

# “Rethinking War”

by Stefan Hofer,\* Switzerland

When the Russian army took military action against Ukraine in February 2022, after Ukraine had refused to agree with Russia's demands

- Ukraine's renunciation of NATO membership
- No bases of NATO or other foreign armies on the territory of Ukraine
- No stationing of NATO weapons on the territory of Ukraine
- Disarmament of the fascist Azov Brigades
- Safeguard the rights of the Russian population in Donbass through immediate full implementation of the Minsk Agreement<sup>1</sup>

and even negotiate, an outcry went through the Western mainstream media: the use of military force to enforce political demands is an incredibly unacceptable crime in this day and age.

In the tone of outrage, it was claimed that for the first time since the Second World War, a sovereign state in Europe had been attacked militarily in violation of international law. The bombing of Serbia by NATO, which violated international law, to force the separation of Kosovo from Serbia was forgotten.

The fact is, however, that the USA, as the leading western power, as well as other NATO states have carried out a number of military operations since the Second World War in order to assert their claims to power and economic and political interests, and have also waged wars lasting several years costing millions of lives.

Without claiming to be exhaustive, reference should be made to the Algerian War, the Vietnam War, the Iraq War, and the military interventions in Syria and Libya. The years-long bombing of North Vietnam, the Iraq War and the bombing of targets in Serbia, Libya and Syria were contrary to international law, but this hardly bothered the Western mainstream media. In each case it was argued that it was a military intervention to enforce human rights. Regarding the bombing of Serbia, it was even claimed that it was necessary

to prevent genocide against the Albanian population in Kosovo.

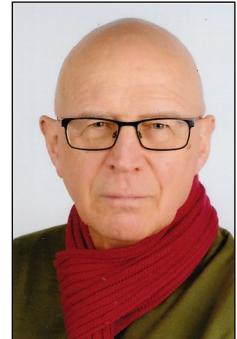
When the war in Ukraine is reported in the mainstream media, they always talk about the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. When reporting on the Iraq War and the bombing of Serbian cities, one looks in vain for the term “war of aggression”.

It is obvious that it makes a crucial difference in perception and assessment whether a military intervention or war is led by the USA and NATO or by Russia. In an editorial in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ), which can be described as an important mouthpiece of the US-led West, editor-in-chief *Eric Gujer* writes with brazen candour on February 10, 2024 under the title “Rethinking the War”:

“For a long time, the United States and its allies believed they could choose conflicts. The West dominated and intervened where it pleased. The battlefield held few surprises for the Western armies. They set the pace and the location.”

The editor-in-chief of the NZZ hit the nail on the head. What infuriates the Western mainstream media is not the fact that a war is being waged in Ukraine, but the fact that Russia, with its military action, has pre-empted the West, which was preparing a military attack to recapture Crimea and the areas in Donbass that had constituted themselves as independent people's republics.<sup>2</sup> The war was planned by the West and preparations were underway. But what angers the West is the fact it can no longer dominate this military conflict at will, as it did in the years after 1990, and can no longer dictate the terms of peace according to its interests, which is an expression of the geopolitical balance of power that has changed since 1990.

The Western capitalist world order, which describes itself as values-based, is dominated by the USA as the hegemonic power. In addition to the US Army, their military instrument of power is NATO.



Stefan Hofer.  
(Picture ma)

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Since the Second World War, the West's claim to world domination has always been enforced by all possible means (economic sanctions and trade embargoes, massive influence on elections, organizing, supporting and financing coups and, as a last resort, direct and, if necessary, the most brutal use of military force).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world power strategists of the USA and NATO believed that there was no longer any serious countervailing power and that they could now assert their economic and power-political interests throughout the world without being restricted or limited by a countervailing power. This was also the message of the Iraq war and the bombing of Serbia: We now determine everywhere in the world where things go, what is permissible and what cannot be tolerated.

In the last 25 years, however, the hegemony of the USA has already been noticeably limited due to the great economic rise of the People's Republic of China. This is what the BRICS and the *Shanghai Organization* as well as the *New Silk Road* stand for.

The changed geopolitical balance of power means that the danger of a major world war threatening all of humanity is increasing because the USA could be tempted to stop the strengthening of the forces that are committed to a new multipolar world order to be reversed as long as they still consider themselves militarily superior.

In view of this serious threat of war, it is of the utmost importance today, regardless of ideolo-

gical and religious orientation, to gather and mobilize the forces that want to prevent war for a powerful commitment to disarmament and against war. A strong international peace movement against armament and war is needed.

The terrible war in Ukraine must be stopped with an immediate ceasefire and the immediate start of peace negotiations. The Zelensky decree, according to which Ukraine will not hold peace negotiations as long as Russian soldiers are still on Ukrainian territory (including Crimea), must be repealed.

The negotiated peace settlement must also take into account Russia's legitimate security interests and the rights and will of the Russian-speaking population in Crimea and Donbass, which means that Ukraine must not join the anti-Russian NATO and must not have troops or bases on its territory of NATO states and that the residents of the Russian-speaking areas should be able to decide freely about their nationality.

Further arms and ammunition deliveries to Ukraine will prolong the war with even more dead and seriously wounded and even more devastation and destruction, without the Ukrainian army defeating the Russian army.

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

<sup>1</sup> About the war in Ukraine: Stefan Hofer. Swiss Standpoint, January 16, 2023  
<https://swiss-standpoint.ch/news-detailansicht-en-international/about-the-war-in-ukraine.html>

<sup>2</sup> Leo Ensel. On Volodymyr Zelensky's Decree No. 117 of March 24, 2021, *Infosperber*, December 16, 2022