

Ukraine Is Just the Beginning

The Geopolitical Consequences of the Special Operation Will Change the Entire View of the World

Konstantin Sivkov

Translation and Foreword by Lt. Col. Charles K. Bartles,
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The below article, authored by Konstantin Sivkov, “Ukraine is just the beginning: The geopolitical consequences of the special operation will change the entire view of the world,” was published in the March 28, 2022, edition of Voenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer, which, until it closed in March, was a prominent, conservative weekly newspaper focusing on military and defense issues.¹ Sivkov is a retired naval officer and General Staff Academy graduate who served in the Center for Military-Strategic Research of the General Staff from 1995 to 2007. He is also a Doctor of Military Sciences, and member of Russian Academy of Missile and Artillery Sciences, who has published over 200 articles dealing with the processes of armed struggle, the nature of modern wars and armed conflicts, and the organizational development of the Armed Forces. In addition, he is a cofounder and first vice president of the Academy of Geopolitical Problems, an independent non-governmental scientific organization specializing in military analysis.

It is important to note that Sivkov comes from the influential military-scientific community, which includes

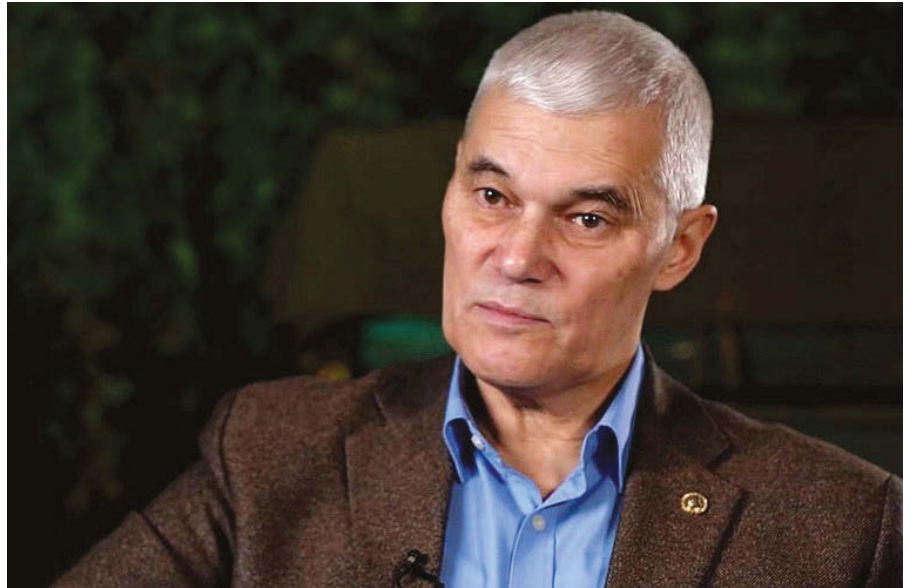
elements of the General Staff, the Russian Academy of Military Science, portions of academia, and Russian think tanks. This community is not only concerned with the research and development of militarily useful technologies; but also has a role in the development of Russian military strategy, operations and tactics; and understanding, and developing policy recommendations for geopolitical issues. Consequently, given Sivkov’s background, close government ties, and the severe penalties for criticizing Russia’s military or spreading “fake news” in Russia, it can safely be assumed that Sivkov’s article accurately reflects the Kremlin’s inner circle view in what is depicted as ‘big picture’ explanation of the ramifications of Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine in the context of a “global war” against the West led by the United States.

Sivkov starts by laying out the argument that Russia is opposed by a coalition of mostly Western client states, led by the United States. This understanding is certainly in line with other comments from the Russian leadership, as they view only a few states as truly sovereign, such as Russia,

China, and the United States, maintaining that smaller and/or weaker states must inevitably fall into the orbit of a greater power. Sivkov further posits that Russia is not just opposed by this coalition, but it has in fact been long at war, albeit a “hybrid” war, of economic and information means, though it has not yet entered a “shooting” war. Therefore, the Kremlin does not see the 2022 invasion of Ukraine as a local conflict between two nations, but as just a front of a larger war between Russia and the West, with Ukraine simply a Western proxy. This is the thinking behind cynical Russian statements such as “NATO will fight to the last dead Ukrainian.”

