



Recalling speeches of President Putin as a basis for the future

An analysis of four speeches by President Putin between 2001 and 2022 show how important history is to him - and rightly so.

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Introduction

The last weeks, months and years have shown how NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, ex-Chancellor Angela Merkel, ex-President Hollande or, for example, on the Ukrainian side ex-President Poroshenko or the Ukrainian ex-Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, not to mention the current Ukrainian leadership, deal with law and history.

Their understanding of the legal system, which regulates the coexistence of societies, states and peoples, and their almost arbitrary interpretation of history, which is accepted without contradiction in the West, is frightening.

In retrospect, this official behavior justifies those who for years have massively criticized NATO and the West per se for their policies, especially, but not only, concerning Russia and Ukraine.

It does not bode well for the future of Western-style law and diplomacy.

UN, BRICS, SOC

In contrast to the West and its satellites - yes, whether one likes it or not, the term vassal seems appropriate - other states maintain a much more differentiated approach to the past. They include not only China, India or a few African states.

"When the UN's predecessor organization - the League of Nations - became incapable of acting, the cruelest armed conflict in human history to date began a short time later."

Even if there are no statistics for this, they are probably the majority of UN members, i.e. the majority of all states in general. These states, which undoubtedly include Russia, regard history as the sum of common histories of peoples and attach great importance to placing their actions in a continuity of what has been, taking into account lessons learned together - and not for the benefit of a small group of states.

In other words, they regard these values as a common heritage. Nothing else represents the UN Charter and the set of rules created around it, the so-called "rights-based order".

No doubt, the UN is currently in a deplorable state and there is much to suggest that it will not survive in its present form.

Nevertheless, it is the only common anchor that the states of the world have, even if something new is developing with BRICS and SOC.

Since there are forces that obviously want to privatize or even abolish the UN, one has to ask who benefits from this.

As a negative example, the WHO should be mentioned here. Once founded as an exclusively state-financed sub-organization of the UN, by far the largest financiers are now 100% privately organized structures. The consequences have become painfully apparent in recent years.

When the UN's predecessor organization - the League of Nations - became incapable of acting, the cruelest armed conflict in the history of mankind began a short time later. 50 million dead later, the founding of the UN represented one of the great lessons learned from this unimaginable slaughter.

As repeatedly mentioned on this blog, the danger is greater than it has been since 1945 that the world can once again become a scene of violence and misery on a large scale. This time, the opponents have at their disposal weapons and technologies, only partial knowledge of which made Einstein say the following:

"I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones"

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Russia's approach to history

Of the 50 million dead mentioned, 27 million were in the then Soviet Union alone. At that time, it had a total population of not even 200 million.

It is above all these staggering figures that have driven Russian President Putin during his 20 years in office in practically all of his major speeches, when he made references to history in them. He did not brandish these figures threateningly like a sword, but rather formulated them in an urgent, admonishing manner, always endeavoring, despite all difficulties, to seek and emphasize what unites us.

Based on the historical emphases Putin set in them, it is not difficult to read the respective state of relations with the West.

Let's take a closer look:

"Speeches by Russian politicians are not too difficult to understand. However, you have to read them and

want to understand them."

Putin's Speech in the German Bundestag on September 25, 2001

The first speech I would like to mention here is his appearance in the German Bundestag. He gave this [speech on September 25, 2001](#), not even two years after he took office.

Putin is a scholar of Germany. He reveres the German language and culture, which he freely admitted again and again on various occasions.

It can therefore be assumed that he prepared this speech with particular care. He packed everything positive he could find into this speech.

"This speech can be called the one in which Russia was the closest to Germany, to the West as a whole."

Starting from the terrible common history of two devastating wars against each other, which broke out despite the many commonalities in culture and economy, he spanned an arc over centuries, always emphasizing the common, the unifying, the possibilities, but without not remembering the painful sides.

There was no reproach, but the desire to build a common house of all states in Europe, regardless of all problems, resonated very openly:

"Not long ago, it seemed that a real common house would soon emerge on the continent, in which Europeans would not be divided into eastern and western, northern and southern. But such dividing lines remain, and that is because we have not yet finally freed ourselves from many stereotypes and ideological clichés of the Cold War."

**PRESIDENT PUTIN BEFORE THE GERMAN BUNDESTAG,
SEPTEMBER 25, 2001**

This speech can be called the one in which Russia was the closest to Germany, to the West as a whole.

Putin offered all-embracing cooperation in all fields and hoped for a common, peaceful, mutually successful future.

As a sign of his special appreciation for Germany, he delivered this speech almost exclusively in German.

Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007

Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007 also made history.

It is a special kind of contemporary history. In this speech, Putin anticipated future developments that were not yet tangible for many at the time.

