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**TO VICTORY – TOGETHER WITH THE CIVILIZED WORLD**

**(a peer review of the monograph: Vidniansky S., Martynov A. Russian-Ukrainian War and International Community: a monograph. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine, NAS of Ukraine, 2023. 264 p.)**

**ДО ПЕРЕМОГИ – РАЗОМ ІЗ ЦИВІЛІЗОВАНИМ СВІТОМ**

**(рецензія на книгу: Віднянський С., Мартинов А. Російсько-українська війна та міжнародне співтовариство: монографія. Київ: Інститут історії України НАН України, 2023. 264 с.)**

After the declaration of independence, confirmed by people's vote in 1991, Ukraine acquired the status of a full-fledged subject of international law, therefore every significant event in the country caused a wide resonance throughout the world. In 2014 Russia occupied the Crimea and started an armed conflict in the east of Ukraine, and on February 24, 2022 – a full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine along the entire length of a common border line and from the territory of Belarus, the system of international security, law and order was under threat, to which international community could not help but react. At the same time, the reaction was far from unequivocal: “deep concern about maintaining peace and security in

Ukraine”, which after the Russian invasion, the UN Security Council expressed for the first time only in May of 2022, avoiding the words “war” or “aggression”; unprecedented support for Ukraine from the majority of EU and NATO member states; China’s pro-Russian neutrality; complicity of Belarus in the Russian aggression against Ukraine... That is why, “the analysis of the politics of European, North and South American, Asian and African countries and the attitude of international community in general towards the Russian aggression against Ukraine” is considered particularly relevant by S. Vidnianskyi and A. Martynov – the authors of the monograph “Russian-Ukrainian War and International Community”, which was published by the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in 2023. It is addressed to specialists in international issues and a wide range of readers who are interested in modern international relations, as well as the place and role of Ukraine in their transformation under the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014 – 2023.

In Preface to the monograph, academician Valeriy Smoliiy rightly points out that “this monograph is interesting as a kind of “photographic fixation” of the disposition of the international community – both individual states of the world and their public, as well as influential international organizations – regarding Russia’s war against Ukraine. Its authors did not limit to a simple statement of the facts of resource-military, technological, or humanitarian support of the Ukrainians by Western partners, but tried to show how difficult it is to define countries based on the range of liberal democracies in relation to the Russian-Ukrainian war that began in 2014” (p. 7). Indeed, the monograph is a broad factual and analytical study of the attitude of various states of the world and other international actors to Russia’s war against Ukraine, which demonstrates a radical transformation of the modern system of international relations. These issues determine not only the scientific, but also practical significance of the conducted research, as it contains separate ideas for the improvement and activation of the Ukrainian peace diplomacy in order to strengthen international security and counter Russia’s armed aggression, which is a threat to the entire civilized world. The results interpretation of a sociological research conducted in Ukraine and other countries, as well as the use and interpretation of a large number of normative and legal acts of both international and national level, makes it possible to talk about the interdisciplinary approach of the scholars to the issues under research.

Structurally, the monograph includes Preface, 11 Chapters and Conclusions. Preface contains a number of conceptual provisions that determine the content of the entire study. There is no doubt about the statement that “the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022, was caused, in addition to the senseless and unrealistic intention of the kremlin leadership to gain revenge and revive the imperial status of Russia after the collapse and disintegration of the USSR, also by a maniacal rejection of the Ukrainian nation and statehood and the European choice of Ukraine, a consistent course of the Ukrainian government towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration, supported by the absolute majority of Ukrainian citizens”. Moreover, the authors rightly consider this aggression to be another stage of Russia’s “hybrid war” against the West, while the latter obviously means the entire civilized world.

