rearm all of its missile formations with the latest Sarmat missile complex (Vasiliev, 2022). Yet, according to US military analyst Yuri Shvets, the "new" Sarmat ballistic missile is a "repainted" copy of the SS-18 Satan, developed in Ukraine by the Design Bureau "South" (Pivdenne) and manufactured at the Southern Machine-Building Plant named after Alexander Makarov back in the 70s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Shvets, 2022). In 2004, Pivdenmash, by a joint decision of the governments of Ukraine and Russia, transferred all documentation for the production of R-36M2 Voevoda (SS-18 Satan) to the Russian state missile center named after Makeev.

Most of the other missile carriers in Russia's service were also developed in the 1970s and 1980s by the Ukrainian designers at Pivdenmash, who played an important role in the program to extend the life of these missiles before the annexation of Crimea. The fact is that in 2022 the guaranteed 20-year term of safe operation of Poplar and Voevoda ends. However,

in 2014, all programs of military cooperation between Ukraine and Russia were suspended. The Russians handed over the task of extending the resource to the Makeyev Rocket Design Bureau, which specializes in ballistic missiles for submarines and has neither sufficient experience nor qualified specialists, without the consent of the Ukrainian side. Therefore, in recent years, life extension of missiles has been carried out by launching only one missile. After that, the Russian “commission” formally decides to extend the service life of all missiles of the appropriate type, practically without suitability testing (Zhirokhov, 2017).

The navy and aviation account for one-third of the Russian nuclear potential. As of the beginning of 2015, the Russian Navy comprised 11 strategic missile carriers of three types, and only eight of them had ballistic missiles on board. Missiles deployed in 128 naval-based ballistic missile launchers can carry 512 nuclear warheads. All naval-based missile systems are developed at the Makeyev Rocket Design Bureau. At the same time, at least two types of R-29 missiles are obsolete, as they were developed in the 70-80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A new naval-based missile system, known as the R-30 Bulava, has been under development since 1998. Although the missile is largely unified with the Topol-M mobile ground missile, by the end of 2016, 10 of the 30 launches had failed. In fact, it took two decades to create Bulava, but alas, a third of the missiles did not reach the target. It was planned to transfer to the Russian fleet eight nuclear Borei-class submarines and eight new multi-purpose nuclear submarines “Ash,” capable of striking long-range cruise missiles, though not all was proceeding smoothly. As a result, the Russian fleet received only three boats of the eight Borei-class submarines. Yuri Dolgoruky and Alexander Nevsky submarines were ready in 2011, but were not accepted into combat service due to problems with the main armament – a solid propellant ballistic missile Bulava (Zhirokhov, 2017).

The strategic aviation component of Russia’s nuclear triad is more than sixty Tu-160, Tu-95 and Tu-22M bombers that can carry about 200 long-range cruise missiles. The most modern is the Tu-160, which was produced from 1984-1992 (1999, serial production resumed). Its main weapon is 12 X-55 long-range cruise missiles with a range of up to 2,500 km. Moreover, although these missiles were developed at the Raduga Design Bureau in the Moscow region, they were produced by the Kharkiv Aviation Plant, and the engines were produced by Zaporizhzhya Motor Sich. Russia also has its own cruise missile, known as the X-101, which should replace the X-55. However, its production is too slow to say that it will soon become the main one (Zhirokhov, 2017). In addition, it should be noted that the analysis of the remains of X-101 missiles, which were launched at facilities in Ukraine, showed that they were equipped with electronics of the 1960s (The latest, 2022).

In the context of the full-scale armed conflict that Russia unleashed on February 24 in Ukraine, the Russian aviation nuclear component is used to bomb civilian objects in Ukraine with non-nuclear munitions. For example, on April 23, 2022, Russian strategic aircraft from the Caspian Sea region launched a missile strike on Odesa. Although two missiles were neutralized by the Ukrainian air defense, five cruise missiles hit a peaceful city and destroyed an ordinary apartment building. Unfortunately, more than fifteen civilians were killed, including a three-month-old infant. President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy assured that all those responsible for Russia’s missile terror, everyone who gives orders and who carries out the orders to kill civilians, will be responsible for each and every murder they commit.

Dual-use items can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads. This is a major concern, since it is difficult to determine the form of a strike (nuclear or conventional) until the warhead explodes (Piddubny, 2022). For example, strategic bomber forces and other military specialists

are accustomed to using missiles that can carry nuclear weapons. At a critical moment, they can automatically carry out a fatal criminal order to launch missiles with nuclear warheads. The world community must unequivocally prohibit even the potential use of the same type of nuclear and conventional ammunition. The whole chain of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery must be specialized, not of universal character.