Perhaps most salient within Sivkov’s article is the explanation of the conflict between the West, Ukraine’s role in it, and the consequences for Russian success or failure of Russia’s current campaign. In general, the Kremlin sees its conflict with the West as between two competing world-views. The Western view (from the Kremlin’s perspective) is one of globalism with weaker nation states, global elites, and universal values. The Kremlin proffers a very different view, with a multipolar system (not dominated by the United States) that emphasizes state power, national elites, and traditional values. These positions are mutually exclusive—the success of one means the failure of the other. Sivkov explains that what happens in Ukraine will do much to strengthen one of these narratives, and weaken the other. Furthermore, the success of this campaign will just not result in the imposition of Russia’s will on Ukraine but will also further its narrative on the world. Therefore, the Ukrainian campaign is of paramount importance for the Kremlin and it will not be easily dissuaded from its objectives in Ukraine by either international or domestic pressure. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the article is that the Kremlin does not believe that the conflict will stop after the Ukraine situation is resolved. Instead, Ukraine is seen as just the beginning of possibly a much larger conflict between Russia and the West.

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Konstantin Sivkov (Photo courtesy of Reporter, en.topcor.ru)

Ukraine Is Just the Beginning: The Geopolitical Consequences of the Special Operation Will Change the Entire View of the World

The special operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Ukraine continues to develop. Serious shifts are taking place in the nature of the operational use of the Russian group of forces, indicating a qualitative change in the course of the armed struggle. Under these conditions, the question arises: what will happen next, will the West stop its pressure on Russia and start negotiations, as many Russians hope, or vice versa—will the pressure become even more fierce, will new armed conflicts arise?

Special Operation as Part of the Third World [War]

To answer these questions, one must turn to a military-political analysis of the situation, focusing on its key aspects, which make it possible to accurately identify relations between Russia and the united West.

First, it is noteworthy that the West acts as a single system. This is expressed by the fact that there is consistency both in actions and in time of all NATO countries led by the United States, as well as their allies in the Pacific Ocean—Japan and Australia, to exert a complex of measures to pressure the Russian Federation. This gives the basis to assert that Russia is opposed by a coalition of states, including one global center of power—the

United States, and a number of regional centers—Japan, Germany, and France. Thus, there is an open confrontation of the coalition at the head of one global center of power against another global center, the partners of which are not so numerous—Belarus is Russia’s open ally so far, but it tends to expand.

Third, the West is pursuing an extremely active foreign policy toward those countries that have a relatively neutral position to get them to join its coalition or at least prevent them from supporting Russian policy. Particularly great efforts are being made in the Chinese direction in order to achieve a split in the emerging Russian-Chinese alliance.



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Second, the set of measures taken by the West in confrontation with Russia can be attributed to open economic warfare. The EU has imposed almost the full range of the most serious sanctions that it can imple-

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ment. This was openly announced by Josep Borrell, President of the European Parliament. That is, there is a pressure, a characteristic of war, of all possible resources of the participating countries. So far, Russia has not really responded, excluding symmetrical and ineffective actions. However, Western sanctions have already inflicted serious economic losses on the EU and the United States, which threaten to turn into social problems in the future. Nevertheless, the expansion of sanctions pressure on secondary areas continues. This testifies to the extreme determination of the Western coalition, which is also one of the signs of war.

Fourth, the struggle of the Western coalition against Russia in the information sphere has all the characteristics of a period of war: bitterness, disregard for all norms of morality, massive influence, the use of short-term fakes that have operational or tactical significance but are not designed to have long-term consequences. Plus, the unity of the information plan in all of the media in the United States and NATO countries.

