

My Thoughts on the Ukraine and Russia Conflict

Shôn Ellerton, March 4, 2022

Here is a short account of my thoughts of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.



A good friend of mine once said to me in a thick Scottish accent whilst discussing tyrants and leaders around the globe. ‘You’re got to give China credit where it’s due. Keeping 1.4 billion people in check needs a strong leader’. He’s got a point.

Well. Here we are. 2022. On the verge of WWIII, Cold War 2, or perhaps, just another bad episode of history that will pass by like the Afghanistan debacle of 2021, although much of the media have pained it to the best of their abilities to keep this as low-profile as possible. After all, we don’t want to further Biden’s humiliation, do we? We’re talking about, of course, Putin’s attack on Ukraine.

Under normal circumstances, *any* news that diverts away from two years of constant COVID would have been welcomed, but this is most worrying. A popular meme on social media has been flying about with a cartoon COVID virus on legs walks out the door and through the other door walks in a cartoon ICBM waving his hand to say, hello. Certainly, the COVID ‘Karens’ are not welcoming the news, not so much for the truly bad news that the Ukraine/Russia conflict poses, but for the fact that their precious narrative on scaring everyone to submission that, unless we all mask up, vaccinate, scan, isolate and take precautions, we are going to kill granny. I took the contrarian position back in January to predict that all restriction removals, vaccine and face mask mandate reversals, abandonment of all testing regimes and vaccine passports, will occur around July 2022. With less than five months to go, it

seems that I'm on track. Thankfully, many regimes, businesses, and nation states have already gone down this path.

But what of Russia and Ukraine? Most anyone living in Ukraine, including Russians and those from other nations, are terrified of what's happening there. As for those in the far-flung corners of the world like Australia and New Zealand, millions of curious eyes are strained on TVs watching what could potentially be a real-world war whilst sitting in the surreal safety of an armchair. We all have our opinions and observations, but these are some of mine.

Let's start with a bit of geography as I've always been a geography nut since childhood and, having had family members that subscribed to National Geographic for many years, it was me that took out neatly folded beautifully produced maps and set them aside for my map collection. I have several boxes of maps from around the world covering practically every kind of map you can think of, not to mention a couple of globes. Many of these maps are pre-1991, meaning, of course, that it shows the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the USSR), a country in history that many of our newer generation *may* have heard of, but many not. My six-year-old son has a pre-1991 National Geographic World Map hanging in his room (only because I didn't have a more recent one of the same), and therefore, could be one of very few children who know what the USSR is, or was.

As for Ukraine, I doubt that many adults outside of Europe, prior to the Russian attack, would be able to point where it is on an unnamed outline map of the world, let alone know what its capital is. To me, it was always known as Kiev but for politically sensitive reasons, the news reports it as Kyiv, the Ukrainian way of pronouncing it, as Ukrainian was deemed to be the official language of Ukraine from 2019 rather than Russian. Doesn't mean we have to change the chicken dish name from Kiev to Kyiv. We didn't do that to Ceylon tea or Bombay duck, did we? I jokingly said that it was a good thing that I didn't throw away all those USSR maps if Putin gets his insidious ways!

Now, about the political differences and the history of Ukraine including how it came to be along with all the major events that occurred post-1991, I have very little knowledge of. I suspect that few outside of Eastern Europe, Russia, the former Soviet Republics, or those who haven't been into its history would have much in-depth knowledge either. I do know that the history between Ukraine and Russia including all the events around the Crimean Peninsula, the politics

around NATO and the western nations and the situation of the pipeline distribution into Europe is complicated. My father, an enigma of a man who I found out in recent years that he speaks fluent Russian and carries a Russian passport, once said to me ten years ago that war between Russia and Ukraine is probably very likely and explained the reasons go beyond the simple manifestations of power-crazed dictators. I clearly wasn't paying much attention because I've forgotten what he said!

As for culture, it's unlikely that visitors are going to notice much difference between the two. I wouldn't. If I was suddenly dropped into a Ukrainian or Russian country town, I doubt that I would be able to tell between the two. The language. They both *sound* kind of Russian if Russian isn't a language you know. They both use the Cyrillic alphabet, and this is the funny thing. Many not familiar with the Russian family of languages mistakenly assume that when they see a sentence composed of words in Cyrillic alphabet, they assume it's Russian, little realising that around fifty other countries use it including Serbia, Turkmenistan, and Bulgaria.