According to researchers, Russia’s war against Ukraine in 2014 – 2023 will have global consequences. Indeed, significant changes are already being observed in the world order, among which scholars single out consolidation of the European states and the member states of the North Atlantic Alliance, intensification of NATO’s activities and expansion, weakening of confrontation between the United States and China, complication of the Russian Federation’s

relations with its partners and application of political and economic sanctions to it, etc. It is also true that the attitude of different countries to the Russian-Ukrainian war is ambiguous. Having singled out the groups of states depending on what position they occupy – support Ukraine in its resistance to the Russian aggression, maintain neutrality or support Moscow – scholars, in fact, determine the logic of further research, which seems quite natural. The emphasis of scholars on the issues related to the functioning of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations and the UN Security Council, a systemic nature of which was confirmed by the Russian-Ukrainian war, is also justified. But it is surprising that the authors ignored the activities of the Council of Europe and its institutions aimed at supporting Ukraine, which has been a member of the Council since 1995, in its struggle against the aggressor.

Chapter 1 contains an overview of modern historiographical approaches to war as a socio-historical phenomenon, but the authors also partially resort to a historical retrospective of views on the issues of war and peace, recalling the famous treatise “The Art of War” by the Chinese strategist and philosopher Sun Tzu, a famous monograph “On War” by the German military theorist Karl von Clausewitz and a number of other works. Without the goal of all modern studies analysis of the war, the authors single out those that, in their opinion, make it possible to determine domestic and foreign political reasons for the Russian war against Ukraine; reveal the essence of the global hybrid war from the point of view of Russian aggression against Ukraine; highlight the issues of Euro-Atlantic relations (the researchers focus on the analysis of publications by experts of the German “thought factory” “Science and Policy Foundation” for the period of 2020 – 2023) and the others. Summarizing the conducted review, the researchers came to a well-argued conclusion that currently “in domestic and foreign historiography, there have been general trends in the assessment of Russia’s “hybrid war” against Ukraine, which, after February 24, 2022, turned into a large-scale “conventional” war, which resembles both world wars in brutality and threatens the entire democratic world” (p. 36).

In Chapter 2 of the monograph there is highlighted the policy of the European Union regarding Russia’s war against Ukraine and the attitude of European society and many European leaders, famous intellectuals to this war. It is quite natural that the authors focus on these issues primarily, since it was the European election of Ukraine in 2014 that became one of the factors of Russian aggression. In fact, immediately after its beginning, according to the correct observation by the scholars, the EU showed readiness to provide a moral and political support to Ukraine, which turned into real assistance gradually. Analyzing the dynamics of relations between Ukraine and the EU in 2014 – 2019, the researchers note the achievement of positive changes in the direction of European integration, the culmination of which is called the adoption of the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine (regarding the state’s strategic course towards full membership of Ukraine in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization)”, which was welcomed by the leaders of the EU member states (p. 45).

The full-scale invasion of Russia, according to the scholars, prompted the EU to adopt an unprecedented document called “Strategic Security and Defense Compass for the European Union, which protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security”, the implementation of which is programmed by 2030. In particular, it condemned the occupation of the Crimea by the Russian Federation, established the definition of unmotivated and unjust Russian aggression against Ukraine, which confirmed not only

the change of attitude, but also the practical approach of the European Union regarding the consolidation of efforts both in the direction of the introduction of tough economic sanctions against the Russian Federation, as well as the provision of real powerful financial, humanitarian, economic and, what is especially important, military aid to Ukraine.

Therefore, the researchers analyse Ukraine's submission of an official application for the EU accession and a difficult process of its approval, which reached its logical conclusion on June 23, 2022, when the European Council unanimously recognized Ukraine as an official candidate for accession to the European Union. Emphasizing that no other state in the history of the EU has received this status so quickly after applying for membership, the authors of the monograph consider the advantages, which Ukraine received as a result, and the recommendations of the European Commission, which must be implemented in order to maintain the candidate status, noting both positive developments in the implementation of the criteria defined by the EU, and certain problems. There is significant the analysis of objectives which are more difficult than the achievement of the so-called Copenhagen criteria for membership in the EU in 1993, because their solution, according to the authors, requires qualitative social evolution: the achievement of a nationwide consensus on the values of European civilization; ensuring human rights and freedoms, democracy, rule of law; overcoming the backwardness of the national economy. And yet, despite the problems, the scholars express confidence that the future of Ukraine is in the European Union, since "The European Union and the governments and citizens of the member countries carry out large-scale actions to support Ukraine in its struggle against the Russian invaders and its European integration course" (p. 69), that "there is no alternative to the European integration of Ukraine, it is beneficial for both Ukraine and the European Union, all its member states" (p. 74).