Fifth, the provision of full-scale military assistance, taking into account only critically important restrictions, to Ukraine, which is conducting an armed confrontation with Russia. In fact, the West cannot offer any other weapons than those that are currently supplied to Ukraine—only small-sized portable weapons systems. It does not make sense to supply larger and more complex items, since they will be quickly identified and destroyed, and the soldiers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine simply do not have time to master them—the size of the country’s territory and the pace of advancement of Russian troops and police units of the LPR [Luhansk People’s Republic] and DPR [Donetsk People’s Republic] do not permit it. At the same time, it is impossible to provide military assistance to Ukraine through the direct intervention of the armies of NATO countries in the Russian-Ukrainian armed confrontation due to the extremely high risk of the conflict going nuclear, or at least resulting in large losses of the alliance’s troops. Even the introduction of a no-fly zone can lead to unacceptable losses of NATO and U.S. aircraft due to the peculiarities of the operational-strategic situation and military-geographical conditions. Moreover, even with the obviously low

effectiveness of the current range of weapons, they continue to build up, indicating the desire of the West to prevent the complete defeat of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the current Nazi Ukrainian government at any cost. Thus, the nature of the actions of the Western coalition fully corresponds to a period of war.

a political settlement.” [In reference to <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/group-statement/the-expert-dialogue-on-nato-russia-risk-reduction-a-joint-appeal-for-a-ceasefire-and-risk-reduction/>] Under the current conditions, this is actually a demand for Russia’s surrender to Ukraine and the united West behind it.

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Sixth, it should be noted what are the decisive goals of the parties. The Western coalition pursues the goal of defeating Russia by initiating a coup in the country to eliminate the current government headed by President Putin, not ruling out the possibility of his physical destruction, and establishing undivided control of Russia by global and Western elites. On the part of Russia, the goal of the campaign is to disrupt attempts of the West and other world players to expand into the post-Soviet space. The elimination of the Nazi regime in Ukraine, which is the most immediate source of military and ideological threat in this context, is only part of the strategic task. The resoluteness of the opposing sides’ goals is an important sign of the state conflict between them.

Seventh, regardless of the outcome of the confrontation between the Western coalition and Russia, there will be a radical reshaping of the system of regional relations, and even the geopolitical picture of the world, which is also a sign of war, and a large-scale war at that.

Finally, one cannot fail to mention the unprecedented activity of the “fifth column,” which began to act almost openly, condemning and sabotaging the actions of the president and the Russian Armed Forces. Suffice it to recall the escape from Russia under various pretexts of various “stars” and “outstanding businessmen,” as well as the “The Expert Dialogue on NATO-Russia risk reduction: a joint appeal for a ceasefire and risk reduction” dated March 2–3 this year, wherein the first paragraph explicitly stated, “All parties should immediately and unconditionally agree to a ceasefire, take coordinated measures to de-escalate the situation, and negotiate

Thus, we can safely say that Russia is currently at war with the united West. This is a war of a different nature than those that took place in the twentieth century. It cannot be declared because in essence it is a classic hybrid one, from the side of the West: Russia in Ukraine, conducting a special military operation, has not yet begun a large-scale application of measures typical of a hybrid war. After all, even gas continues to flow to Europe, including through the GTS [gas pipeline] of Ukraine. The scale of this hybrid war with the West suggests that it has all the hallmarks of a world war: the presence of opposing coalitions led by global centers of power that have entered directly into a military confrontation, albeit it just in the economic and information spheres, the resoluteness of goals, the use of all possible means of confrontation, refusal to comply with peacetime legal norms with the transition to the principle of military expediency practically on a global scale, drawing most countries of the world into the conflict according to the principle “if not with us, then against us.” That is, we are talking about the beginning of the third world war, which is still taking place in a refined hybrid form—the Western coalition conducts armed confrontation using its proxies—the Armed Forces of Ukraine, in a limited TVD [theater of operations] within Ukrainian territory, while conducting full-scale global economic and information warfare against our country.