In addition, according to the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, Russia has about 2,000 tactical nuclear munitions (Zhirokhov, 2017). A tactical warhead is smaller in power, but can cause significant damage and mass deaths. In fact, some of its types have variable power, which allows to calibrate their explosive power for a particular attack; others, known as “neutron bombs,” were designed to emit radiation at a minimum force of explosion (Pidubny, 2022). Tactical nuclear warheads are multidisciplinary. They are made as warheads of tactical missiles, aircraft bombs, artillery shells, nuclear torpedoes and mines.

In the meantime, corrupt Russia is collapsing in all directions, including its nuclear potential. According to expert assessment, there are a number of factors that reduce the combat effectiveness of Russia’s nuclear forces, in particular the aging of nuclear warheads and strategic carriers (80% of missiles have reached the designated service period). Russia does not have the technical capability to observe the water area of the Atlantic and most of the Pacific oceans. Russia’s strategic bombers are located on two bases, what makes them vulnerable to preventive destruction. Moreover, the mobility of nuclear submarines with missiles on board is reduced, since only two of them can conduct combat patrol at the same time (General, 2012).

Formally, the Russian Federation has the largest nuclear potential in the world. However, almost all nuclear weapons were manufactured seventy to thirty years ago, and the small number of “new” nuclear munitions that Russia could potentially own has not been tested. According to experts, the smaller the power of a nuclear warhead, the more likely it is that it will not work due to irreversible aging processes. It should also be emphasized that most of the means of nuclear weapon delivery were elaborated more than thirty years ago. Whereas “modern” means of delivery are developed on the basis of mid-twentieth century technologies. Experience has shown that during the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022, more than 30% of military equipment did not perform its functions for technical reasons, and another 30% of military assets were destroyed by the Ukrainian Air Force. Specialists believe that out of 10 nuclear warheads launched by Russia, 7-9 of them can be neutralized by the time the nuclear ammunition is activated (Rustamzade, 2022). In other words, at least one in ten warheads can hit a democratic state. In order to prevent this, it is necessary to use organizational and legal measures in parallel with technical and military means to restrain the use of tactical and strategic weapons by Putin.

### **World community response to the possibility of Putin’s use of nuclear weapons**

As stated above, Western nations have long been subject to Putin’s nuclear pressure. In particular, this led to the failure to provide Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine from 2014 to 2022 with adequate assistance to protect against Russian terrorist aggression. The leading negative role was played by French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. First of all, owing to these European political leaders, Ukraine and Georgia did not receive an action plan for NATO membership at the NATO summit (2008). Even after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Merkel’s government ruled out arms supply to Ukraine. The construction

of the Nord Stream-2 gas pipeline was approved afterward. Therefore, Putin took the forced shifting of borders for granted (Hasselbach, 2022).

The situation has changed significantly after the Western media uncovered non-human atrocities by Russian terrorist forces in Bucha and other settlements in Ukraine that were temporarily occupied by Russia. On April 2, 2022, when the cities of Bucha, Irpin, Gostomel and others were completely liberated, Ukrainian soldiers, journalists, and in a short time, the world community were shocked by the horrible damage caused by Russian terrorists. Here are the words of journalists from Agence France-Presse and Reuters describing the events on March 3, 2022: “About 20 bodies of people in civilian clothes were seen on one of the streets of Bucha; the man’s hands were tied behind his back with a piece of white cloth; three bodies were laying close to a stack of building materials and wooden pallets.” Bucha Mayor A. Fedoruk said that 280 people were buried in mass graves. Locals told Reuters that all these innocent people died as a result of Russian troops (After, 2022). Numerous mass graves, rapes, including children, hundreds of civilians killed in chaotic shelling of residential areas and a number of deaths due to a lack of assistance to people trapped in basements after the bombings were identified in Kyiv Oblast (New mass, 2022). Tragically, this is only the beginning of recording criminal activities committed by Russian soldiers in Ukraine. There is reliable information that most of these crimes were committed in eastern Ukraine, where Russian terrorist forces murdered thousands of civilians and completely destroyed such cities as Volnovakha and Mariupol. The number of tortured and killed civilians, as well as those who died from hunger and disease in basement traps after the destruction of houses by shelling, exceeds twenty thousand citizens. In addition to that, countless deaths of prisoners of war and those who once took part in hostilities. In fact, much attention must be drawn to such a criminal phenomenon as “safari” – hunting of servicemen of the Russian terrorist forces for civilians with firearms, or crushing the cars of Ukrainian citizens with tanks (Designed, 2022).

The same cases are recorded in Kherson and Zaporizhia regions, which are also under partial temporary occupation. However, unlike Bucha and other liberated settlements in Kyiv, Chernihiv and Sumy oblasts, it is difficult to record these crimes. After all, the Russian occupation authorities do not cooperate with Ukrainian or international investigators. In the east and south of Ukraine, intense military action and the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Russian terrorist forces continue, because the following actions are encouraged by the Russian military and political leadership as a means of breaking the Ukrainian resistance to the occupiers. After the discovery of such horrible facts, the whole Western world realized that Putin was a murderer (Chernova et al., 2021). What is more, none of the decent politicians want to deal with him anymore. Western leaders and most democracies understand that if Putin is not stopped by Ukraine, his hordes will continue their aggression further to the West.