The other thing about Ukraine and the Russians from an outsider's perspective is that they don't like each other very much in general. I've made this mistake before and, whilst trying to impress, cowered away in embarrassment when I spoke *very* basic Russian to someone who not only came from Ukraine but disliked the Russians intensely. He spoke several other languages other than Ukrainian, Russian, and English. Heck. Many of us make this mistake with Americans and Canadians, although it's a pity we can't distinguish them by watching if their heads become detached when they talk as in the animated show, South Park!

How are we interacting socially and in the news with the Russian attack on Ukraine? Take social media. Social media is bombarded with memes, tweets and posts proclaiming that Ukraine is good, Russia is bad. This can be damaging rhetoric and recalls those cases of assault and bully tactics given to Asian people by ignoramuses during the pandemic as if they're to blame for the spread of the virus. Recently, there was a case of windows being smashed at the Russia House Restaurant in Washington DC, although the owner declines that it had anything to do with the Ukraine conflict. If we are not careful in moderating our binary views of the conflict, we could see a rise in anti-Russian sentiment. Thankfully, there is ample footage in mainstream media of ordinary Russians on the street protesting Putin's attack on Ukraine, an extraordinarily brave thing to

do I would surmise. Ultimately, it is the ordinary citizens, whether Russian or Ukrainian, who suffer, what looks like to be, the crazy whims of a despot suffering from small-man syndrome. Actually, I take that back. He's not crazy, but rather, very smart and calculating leader who wants his beloved Russian Empire to return in the vein of Peter the Great. However, Putin needs to be put back in his box as its grossly impolite to start taking over countries as if they're tokens on a Risk board game.

Social media has gone flippant and crazy with people spruiking up Ukrainian banners in their profiles and even going so far as to applaud when 9,000 Russian soldiers were killed by the Ukrainian army, as reported by The Telegraph during early March 2022. I find this all a little disturbing and recalls, once again, the infamous passages out of George Orwell's *1984* book when the teleprompter was barking to its citizens that Oceania's army has killed so many thousands of Eurasian soldiers while showing scenes of them on the telescreens being transported to the main square, in which they were summarily shot with machine guns or being hanged whilst onlookers were applauding and cheering. A thoroughly disgusting display of mankind's predilection of cruelty and vengeance.

As predictable as can be, Europe persuaded big tech to ban news broadcasts from Russian networks such as RT and Sputnik. Naturally, this casts a greater sense of suspicion from those who have lived through two years of the same propaganda and censorship spewed by mainstream networks through the pandemic. These days, much of the population have very little confidence in mainstream, or legacy, news networks anymore. Not surprisingly, podcasts with honest conversations like Joe Rogan, have been making quite a hit much to the chagrin of the mainstream brainwashed.

As for our world leaders, let's just line up Biden, Xi Jinping, and Putin together. No doubt, Biden is, by far the weakest leader every to be in the office of president in the United States in modern times. His poll ratings reflect this accordingly as well. Honestly, I don't think the United States is geared up to take any action with Biden at its helm, and many around the globe share the same sentiment. The United States with its exceptionally low level of patriotism and utter discord and pandemonium within its state and federal political parties makes ripe pickings for other world leaders with grandiose plans to expand their territories. Trump, despite his terrible rhetoric and 'stupid' moments, such as flashing a Bible whilst walking from the White House to a nearby church, re-

enacting capital punishment in Federal prisons, and generally, being buffoon-like in nature, was not a bad international statesperson. His peace agreements in the Middle East were notable but, predictably, this was swept under the carpet or distorted by the media. Whereas Biden refuses to engage directly face to face with the enemy, Trump did. He took the Machiavellian or Sun Tzu approach of 'keeping your enemies closer to you than your friends'. It seems that grandstanding and imposing economic sanctions, which, by the way, never work, is the way the Biden administration and some other nations of the world are following. Much of the press are so *still* fixated on Trump that they took snippets of words saying that he called Putin a genius. Naturally, this was an excerpt taken from a much longer speech, which, without hearing in its entirety, has been grossly misconstrued by many. In a nutshell, I highly doubt that the Afghanistan Debacle and the Ukraine Conflict would have taken place under Trump's administration. Consequently, Biden supporters and Trump haters have become somewhat quiet these days, because, deep down, many of them know this to be true as well.