One may object that it is too early to talk about a world war. Well, let’s compare the current world situation with the beginning of World War II. It began on September 1, 1939, with the attack of Nazi

Germany on Poland. France and Great Britain immediately declared war on the Germans, bound by an agreement with Poland. However, having declared war, they did not lift a finger to attack Germany from the West, where Hitler did not have combat-ready troops. Poland fought alone, without any help from

fairly high-ranking prisoners of war who voluntarily laid down their arms; the actions of Western elites that are completely meaningless from a military and economic point of view, such as the supply of S-300 air defense systems to Kiev from Slovenia or demands for Turkey to give S-400 air defense systems to Ukrainians; the

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its Western allies, even in the form of arms supplies. The only thing the British and French did was start an economic blockade of Germany. Doesn't it remind you of anything? In fact, the situation in the autumn of 1939 is structurally identical to the current one: the three leading geopolitical centers of that time officially entered the war—Germany on the one hand, and Great Britain and France on the other; battles took place only in Poland, where the Wehrmacht was opposed by the Polish Armed Forces, which can be considered as a proxy for Western powers. Only the interests differed: at that time, France and Great Britain were interested in defeating Poland so that their higher-level proxies—Hitler could attack the USSR, and so today for the united West, the defeat of Nazi Ukraine would mean a heavy strategic defeat. So, February 24, 2022, military historians of the future may well recognize the date of the start of the third world war.

What's Next?

Based on such an understanding of the essence of the current historical moment, it is possible to predict the development of the world geopolitical situation and the direction of the strategic efforts of the warring parties. It must be stated that if we consider the purely military aspect of the special operation in Ukraine, then the defeat of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the entire Nazi government is predetermined in a fairly short time. There are many signs of this. Among them are changes in the way Russian aviation is employed; the appearance of

frankly decadent speeches of the leadership of Ukraine and a number of others. Under these conditions, only political betrayal can prevent the complete defeat of the Ukrainian Nazi regime, if the “fifth column” manages to achieve a cessation of hostilities before the Armed Forces of Ukraine are utterly defeated and compelled to complete and unconditional surrender.

However, regardless of the outcome of the special operation in Ukraine, the war of the Western coalition against Russia will continue to escalate—the Western and global elites cannot stop without defeating Russia or suffering a final defeat in this war. After all, at stake is the shape of the future world, of which there are only two variants. One proclaimed Klaus Schwab—the mouthpiece of the globalists. It has no place for states and national elites—the world is controlled by transnational corporations and is actually privatized by them. An alternative to it is the concept of a multipolar world proclaimed by our president last year at the Davos forum and subsequent key international summits, where states remain the subjects of world politics, and there is no place for the global power of transnational corporations and the corresponding elites.

These two options are mutually exclusive. The victory of one of them means the inevitable collapse, death, at least political and economic sense, and the disappearance of the bearers and beneficiaries of the alternative option into history. Therefore, the struggle has an extremely tough character, when all means are used that can be used without risking their own immediate death. For Western and global elites, the central task on

this path is the defeat and subjugation of Russia since it is so far the only leader who has proclaimed an alternative world agenda to globalism. Russia has a nuclear potential capable of physically destroying the global elites and the entire Western world. Without the unification of Russian and American nuclear potentials under the

Therefore, further escalation of tension in the world, especially military, will increase, and we can expect the next stage of the initial period of the third world [war]. Its main content, most likely, based on the expected global balance of power following the results of the special operation in Ukraine, will be the final

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control of the globalists, it is impossible to bring China to its knees. Therefore, the defeat of Russia by initiating a revolution in it in the next few years (two to three years) is a vital task for the globalists and the current Western elites.

The defeat of Nazi Ukraine will mean the collapse of the entire strategy built by the West and the globalists over the last twenty years. The consequences of this defeat could be catastrophic for the globalists and have a geopolitical scale. Signs of this are already manifesting themselves today in the emerging rapprochement between the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia with Russia, China's tough position on the Ukrainian issue, Venezuela's demand to recognize Maduro as the country's legitimate president as a condition for starting negotiations with the United States on oil supplies, and a number of other similar manifestations that indicate a loss of authority of the U.S. and the West in the general world order. The result of the defeat of Nazi Ukraine will be a sharp drop in American and, in general, Western influence in the world, which will have the most severe consequences for the economy. Under these conditions, revenge for the Ukrainian defeat may become the main leitmotif of U.S.-European geopolitics.

