

Back to the Battlefields? No.

By Constance Scrafield

Gwynne Dyer tells us that the United States has been sending arms to Ukraine but ?just eighteen 155mm. howitzers in April but stripped ...of the advanced computer systems that improve the weapons' efficiency and accuracy....[later sending] more howitzers (also without computers).?

We can definitely believe Mr. Dyer's reporting and tremble at his musing: ?There is reason to suspect...that the very slow drip-feed of American weapons to Ukraine is deliberate,...[intended] to keep the Ukraine government from winning too soon or too big...? suggesting both sides might exhaust themselves and finally ?arrive at some sort of compromise peace deal.?

Terrifying as this image is, what is likely worse is that, but for a very significant defeat, Putin will never allow Russia to become exhausted and will continue to direct the killing, destruction and now, the blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports from which ships are ready to transport grain to countries throughout Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

There is even concern now that Putin's Russia will expand its battleground into Europe ? talk of actual on-the-ground engagements, soldier to soldier ? just like the catastrophic wars of the 20th Century. Already, some aspects of the fighting in Ukraine have been compared to those ?bad old days? (my words) of World War I.

If a person were to claim that wars are always about something else rather than God or whatever, but actually about money, power, egomania, the ravings of Machiavellian politicians prepared to sacrifice untold thousands of people's happiness, homes and lives, that is surely true this time.

The attacks and wholesale murder of the citizens and cities of Ukraine have already been dubbed ?war crimes.? How much worse is the intentional withholding of food from being transported to millions of people who will starve without it. Putin's blockades are in retaliation to the sanctions against Russia, which are protests against his utterly indefensible invasion of Ukraine.

The leaders of every country that possess nuclear weapons are very well aware that they can never use them. The use of nuclear weapons is the end of the world and that is not overstating the consequences. If Putin sends bombs to destroy New York, he knows the US will manage to send the same package to Moscow. Before long, scientists assure us, the world will be gripped by a deadly nuclear winter from which only cockroaches and their kin will survive. Dogs won't; dolphins won't; we won't. Putin knows this: he would not survive ? nor his soldiers, nor his loved ones ? nobody.

Much as he has rattled that chain, Putin ? or his generals ? will never use it. When Trump blustered about bombing with ?nukes,? his generals quietly expressed the reassurance that the order ?to go? would be stopped by the generals calling it a clear sign of incompetence and that is what Russian generals would do too.

It is imperative that this escalation of military thought and planning be halted; that Putin be convinced he cannot continue in Ukraine; that he cannot begin in Europe. Europeans have understood the urgency to turn off the taps to Russian oil, scrambling to find alternatives in a clear statement that more severe sanctions may be the alternative to military action. These sanctions are very hard for Europe which imports from Russia as much as 40% of its needs for oil, something like \$1 billion a day, income for Russia and largely funding its war on Ukraine.

When Putin decided to invade Ukraine, how did he think the rest of the world would react? Did he believe they would simply express their regrets at the aggression but buy into his nonsensical story for why he was invading Ukraine?

Are all the reactions that most of the rest of the world has taken a surprise? Perhaps, he felt, as he is apparently so delusional that Russia's wealth and power is too imposing to be resisted. After all, when the United States invaded Iraq for reasons that were as

shaky as those Putin is presently promoting, not only were there no sanctions but the UK and other countries joined in that illegal and very damning attack and war.

Look: it is not only about the death, destruction and fear of more to come; the stomach-turning idea of this debacle spreading its poison back into Europe; it is that all this money and all this harm have taken our attention almost entirely away from the greatest danger of all ? the climate crisis we are facing.

This ongoing crime against the whole world cannot be allowed to linger and be fought for years. The time is finished when war can be encouraged for the benefit of armament companies or for whatever wealth or power - all those acquired illusions of what is desirable for the few.

That time is over. There is only the big picture left and in it must be found the most intelligent ? the masterful and least damaging ? way to end it. Surely, in all this world of seven billion people and counting ...there must be such wisdom.