In Chapter 3 of the monograph there is analysis the support specifics for Ukraine by individual states (Great Britain, Italy, the Iberian states, Germany, France, the Scandinavian countries). The focus on this issue is obviously dictated by the fact that each of these countries experiences its own internal political, economic and social problems during the entire period of Russian aggression, which undoubtedly affect the "operational, strategic and functional capabilities of their national foreign policy" (p. 85). Thus, the researchers recognize Great Britain as "the most consistent ally of Ukraine" (p. 90), in Germany "the idea of supporting Ukraine remains relatively stable" (p. 95), instead, "in France there is no political party that would openly and consistently defend the course of providing aid to Ukraine until victory over Putin's Russian Federation" (p. 102). It should be noted that the scholars' considerations are confirmed by a large number of facts.

In Chapter 4 there is characterized the position of the EU member states neighbouring Ukraine regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war. Despite the disputes between Ukraine and Poland regarding their common tragic history, the authors prove that Poland "took a clear and unambiguous position regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014 – 2022: resolutely condemned the aggression of the Russian Federation and showed complete solidarity with Ukraine, supported all sanctions imposed by the international community against Russia and became one of Ukraine's closest allies" (pp. 109–116). And, on the contrary, the scholars consider the position of Hungary to be ambiguous, the policy of the Hungarian government towards Ukraine and the Russian-Ukrainian war is called counter-productive (p. 125), at the same time, they hope for favourable changes in the attitudes of Hungarian society for Ukraine. Therefore, the authors name a wide list of manifestations of support and assistance to Ukraine from the side of Romania and express quite realistic expectations, that "in peacetime, and

especially in the context of the negotiation process of Ukraine's accession to the European Union ... with the mediation of Brussels, Kyiv and Bucharest will be able to resolve all problematic aspects of bilateral relations" (p. 134). The researchers did not ignore an active support of Ukraine by the Slovak Republic (apart from political forces that are supporters of national egoism, mistrust of integration associations, which significantly influence public opinion as well); the scholars noted that the Czech Republic helps Ukraine as much as possible, allocating it, in particular, significant funds for military and humanitarian needs.

The support and assistance of the Baltic countries to Ukraine in its resistance to Russian aggression versus the "neutral" policy of Austria, Switzerland, Belarus, Bulgaria, Serbia, the Caucasian and Central Asian countries is highlighted in Chapter 5. The authors quite rightly believe that "the position of the Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania – regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war is determined by their historical experience of coexistence with the aggressive Russian empire in its various guises" (p. 148), which is confirmed by the actions of the official authorities of these states and the facts of the solidarity of their peoples with the people of Ukraine. As for those states that are formally considered neutral, the situation is not so unambiguous. Thus, according to the scholars, Austria balances its interests and European values (p. 153), Switzerland emphasizes its neutral status, provides financial assistance to Ukraine, but refuses to supply weapons (p. 154).

Continuing to highlight the policy of "neutral" states, the researchers come to the conclusion that deep internal political problems do not allow Bulgaria to make a clear decision regarding the condemnation of Russian aggression against Ukraine (p. 160), and condition Serbia's "hybrid neutral" policy (p. 162), make the neutrality of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia pro-Russian (pp. 163–166) and encourage Kazakhstan to balance between China and the Russian Federation (p. 168), Kyrgyzstan to support Russian military aggression actually (p. 169), and Turkmenistan to limit its foreign policy activity (p. 170).

