

Nonkilling Political Reflections: the sham of non-existence and the Russo-Ukrainian War of 2022

By Clay Edwards*

What should greatly concern us, in my view, is that US President Biden hit the impotence of our security structures squarely when he declared that Russian President Putin should not be in power. The use of the word "power" in regard to Russian President should be clarified.

I would argue that Putin is as powerless as Biden, NATO and the UN - the entire international community, by the standard that Haile Selassie of Ethiopia speaking to the League of Nations when Italy invaded Ethiopia under flimsy pretexts. That an attack on one is an attack on everyone and should be regarded as such. Much of what he said back in 1935 seems to fit the current situation Ukraine finds itself in. "In that unequal struggle between a Government commanding more than 42 million inhabitants, having at its disposal financial, industrial and technical means which enabled to create unlimited quantities of the most death-dealing weapons, and, on the other hand, a small people of 12 million inhabitants, without arms, without resources, having on its side only the justice of its own cause and the promise of the League of Nations.

What we have is strong wills clashing, instead.

It is one thing to generate things including materials or products that give us advantages in life, sometimes above others of the human family. It is entirely another to direct and redirect power, to give power to others and have it returned, which is really the essence of wielding power. This means the world is in a very dangerous predicament. Putin's rhetoric is a litany of excuses for his generating military action against Ukraine. Such is what Plato termed "bare rhetoric", talking about justice without instructing in justice. For Biden's part, he is also generating military action by proxy, equipping Putin's Ukrainian opponents. He says Putin should not be in power and at the same time is not prepared to exercise military force to mirror the Russian military effort in Ukraine. Our government has labeled Putin a war criminal, a legalistic term that says Putin is taking unfair advantage in open warfare. His claim in essence and the claim of NATO and allied countries and politicians and others is that it is unjust to employ military force against Ukraine and particularly unlawful use of military action against civilians. I think of the the US use of nuclear weapons against Japan and the fire bombings of Dresden and Hamburg where it seems the last instincts of decency were being sucked out of civilized society. The idea was to break the war effort insofar as civilians contribute to it. At the same time, it has been said that if the Russians had our planes and pilots during that war, they would have done the same thing to those cities and do it with joy, and not even half repay the

Germans for the destruction and loss of life in the Soviet Union generated by Hitler's military action.

At this time, people worry openly that Putin is looking for an excuse to use chemical and biological weapons and even tactical nuclear weapons against Ukraine, using his own military's failures in the field against Ukrainian forces to do so, and perhaps is looking for an excuse to turn his arsenal loose on the US, which I think he believes is Russia's chief tormenter. As I pointed out, instead of instructing each other in justice, it seems we are impotent in all the terrible technology of destruction we possess - a kind of genius and idiocy wrapped up together in some kind of attractive colors, enamels, plastics and metals. We are reduced to a simple question - does a fool do what he will or what he thinks best? I suspect it is the latter. Plato had Socrates sum up the problem of bare rhetoric:

Suppose that in a crowded market I should hide a dagger under my arm and then say to you: "Polus, I have just acquired, by a wonderful chance, the power of a despot; for if I should think fit that one of those people whom you see there should die this very instant, a dead man he will be, just as I think fit; or if I think fit that one of them shall have his head broken, broken it will be immediately; or to have his cloak torn in pieces, [469e] torn it will be: so great is my power in this city." Then suppose that on your disbelieving this I showed you my dagger; I expect when you saw it you would say: "Socrates, at this rate every one would have great power, for any house you thought fit might be set ablaze on these methods, and the Athenian arsenals also, and the men-of-war and all the rest of the shipping, both public and private." But surely this is not what it is to have great power—merely doing what one thinks fit. Or do you think it is? Has politics become an unknown art?

Certainly, the problem seems to be that a person who sees an advantage would believe he is doing well by acquiring and brandishing arms that are tools to execute his advantage as against other people. It seems we revisit Glenn D. Paige's funnel of killing paradigm side by side with the unfolding fan of nonkilling possibilities as the second paradigm (Glenn D. Paige, *Nonkilling Global Political Science*). In short, Putin and Biden seem to show us coming to the apex of a cruel hoax on humanity, in which it seems we can even be pleased by flattery in the so-called power of despots. We have the perfect excuse for the slaughters of history.

Yet justice like medicine is built on the notion of human need. Our souls need justice as the medicine for their torment. The soul, Plato urged is designed to withstand extremes of good and evil, all for justice. They are designed as masters of the body. That means they are capable of directing and redirecting power as well as generating the power to move things. To do as the despot proposes, or those who feel confined to deal on the level of the

despot is to merely be in motion, fast or slow, in spin, propagating faith in advantages over others, We don't move and the propaganda we associate with religions and arrangements of human government and doing business limit us unjustly in evil.. Movement is associated with life while motion and rest as motion are the province of doing nothing, of not existing and it seems we have put ourselves in a philosophical bind, of contriving non-existence as the human stock in trade, employing sophistry combined with habit and cookery to make a sham covering justice and medicine in political art. We know neither as we muck in the BS of division, separation of our souls from the bodies that animate. Thus, when we are captives of motion and rest, we behave despotically and do not grow in learning and understanding, as a pedagogical matter.

It is time we esteem everyone's existence or we denigrate everyone.

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