The culmination of the fact that Western politicians stopped fearing Putin’s nuclear blackmail was a meeting of the Advisory Group for the Defense of Ukraine, organized at the initiative of the United States at Ramstein American Air Base in Germany on April 26, 2022. It was attended by representatives of the defense agencies of more than 40 NATO countries and US partners. The Minister of Defense of Ukraine, Oleksii Reznikov, also took part in the meeting. In his speech, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin called the summit historic, noting that its goal was to help Ukraine win the war, resist the Russian invasion and prepare Ukraine’s defense capabilities for future challenges. The Minister of the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom, James Gippi, stated that Ukraine could legitimately strike at enemy

territory, attack its logistics lines, ammunition depots, fuel supplies and use weapons provided by the United Kingdom. The conference received a commitment from the allies to support the Ukrainian military during the next phase of the war and beyond (Secretary, 2022).

Another indirect factor that the West is not afraid of Putin is the Nuclear Posture and Missile Defense Reviews conducted by the USA. According to President Biden, as long as nuclear weapons exist, the fundamental role of US nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack on the United States, its allies, and partners. The United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the USA or its allies and partners (Bertuca, 2022).

In our opinion, all non-NATO countries, which were invited by the United States to a meeting of the Advisory Group for the Defense of Ukraine, clearly belong to the US partner countries as entities that can count on the US nuclear umbrella along with NATO countries. Naturally, Ukraine belongs to this group of US partners and is practically under US nuclear protection in the event of Russia's attempts to use tactical nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction against Ukraine.

Thus, the West's policy to prevent the possibility of Putin's use of nuclear weapons is active and strong. It lies in the fact that there is no need to be afraid of Putin. The United States and Britain have made it clear to Putin that in the event of the use of tactical or other nuclear weapons, the bunkers in which the Russian dictator is hiding will be destroyed in the first place.

### **Organizational and legal factors in neutralizing Putin's nuclear blackmail**

By his actions, which contain all the elements of crimes against humanity and genocide against the Ukrainian people, Putin has managed to unite virtually the entire civilized world against himself. On February 8, 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on "Aggression against Ukraine," condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It states that Russia must immediately withdraw its troops from the Ukrainian land. The decision was made by an unprecedented number of votes – 141 countries voted for, 5 against and 35 abstained. Russia, Belarus, North Korea, Eritrea, and Syria voted against it. The UN General Assembly condemned the decision of the Security Council of the Russian Federation of February 24, 2022, "On conducting a special military operation" in Ukraine. The General Assembly expressed serious concern at reports of attacks on civilian objects such as housing, schools and hospitals, as well as casualties, including the most vulnerable civilians – women, the elderly, the disabled, and children (The UN, 2022).

Thus, the first factor in neutralizing Putin's nuclear blackmail is virtually UN support, which condemns Russia's invasion of Ukraine and urges Russia to immediately withdraw its troops from the territory of Ukraine.

Nevertheless, the decision of the UN General Assembly in terms of international law is of a recommendatory nature. It is clear that Putin will not do it without coercion. According to the theory of law, disposition without the sanction in most cases is powerless. Respectively, in order for Putin to implement the following resolution, the practice of international coercion must be enforced.

The subject of the use of military coercion in the current conditions is exclusively the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which is now courageously resisting the Russian terrorist forces

in Donbas and southern Ukraine. Fortunately, the modern high-tech weapons needed to repel Putin's terrorist aggression are already coming to Ukraine from most democratic states. The American Lend-Lease Program was created during World War II is a revolutionary decision to provide the Ukrainian army with high-tech weapons and equipment needed to defeat Russia in its attempt to counteract the democratic world. Western partners have already provided Ukraine with a significant number of weapons that help destroy enemy equipment on the ground, in the sky, and soon in the sea. According to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Milley, Ukraine has already received 60,000 anti-tank units and 25,000 anti-aircraft weapons. On top of that, under the Lend-Lease Program, Ukraine will receive much more powerful weapons. Hopefully, significant foreign aid can play a pivotal role in the war against Russian aggression, as eight decades ago during World War II. The bravery of the Ukrainian army and powerful Western weapons will help Ukraine not only to repel the attack but also to win the war (Vyatrovich, 2022).

Thus, the main factor in neutralizing Putin's nuclear blackmail is Ukraine's military victory in repelling Russian aggression. Consequently, the Russian army must be weakened to such conditions that Russia's militarized forces will no longer be able to restore combat capability. This can be accomplished, provided that courageous Ukrainian people receive heavy offensive and high-tech weapons. The United States, Britain, as well as other US allies and partners have begun to render appropriate assistance and support to Ukraine, through individual and collective military programs.