It is no longer a question of what unites the two countries, which can itself be determined verbally. In Berlin, the word "together" occurred six times in a wide variety of contexts with positive connotations. In Munich, it occurred exactly once:

"Let's work on this together."

PRESIDENT PUTIN, MUNICH 2007

And that was on a draft treaty on avoiding the stationing of weapons in space. The topic was exclusively security, which Putin again saw endangered by the developments of the preceding years.

The word "monopolar" was used five times. And not once did it have a positive connotation: As an example, I would like to highlight the following passage:

"The history of humanity certainly has gone through unipolar periods and seen aspirations to world supremacy. And what hasn't happened in world history?

However, what is a unipolar world? However one might embellish this term, at the end of the day it refers to one type of situation, namely one centre of authority, one centre of force, one centre of decision-making. It is world in which there is one master, one sovereign. And at the end of the day this is pernicious not only for all those within this system, but also for the sovereign itself because it destroys itself from within."

PRESIDENT PUTIN, MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE, 2007

The political wind had completely changed. The events of 2008 - we mean here the Georgian war - confirmed the negative trend in their own way. I would like to remind that an official [investigation](#) of the EU concluded that [Georgia started this war](#).

Speech of February 21, 2022 on the occasion of the admission of Donetsk and Luhansk regions to the Russian Federation.

The last speeches in this series are the two that immediately preceded the special military operation in the Donbass and Ukraine.

First, the speech of [February 21, 2022](#), on the occasion of the admission of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions to the Russian Federation, and second, the speech of February 24, 2022, on the occasion of the beginning of hostilities in the Donbass and Ukraine.

Since both of them were held practically at the same time and by each other conditioned events, I would like to treat them here together. In both, history once again plays a paramount role.

Putin derives the historical decisions preceding the speeches at length from historical events.

In his speech on the absorption of Donetsk and Lugansk, he goes back very far in some cases, not only to the time of the Russian October Revolution, but to the 17th century, when the Ukrainian hejtmans voluntarily submitted to the Russian tsar.

However, he puts a great emphasis on political mistakes of the leaders of the Soviet Union, which practically not only put the fuse to today's events, but made them smolder.

Thus, he explains the historical and cultural consistency of the decisions taken. Their inevitability, in his view, stems from the actions of the Ukrainian leadership since 1990, fueled by NATO and the EU.

It is also worth recalling the remarks made by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at a [NATO press conference in Brussels on February 14, 2023](#):

"The war began in 2014"

NATO SECRETARY GENERAL JENS STOLTENBERG ,FEBRUARY 14,
2023

Speech of February 24, 2022 on the occasion of the beginning of hostilities in the Donbass and Ukraine.

The speech on the commencement of hostilities seamlessly follows that of February 21, 2022.

It deals in detail with the events of Ukrainian and Russian history over the past 30 years.

Here, President Putin gives wide space to Russia's ultimately unsuccessful efforts to find a peaceful solution to the problems that have arisen.

Much of what Putin says about the relationship between Russia and NATO or the EU seems like déjà vu if you are familiar with his Munich speech of 2007.

As never before, he criticizes the actions of the U.S., NATO and the EU, which are striving for a kind of new absolutism as their sole goal, the creation of absolute superiority for the implementation of practically any goals.

International law plays no role in this, "but the circumstances they interpret as they see fit."

Libya, Iraq, Yugoslavia were logical consequences of this claim to omnipotence.

He goes into detail about these NATO wars, and then states:

"Despite all that, in December 2021, we made yet another attempt to reach agreement with the United States and its allies on the principles of European security and NATO's non-expansion. Our efforts were in vain. The United States has not changed its position. It does not believe it necessary to agree with Russia on a matter that is critical for us. The United States is pursuing its own objectives, while neglecting our interests."

PRESIDENT PUTIN, FEBRUARY 24, 2022

Thus, his speech comes full circle with a reference to the beginning of World War 2:

"Of course, this situation begs a question: what next, what are we to expect? If history is any guide, we know that in 1940 and early 1941 the Soviet Union went to great lengths to prevent war or at least delay its outbreak. To this end, the USSR sought not to provoke the potential aggressor until the very end by refraining or postponing the most urgent and obvious preparations it had to make to defend itself from an imminent attack. When it finally acted, it was too late."

PRESIDENT PUTIN, FEBRUARY 24, 2022

Conclusion

If one looks at the Russian president's speeches across the board, it becomes clear that the significance of past events for the present is extremely important to him.

The historical references are targeted and they reflect the overall political situation as if on a barometer.

With the Second World War, the Great Patriotic War for Russia, they touch on a national trauma of dimensions unimaginable to outsiders.

To understand a country, to comprehend the actions of its leadership, it is essential to study its history and culture in depth.

With this knowledge, political statements and diplomatic speeches by Russian politicians are not too difficult to understand. However, one must want to read and understand them.

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