Stepping back in time, those of us who have lived through the 80s during their earlier years, especially from the deep interior of the United States, where I grew up, will remember what it's like during the last years of the Cold War. Memories spring into action. Reagan, Missile Command, *War Games*, *Red Dawn*, NORAD, *Russians* by Sting, and many more aspects of political and social life. We all knew that if one ICBM fitted with a nuclear warhead was launched, others would follow, and that would be that. Literally. No country armed with nuclear warheads would benefit from a nuclear strike because nobody would be left if an all-out nuclear war prevailed. Think of Nevil Shute's novel, *On the Beach*. After all, what would be the point of annihilating a city if you then cannot occupy it? So, as much as the fear is palpable as far as a threat of nuclear strike is concerned in today's Russia/Ukraine conflict, and if we can take a leaf from the past, it is unlikely that we will have to be concerned with a nuclear attack. Putin is not mad or insane. Conventional warfare, as damaging and horrible as it is, will most likely continue to prevail as it already has extensively this century in the Middle East including Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. Frankly, I am surprised that we haven't had a nuclear bomb strike from an extremist group harbouring no value in humanity, but I guess making a nuclear bomb is, thankfully, quite a difficult thing to do. I did read something fifteen years ago or so that someone in a New York City apartment was nearing

accumulating enough nuclear material to get to critical mass, which made a bit of a stir in the press when he was found out by the local authorities.

Perhaps the most damning aspect we can take away from all this is knowing that more could have been done by the West to prevent this from occurring. Just over a year in with the Biden administration, the United States had made a complete mockery of itself by focussing on petty internal issues that divided the nation and fomented mistrust between its government and the people.

Democrats and Republicans at each other's throats. COVID aside, there have been crazy abortion laws. Re-introduction of capital punishment for federal prisoners. Opening borders to illegal aliens. Critical Race Theory. BLM and Antifa protests and riots. George Floyd. Systemic racism. Trump Derangement Syndrome, Voting accessibility. And of course, we can't forget about January 6th, the insurrection at the Capitol, an event indelibly etched into every anti-Trumper and of the pull-out of Afghanistan, an event in which any sane leader with a fit state of mind would have ensured that the military be the *last* to leave.

Many seem to have forgotten that while this was happening, beady eyes from other nations with very different ideologies and power plays to hand have watched with glee, salivating at the thought of the progressive, weakened, and woke West collapse like the proverbial bull awaiting the matador's final cut of the sword. There has also been the high posturing by such governments like Australia accusing China of human rights, notably that of the plight of the Uighurs. Sowing seeds of hate of a very well-needed trading partner into the minds of the Australian population is a very bad move indeed. Will Xi Jinping lose sleep knowing that the Australian media are spreading anti-Chinese sentiment? Eh? I don't think so! I don't think Putin is either to be honest.

I'm not particularly worried about nuclear threat but I am worried about the echo chambers on social media proclaiming that Russians are monsters and are our enemies. This is terribly damaging and unnecessary. My grandfather, who was a scientist in Germany, emigrated to England to work for General Electric. He was involved with a number of quite significantly important projects in Nazi Germany including the heavy water project in Sweden and the attempt to create nuclear fission using high-voltage electricity. Thankfully, they didn't succeed! Did he like the Nazis? No. He hated them. But he needed a job and had plans to emigrate as soon as possible as did many of Germany's brilliant scientists. He was welcomed by his new co-workers in Chelmsford and quickly introduced into the English language and its humour. However, there were a lot of, mainly