Putin's attempts to use tactical and strategic nuclear weapons would be a completely irrational step. After all, such actions will lead to his immediate death, as well as the dissolution of the Russian Federation. However, given his mental state, it is impossible to rule out an attempt to use nuclear weapons. Accordingly, the Western world community must ensure that the order to use nuclear weapons given by Putin cannot be executed. Although the President of Russia can legally decide to use nuclear weapons alone, it is known from open sources that the necessary active actions of the Defense Minister and the Chief of the General Staff are required as well. In general, it should be noted that the implementation of the decision to use nuclear weapons is a system of synchronous and consistent actions of many decision-makers and actors.

There are 5 to 7 stages in which people must simultaneously carry out the orders to use nuclear weapons given by the President of Russia. It should also be emphasized that nuclear weapons must be at the highest level of combat readiness to be launched for certain purposes. Most of the workers who maintain combat readiness have the opportunity to create artificial barriers in the mechanism, without which the launch of a nuclear weapon will not be performed. For instance, a mechanic-driver of a self-propelled launcher can create mechanical obstacles, restraining the start of the internal combustion engine and the launch of a nuclear weapon itself. Specific barriers directed at the consistent system of launching nuclear warheads can be created by other specialists involved in the launch of missile carriers and other means of delivery of nuclear munitions.

That is to say, hundreds and sometimes thousands of intelligent and rational people take part in all stages of the launch of nuclear weapons. What is more, most of them have the opportunity to interrupt and deter Putin's criminal order.

The passive actions of the people involved in the launch of nuclear weapons should be encouraged to prevent the explosion. Those who do not comply with Putin's criminal order

must be physically and financially protected by the legal and organizational measures of the guarantor countries.

It is necessary to cooperate with all Russian officers, rocket scientists (nuclear system engineers), submarine officers, and strategic bombers. They are highly educated people who know better than average citizens what terrible consequences and damage this nuclear war will cause to their families and loved ones. Everyone who is willing to cooperate with the democratic forces of the anti-nuclear war must be provided with security, high financial support at the expense of the international community and the opportunity to live in the chosen democratic country under their own name or legend (Halunko, 2022a).

Another factor for preventing Putin's nuclear blackmail is weakening Russia's economy and public finances with sanctions to such an extent that:

Firstly, most Russians who support Putin have realized that their poverty is directly linked to their leader's aggressive foreign policy;

Secondly, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Armed Forces will not have the financial means to maintain the combat readiness of the nuclear triad and tactical weapons at the appropriate level.

This will be possible only if the oil and gas embargo is imposed to Russia. In our view, these sanctions are of primary importance.

## **Conclusions**

Putin's nuclear blackmail is a system of political, organizational, international, and legal, psychological means used by the Russian dictator to spread the influence of the "Russian Peace."

The democratic world community cannot succumb to Putin's provocations and allow to occupy any small, medium, or large state. After all, an independent Ukrainian state became a victim of open and unprovoked aggression conducted by the Russian Federation after the events in Georgia.

If Ukraine does not win the war against Russian terrorist forces, Putin's next victims will be Moldova, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, and so on, including the English Channel and the Mediterranean. At the same time, Putin's nuclear blackmail will grow exponentially with the capture of each new sovereign state.

Putin's aggressive actions and blackmail are part of his strategy of psychological intimidation of politicians and nations aimed at paralyzing their will to resist.

Based on these considerations, it was concluded that the victorious war of the Ukrainian people with Russian terrorist forces was not the catalyst for Putin's use of nuclear weapons. Conversely, it is an effective means of preventing nuclear war.

It has been proven that Putin is unlikely to use tactical or strategic nuclear weapons. The state of nuclear suitability for the use of nuclear weapons is unsatisfactory. The US allies' and partners' nuclear deterrence and missile defense systems are at a high level.

Nevertheless, the world community must respond to Putin's nuclear threats through a deterrence policy. The smallest miscalculation in this area can eventually cause a huge number of casualties.

Measures to prevent Putin's nuclear blackmail include:

1. Providing Ukraine with the latest weapons to repel the aggression of the Russian Armed Forces so that they will not be able to restore their combat capabilities and continue aggressive actions towards other democracies for a long time.
2. Imposing tough sanctions on Russia, mainly on oil and gas exports, thereby restricting the reinstatement of Russian military potential. At the same time, sanctions can be lifted only if Russia declares non-nuclear status and begins the process of disposing of nuclear weapons under the control of the international community.
3. Implementing legal measures to ensure that those involved in the entire synchronous chain of nuclear weapon activation, deliberately fail to comply with Putin's criminal fatal order to use nuclear weapons.

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