

Behind the Veil of Russia, Ukraine and the Global Power Struggle

The world has been watching the tragedy unfolding in Ukraine. The first war fought in the age of social media has given us an unprecedented real-time view as civilian targets are destroyed, questions of war crimes emerge and Vladimir Putin seems undeterred by nearly global condemnation.

Much debate has been had concerning what, if anything, could have prevented this unprovoked attempt to take over a European democracy. Whether or not the world should have seen this coming is unquestionable.

Ukraine's nuclear disarmament with the promise of Russia's respect for its independence and borders in 1994, Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008, its invasion and annex of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea in 2014, and the buildup and staging of troops on the border of Ukraine all occurred under the world's watchful eye. What could cause this kind of watchful blindness? Could it be our growing dependence on Russia for energy? According to Eurostat, in 2019, the EU imported 27% of its oil, 41.1% of its natural gas and 46.7% of its solid fuel from Russia. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Russian oil imports reached a record high in 2021. The Ukrainian President's pleas for help were only heard after the brutal invasion started.

Author Johnnie Dent Jr. is quoted as saying, "The bill for hindsight is much more expensive than the receipt for foresight." The cost is indeed high, and this bill is being paid in treasure and blood. Why is it that history is the teacher we seem incapable of learning from?

First Samuel 13:19a (NLT) says, "There were no blacksmiths in

the land of Israel in those days.” The complete absence of blacksmiths in Israel is only less surprising than the reason why. “The Philistines wouldn’t allow them for fear they would make swords or spears” (v. 19b). The enemy targeted one profession, one small sector of a nation’s economy. It’s not as if farmers couldn’t sharpen their sickles and plows or builders their axes. They went to Philistine blacksmiths.

Israel got itself into a position where they were paying a nation hostile to them for something they had the ability to provide for themselves. Sound familiar? The war against blacksmiths doesn’t seem that important until the day of battle. “So on the day of battle none of the people of Israel had a sword or spear, except for Saul and Jonathan” (v. 22). The day of battle is a bad time for an epiphany.

As Homer noted, “After the event, even a fool is wise.”

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