

Current situation in Ukraine and global implications

Talks with Jacques Baud and Gabriele Galice

by Robert Seidel

As part of the summer conference of "Swiss Standpoint" on 29 and 30 July 2022, Jacques Baud, iGst Colonel, and Gabriele Galice, president of the Geneva Institute for Peace Research GIPRI, spoke on the topic of "War in Ukraine: current situation and global implications". Both represent well-founded positions that may well be outside the mainstream.

Conflict cannot be won militarily by Ukraine

Jacques Baud,* who has broad international experience in the military and intelligence fields – a subject matter expert in the best sense of the word – presented the conflict in Ukraine from different perspectives. He emphasised that he relied solely on Western sources in his research for this lecture.

At the beginning of his presentation, Jacques Baud highlighted some key points that are often forgotten or concealed, but which put the focus on the conflict in the necessary context:

The coup d'état in Kiev (Maidan) on 23 February 2014, culminated in an uprising of the Russian-speaking south-eastern part of Ukraine which the rebels call "Novorossiya". At the time, its districts distanced themselves from the coup government installed after the Kiev coup. One sub-territory, namely the Donbas, declared itself autonomous *within* Ukraine and defended itself militarily. The uprisings in the other areas of "Novorossiya" were put down by the Ukrainian army which led to a "conflict just ticking over" for eight years.

* Jacques Baud studied international security and economics in Geneva. He is a colonel in the General Staff of the Swiss Army and worked for the *Swiss Strategic Intelligence Service*. For several years, he performed various functions in Brussels and Ukraine on behalf of NATO. For UN peacekeeping, he was mainly deployed in African countries. He is the author of numerous books and articles on intelligence, asymmetric warfare, terrorism and disinformation. His current analyses of the Ukraine crisis, published in independent media, are widely read in Europe and beyond.



Jean-Paul Vuilleumier, Editor-in-Chief of Swiss Standpoint, and Jacques Baud at the meeting on 29/30 July 2022.

Ukraine – international agreements ignored

International efforts to uphold the rights of the Russian-speaking population – the *Minsk Agreement I* and the *Minsk Agreement II* – were openly and knowingly ignored by the Kiev administration. This was particularly true of the language status and the granting of an autonomy statute. The OSCE monitored the ceasefire on the line of contact between the Donbas regions declaring themselves autonomous and the Ukrainian army. From 2014 to mid-February 2022, about 14,000 people died as a result of military attacks by the Ukrainian army.

On 24 March 2021 (!) Volodymyr Zelensky declared by decree the military reconquest of Crimea and the southern parts of the country. From 16 February 2022, the OSCE could observe a sharp increase in shelling of the Donbas by the Ukrainian armed forces – i.e. before the Russian intervention. Finally, on 24 February, military intervention by the Russian army occurred at the request of the two self-proclaimed Donbas republics.

Two thrusts took place: first, in the north, the side thrust on the capital Kiev to tie up Ukrainian forces there, and second, in the east, the main thrust to encircle and destroy large parts of the Ukrainian army standing outside the Donbas region. Most of the Ukrainian artillery and air force was destroyed at the beginning of the intervention. Western arms deliveries, if they arrived at all, prolonged the war but did not lead to a turnaround, Jacques Baud stated.

Flexible approach of the Russian army

Jacques Baud explained that the Ukrainian army had been deployed outside the Donbas long before February 2022. In total, the Ukrainian army comprised about 700,000 soldiers at that time. The Russian forces consisted of about 100,000 soldiers and about 80,000 militiamen from the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. The personnel inferiority of the Russian army was offset by mobility and the creation of local and temporal superiority.

The speaker specified that the Russian thrust to Kiev took place in order to tie down the Ukrainian forces there, thus keep them away from the southeast. It was not the goal of this thrust to conquer the capital, as the Western mainstream media claimed. Russia deployed far fewer forces near Kiev than in the Donbas.

“Demilitarisation” and “denazification”

From the very beginning, the Russian army's actions had not been designed to gain the maximum amount of territory, but had always corresponded to the two officially declared goals: demilitarisation and denazification.

These goals had not been understood in the West. *Demilitarisation* for Russia meant neutralising the threat to the Donbas. The ongoing shelling of civilians, infrastructure, and social institutions had to be prevented.

Denazification meant neutralisation of the volunteer neo-Nazi combat groups of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and legal processing of their crimes. These volunteers had been hired by the Ukrainian Armed Forces immediately after the Euromaidan to compensate for the low combat strength of the regular armed forces.

The statement that these groups were neo-Nazis was meticulously substantiated by Baud – with Western source material! The unifying characteristic of these groups was their pronounced hatred of Russians, their racist ideology of a pure Ukrainian race, which was directed against all other Ukrainian minorities such as Hungarians, Romanians, etc., the glorification of violence and an admiration for the Third Reich.

Neo-Nazis trained by Western militaries

Ironically, parts of these neo-Nazi groups had long been trained by Western militaries in the USA, in Canada, France and Great Britain. In the U.S., intelligence agencies warned that these

neo-Nazis could also become active in their own country (Charlottesville attack 2017). Militarily, these “troops” would not be maneuverable. They would be deployed in villages and towns. As a result, the fighting would be tougher and more static. To outsiders, he said, the neo-Nazi units were clearly recognisable by their tattoos – as seen when they surrendered at the Azov steel plant in Mariupol.