uneducated and untravelled population, who hated the Germans at every level. They wouldn't eat German products. They wouldn't buy a German car. In general, the stupid masses hated anything German. It is absolutely a form of racism fomented largely by divisive media aimed at those who are uninformed of alternative news sources or are too stupid or obstinate to understand taking the position of someone being in the shoes of a German living in a foreign country in which the leader in their home country is enacting atrocity and acts of terror and inhumanity. If there's one film everyone should *now* watch is *All Quiet on The Western Front*. The 1930s or the, more recent, 1978 version will suffice. The story is taken from the viewpoint of an ordinary German soldier during WWI, and it is a tragic story indeed. Those who applaud when they read the news that the Ukrainian army dispatched 9,000 Russian soldiers should seriously re-align their moral compasses. It is, however, exceedingly distressing when civilians are caught in the crossfire of war. Again, I firmly believe all this could have been avoided if we had the right world leaders at the helm, which we certainly do not.

Now let's move on to something else. Enter today's snowflake society where *everything* has to be boycotted because it's causing offence. OK. Sport. Again, I hate when sport and politics get intertwined. When sports players display their so-called moral rectitude by taking the knee at soccer matches, this is a prime example of moral grandstanding and virtue signalling. I don't like and it shouldn't be necessary. With the Ukraine situation and of others similar in the past, we have or had athletes who have trained their whole lives to become sports legends only to find that they are not allowed to participate because of the actions of their governments. Sports is supposed to bring people *together*. Take the South Korea and North Korea football matches for example. During the last Cold War, proud Americans and proud Russians would go face-to-face in battle to compete in their sport, and by golly, did they how. There were many an ice hockey game played against Czechoslovakia and the USSR with much blood spilled on the ice. Olympic players from both sides of the Iron Curtain would play with their utmost of their power and ability to win. Even really serious chess matches were played between the USA and the USSR during the height of the Cold War. But these days, we have a festering blizzard of snowflakes who refuse to play against a political enemy. I can't understand this at all. Perhaps they need to see that old 70s classic, *Rollerball!*

A couple of other stories portraying immaturity, stupidity, shallowness, and moral high virtual signalling. First, of various liquor stores to destock their shelves of Russian vodka despite the fact that they already bought it. Second, the employee of a Russian drugs and arms dealer on an expensive yacht in which that employee, despite working for him for ten years knowing that his employer was a drugs and arms dealer, miraculously starts to show his moral rectitude by trying to sink his boat. Folks, this is just utter stupidity and herdlike, brainwashed, mentality. Someone hires you for money, you either damned well work for that person and if you don't like that person, then resign and get another job. I was thinking of the White House spokeswoman, Jen Psaki. She's got one crappy job in my opinion. She might have her own thoughts on what she believes in, but her job is to be the mouthpiece of the White House and she is paid accordingly. If she suddenly believes that the administration is doing something which she personally hates, is she going to openly say this in public while employed? Of course not.

In sum, the situation in Ukraine is certainly not good, but many of us forget that other situations that have been taking place around the world in other countries are equally, if not more, dire as well. For example, the atrocities and horror occurring in countries like Yemen and Afghanistan have been neatly buried under the news from Ukraine. And prior to that, a pandemic which is on its last legs. And yet, much like the black squares of 2020, we have the yellow and blue banners springing up like wildfire on social media in solidarity of a cause. The most important thing we all need to exercise is rationality. We are running short of it to be honest. Our governments are promoting embargos and boycotts which only damage those who are trying to make a living. They don't work anyway, because there are always loopholes in the system. There are some who are determined to starve the Russian people out by supporting these embargos on the basis of forcing them to protest against its leader. This is utter tripe and madness, especially from those who are afraid to protest far more minor matters *in their own far more democratic country!* Those Russian protestors who are caught are not going to get a slap in the hand like they do in Australia or in the US. No siree! They may disappear from the face of the Earth for what we know. I'm very saddened to see such responses that the only way to beat Putin is to force its citizens to protest him by condoning damaging sanctions to Russia. What is the solution? I don't know, but we have crossed the Rubicon of being able to talk to our enemies like the previous US administration managed to do. We will have to take some form of action, but what kind of action is uncertain.

If we follow the paths of what we took back in 2014 when Russia annexed the Crimea under the Obama administration, probably nothing will happen, and Russia will claim its new prize with little resistance. Again.