In turn, the termination of the special operation with the preservation of the current regime, even with a host of various treaty guarantees, will mean a military defeat for Russia. And the consequences of this will be very severe, primarily in the domestic socio-political situation. Such a step will have a negative impact on the international position and status of our country.

division of the states of the world into opposing coalitions, economic and information confrontation, as well as the creation of zones of armed confrontation between irregular formations and regular armed forces of countries that are proxies of the leading centers of power. In each of the coalitions, a core will be clearly identified, which will include the leading centers of power with their closest allies, who strictly pursue a common policy and actively participate in the struggle, and the periphery—countries that support this coalition but only participate in its actions to a limited extent. The core of the Western coalition will be the United States and Britain, and probably France, Germany, and Turkey. The periphery will be made up of the rest of the EU countries, oriented toward Western civilization or the states of Latin America, the Middle East and Africa dependent upon them. The core of an alternative coalition could be Russia, Belarus, and China, and probably North Korea and Iran. The periphery can be made up of the rest of the CSTO countries, as well as the countries of the regions mentioned above, oriented toward Russia and China, in particular Syria.

Within the framework of this stage, the Western coalition will focus its main efforts on solving the problem of the final defeat of Russia by initiating an unconstitutional change of power with the subsequent control of it. To this end, an unlimited economic and information war will continue, combined with attempts to create centers of internal and external armed conflicts and even local wars on the territory of our country or near its borders. Possible areas where the Western

coalition may try to initiate military conflicts may be in Russia, in the areas adjacent to Ukraine; in the North Caucasus; in depressed regions, as well as in the regions of the Russian Federation with a significant Islamic population. Possible zones of external military conflicts that our country could be drawn into could be Ukraine,

conflicts between countries that are on the periphery of opposing coalitions are also likely to escalate.

In terms of duration, this period of the third world war can range from one to three years. It will end with the formation of opposing coalitions and the emergence of clear zones of armed confrontation, where

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where the West will try to deploy and support the Bandera movement; Central Asian countries with unstable regimes or territorial claims to their neighbors, as well as those bordering Afghanistan. Under certain conditions, the most important of which may be the termination of the special operation without achieving the stated goals, one cannot rule out U.S. attempts to push Japan toward a military solution to the problem of the northern territories.

Russia will most likely be forced to take radical economic measures against the EU, up to a complete shutdown of energy supplies and other raw materials, while simultaneously resolving the tasks of parrying the threats posed by the Western coalition, paying special attention to the military ones. China, subject to a weakening U.S. position in the world and the decrease in the integrity and economic potential of the NATO bloc will be the result of sanctions on Russia, can opt for a forceful solution to the Taiwan problem. Against this background, one should expect a sharp increase in military tension around Iran. In Latin America and Africa,

conditions will be created for the start of direct armed confrontation between the armies and navies of the leading world powers. The beginning of this period will put the world on the brink of nuclear war.

And it can be assumed with a high probability, that with the emergence of a more or less large-scale precedent of conflict between the armed forces of the United States, China, and Russia, steps will be taken to prevent further escalation by all conflicting parties. At the same time, this stage of the third world war may end in connection with the withdrawal from the Western coalition of the world's leading center of power—the United States. This is possible as a result of an internal conflict that is growing in American society, expressed in the confrontation between the national and globalist elites. It may enter an acute phase after the autumn elections, when the U.S. will plunge into solving internal problems, which may lead to a decrease in international tension and the beginning of a de-escalation of the confrontation between Russia and the Western coalition. ■

Note

1. Konstantin Sivkov, "Украина—только начало: Геополитическим последствием спецоперации станет изменение" [Ukraine is just the beginning: The geopolitical

consequences of the special operation will change the entire view of the world], *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer*, 28 March 2022, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/66370>.