

The European Security and Defence Union



War in Europe

Rethinking European defence
in a crumbling world order

GUEST COMMENTARY

“Le droit des peuples”*

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In the West, where we were lucky enough to live on the right side of the Iron Curtain, we still reason in traditional terms, focusing on relations between states, regularly making mistakes, but ignoring a fundamental fact that explains everything: the people.

In Eastern Europe, those who suffered the most from the Soviet occupation and tyranny, from the liberticidal and mortifying communist dictatorship, unanimously wanted to join the Western family to avoid the return of the terror that haunts each family, so many of them having been decimated.

It was not an American or European plot that led to the enlargement of NATO, it was the repulsion and fear inspired by a Russia that has never been able to bring communism and its crimes to justice.

Nuremberg made it possible to judge an ideology and condemn the Nazi executioners, to allow Germany to return to the concert of nations.

Neither communism nor Stalin have been tried and condemned for the millions of deaths and sufferings they caused. Putin is only their grandson, the unlikely survivor of a security apparatus that has taken over the world's largest country and plundered it.

The Russian people are being held hostage by a few rather pathetic oligarchs and thieves who have taken over their immense wealth.

The de-Stalinisation of Russia – right now the de-Putinisation – is much more necessary than the so-called denazification of Ukraine.

The history of Europe cannot be rewritten by Russian revisionist dictators. Nobody can ignore the feelings of

the people. They voted for democratic regimes, which may seem imperfect but which are real paradises compared to today's Russia.

We must therefore recommend that only the Ukrainians decide their future.

And they will have strong and legitimate demands.

Neutrality, denuclearisation, non-membership of this or that alliance? The last time they accepted such conditions was in 1994 with the Budapest Memorandum, an international agreement signed by Russia, the United States, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, guaranteed by all members of the UN Security Council.

In return for recognition of its borders and a commitment to non-aggression, Ukraine agreed to part with the 1,900 Soviet nuclear warheads on its soil, which were repatriated and destroyed in Russia with US funding. We have seen what has happened to these “security assurances”, all of which were ignored by the signatories when Putin reneged on his word by attacking it militarily!

The Ukrainians will only agree to deal with the aggressor in the certainty that he will not return, such is the mark that Russia has left on the lands of Europe: blood, suffering and the horrors that Putin continues to spread.

So, they will resist to the end and they may well win because all their people are committed, they have the right to say what they want and what they do not want. In doing so, they are protecting a West that is very timid about having to do the same by assuming the risk of a conflict.

* *The right of the people*