

PRESS STATEMENT: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

Brussels, Thursday 24 February 2022

Following this morning's news of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Friends of Europe's senior fellows share their first thoughts:

Jamie Shea:

"This is a dark moment that will change security in the 21st century in a fundamental way. Putin's invasion of Ukraine is one of the most unprovoked and unjustified uses of military force that has ever been witnessed. It is a criminal act and thousands of innocent people will be killed. This aggression is a direct threat to the whole of Europe and not only to Ukraine's survival as an independent, democratic country. Of equal concern is the absurd and distorted perversion of the facts, truth and history that has motivated Putin, the leader of a major world power, to launch his aggression. This does not bode well for the security of any country in the Euro-Atlantic area.

The West has failed in its sincere and persistent efforts to avoid a Russian war against Ukraine by seeking a diplomatic solution. It must not fail in the next phase of its response. Sanctions against Moscow must be severe and unanimous; NATO will need to bolster its defences rapidly to prevent any spillover of the Russian war against Ukraine on to NATO territory; the West needs to work hard to reduce its dependency on Russia particularly in the energy sector; and the West will need to develop a long-term strategy to isolate Russia in the international community and reduce its capacity through hybrid warfare and corrupt practices to undermine the democracies."

Paul Taylor:

"Russia's launch of a full-scale war against Ukraine is the biggest rupture in the European security order since the end of the Cold War. It will fundamentally upend international relations for a prolonged period. NATO and the European Union must be unanimous in enforcing the most crippling economic sanctions possible, and in sharing the burden of the cost among allies and member states.

Turkey's role will be key, both as the guardian of access to the Black Sea and because of its close relations with Russia. Keeping Turkey in the Western camp and ensuring that it helps to raise the cost of Russian aggression against Ukraine will be essential."

Chris Kremidas-Courtney:

"Putin told us all along what he intended to do and few were willing to believe him until he did it. As predicted, we're already seeing the cyber attacks on Ukraine having a spillover effect as the malware is now being found on systems all over Europe. The impacts on EU businesses, governments, and individuals could be significant.

We should also expect the flood of disinformation to escalate as Russia seeks to demoralise Ukraine and split the West.

Hard power and realism have returned whether Europe is ready for it or not. I think the EU would be wise to re-think its Strategic Compass prior to its launch in March instead of releasing a plan for a world that no longer exists.

Ukraine is a sovereign nation, being attacked by a bullying neighbour. And this time Ukraine is better armed, trained, organised and united than ever before so Putin will find the price of this aggression much higher than he bargained for."

All of Friends of Europe's Peace and Security Experts are available for interview:

- **Chris Kremidas-Courtney**, Senior Fellow, Peace, Security & Defence, Lecturer for Institute for Security Governance (ISG) in Monterey, California. (English, Greek, German)
Expertise: cyber security and military strategy.
- **Jamie Shea**, former spokesman and deputy assistant Secretary General, NATO, senior fellow, Friends of Europe (languages: English, French, Italian and German)
Area of expertise: What NATO and the US should do to help Ukraine now and strengthen eastern Allies' defences.
- **Paul Taylor**, Senior Fellow, Friends of Europe, former Reuters journalist and author of "Murky Waters - the Black Sea and European security" (languages: English, French, German)
Area of expertise: European, Atlantic and UN diplomacy, sanctions, the role of Turkey and the Black Sea.

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