Weapons deliveries have no decisive effect

In 2014, many Russian-speaking Ukrainians were still serving in the Ukrainian army; the army's fighting morale was not very high because these troops did not want to fight their fellow citizens. In the first weeks of the war in February and March 2022, this led to entire Ukrainian units joining the resistance in the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics with their equipment.

In the south of Ukraine, large parts of the population now welcome the Russians. In these regions, 16 new volunteer brigades were formed to support the Russian-speaking coalition, consisting of the Russian army and the militias of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics.

As a consequence, the Russian army is gradually disbanding the Ukrainian army by military means. Thus, the forces of the Russian-speaking coalition are gradually destroying the Ukrainian armed forces. The Ukrainian army, which was poorly led and did not master the art of operational maneuvering, committed the same mistakes as in 2014 and was unable to fight effectively. But each additional day meant more deaths, more suffering, and more destruction.

In March, Zelensky's proposals for negotiations had been positively received by the Russians. However, they were actively and deliberately sabotaged by the EU and the UK. No sooner had the Ukrainians expressed interest in negotiations, as they had in February, than *Ursula von der Leyen*, the president of the European Commission, promised Kiev massive arms deliveries. British Prime Minister *Boris Johnson* personally travelled to Ukraine to prevent negotiations and fuel the war with new arms deliveries.

Europe is acting “idiotically”

Summing up, Jacques Baud pointed out that Western decision-makers were misjudging the situation. Seen from the outside, they had acted “idiotically”: Arms deliveries have no decisive ef-

fect and only tempt Ukraine to prolong a costly war. For its part, the EU has missed the opportunity to play an arbitrator's role; instead, it has acted as an actor in this conflict. The sanctions it has imposed on Russia tend to turn against itself. Crisis management has been impulsive and emotional, lacking detachment, deliberation, and a medium- and long-term vision.

Russia's security interests are ignored

Gabriele Galice,** peace researcher and president of the *Geneva Institute for Peace Research* GIPRI, took a look at the history of the Ukraine conflict since the fall of the Berlin Wall. At the outset, he noted that it is always necessary to get to know the history and attitudes of all parties involved in order to find ways out of a conflict.

NATO expansion to the east contrary to all agreements

Contrary to all agreements made with the Soviet Union and Russia in 1989/90, NATO has gradually extended its sphere of influence beyond Germany's borders to the east, all the way to the Russian border. The driving force behind these expansions was the USA. With this approach, Russia's security interests had been deliberately ignored time and again. Finally, the disregard of the *Minsk Agreement II*, which was negotiated under international law within the framework of the UN, has become an existential threat for Russia. In December 2021, the Russian government had called on the United States and NATO to provide security guarantees, which they ignored.

Brzezinski and Friedman as ideological "masterminds"

Gabriele Galice introduced two influential ideological "masterminds" of this aggressive U.S.

***Gabriele Galice* is an economist and political scientist. He is president of the *Geneva Institute for Peace Research* (GIPRI). He has taught at a university in Algeria and headed educational and advisory missions in post-communist countries in Eastern Europe in the 1990s. His two major works are "Du Peuple-Nation – essai sur le milieu national de peuples d'Europe" (2002), in which he examined the formation of national identities in Europe, and "Penser la République, la guerre et la paix sur les traces de Jean-Jacques Rousseau", on Rousseau's understanding of the state. He has also published numerous articles on NATO, war and peace, and Ukraine.



Gabriele Galice at the meeting on 29/30 July 2022.

policy against Russia: *Zbigniew Brzezinski* and *George Friedman*. Brzezinski, advisor of many U.S. presidents, outlined a strategy to control Eurasia. A central point of this strategy is the control of Ukraine ("The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives", 1997).

Friedman, in turn, emphasised the goal of preventing cooperation between Germany and Russia in order to remain world power number one itself ("The Next Decade: What the World Will Look Like", 2010). The U.S. approach of the past decades, he argued, was in line with the intellectual precepts of these two influential "masterminds" and could explain the U.S. approach to Russia in Ukraine.

Following Jacques Baud's contribution, Gabriele Galice referred to the continuity of Nazi and neo-Nazi movements during and after the Second World War in various European states, which are often ignored but are now virulent.

USA – permanent war for its own supremacy

In a broader exposition, Gabriele Galice drew on a publication by two Chinese military experts. (*Qiao Liang* and *Wang Xiangsui*, "Unrestricted Warfare", 1999. See also: *Swiss Standpoint*, 9 August 2022) The authors predict an expansion of warfare into non-military domains, toward permanent targeted combat in the domains of economy, technology, and communication.

Building an international security architecture

Instead of working toward an international security structure after the fall of the Berlin Wall or the Iron Curtain and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, as prepared in the CSCE negotiations, the U.S. pursued the goal of expanding its supremacy and placed its own "vital" interests

above the interests of all other states. In doing so, their actions formed a line: NATO's eastward expansion, the wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and the "colour revolutions" in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. Problematically, the U.S. did not shy away from trying to establish NATO as the military arm of the UN in 2008. Since 2011, however, its actions in the UN have again been slowed by vetoes from China and Russia.

Cuba still independent 60 years later

Gabriel Galice reminded the audience that even after 60 years, the U.S. has not succeeded in bringing about "regime change" in Cuba. This could give cause for confidence. Today, he said, it is still a matter of exerting influence on decision-makers and actively working for peace and security. To this end, the elected representatives of the people must also be held more accountable.