It is worth noting that within the same chapter, the authors analyse the position of Belarus as a "neutral" state, which does not seem entirely logical, since Belarus participates in Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The policy of the USA and Canada regarding Russia's war against Ukraine is the subject of analysis in Chapter 6. At the same time, the authors note the activation of the US policy in this area: if in 2014 the administration of the US President B. Obama refused to supply weapons to Ukraine, during the period of 2017 – 2019, the administration of D. Trump agreed for the first time to transfer Javelin anti-tank systems to Ukraine under the condition of their storage, and in May of 2022, the US President J. Biden signed the law on military lend-lease for Ukraine, which entered into force on October 1 of the same year. In general, the researchers summarize that "in the US, there is a two-party consensus on preventing the success of Russian efforts aimed at revising borders in Europe forcibly. However, this cannot be said about the consensus regarding the expediency of the final victory over the Russian Federation with its subsequent disintegration and collapse" (p. 177). According to the scholars, Canada's position is vivid, which has supported Ukraine since the declaration of its independence. The reasoning of the researchers that "a significant role in the support of the USA and Canada to Ukraine is played by the numerous and active Ukrainian diaspora in these countries" (p. 179) is absolutely correct.

In Chapter 7 of the monograph, the researchers again raise the issue of the "neutral" position of individual states, this time Moldova and Turkey, Arab countries and Israel, regarding Russian aggression against Ukraine. In our opinion, it makes sense to combine this

chapter with Chapter 5, since both highlight the features of the neutrality of various states, which is determined by internal political processes. Noting a certain support of Ukraine by Moldova, reflecting on the maneuvering of Turkey and Israel in matters related to assistance to Ukraine, the researchers, however, ignore the position of the Arab countries, although this is announced in the title of the chapter.

The subject of research in Chapter 8 is the attitude to the Russian-Ukrainian war of states that, according to the scholars, occupy a position between “neutrality” and collaboration. Among such countries are China, India, Japan, Iran, Argentina, Brazil, and the North African Republic. In addition to the idea about the possibility of reformatting the chapters, expressed above, we have doubts about whether Japan belongs to this group of states, since, according to the authors themselves, “Japan was one of the few Asian countries that openly and consistently supported Ukraine” (p. 207). Other considerations, for example, about the position of China, which “in the Russian-Ukrainian war, pursues a traditional policy of Chinese interests exclusively” (p. 198) or Iran as “a direct ally of the Russian Federation” (p. 207) seem to be fully justified.

North Atlantic military aid to Ukraine (Chapter 9), in our opinion, is not fully covered. The authors once again emphasize the help of the USA and the EU in Ukraine’s resistance to the Russian aggressor, noting their consolidation “for the sake of protecting the values of democracy” (p. 221), instead it was worth at least mentioning the activity of the Ukraine-NATO Commission during the period of the Russian-Ukrainian war .

Chapter 10 entitled “The OSCE Crisis and New Horizons of the European Security System” contains a general description of the creation process and activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, at the same time, the scholars’ conclusions are sometimes contradictory: “the authority and real influence of the OSCE on international affairs was levelled off”, and further: “despite certain imperfections, the OSCE remains the only proven mechanism of multilateral diplomacy in the recent history of international relations, the efforts of which are aimed at strengthening peace and stability” (p. 224). The researchers consider the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and the Central European Initiative to be new and promising elements of the European security mechanism.

In Chapter 11, the scholars raise the effectiveness issue of the United Nations and its most influential body, the Security Council. The researchers note that “at the initiative of Ukraine, the world community within the framework of the UN repeatedly discussed the issue of Russian aggression against Ukraine and adopted a number of important protective documents, although voting for them demonstrated an ambiguous attitude of its member states to the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014 – 2023 (p. 232) and the authors emphasize that “systematically the Russian Federation blocks all decisions of the UN Security Council concerning its aggressive actions in Ukraine” (p. 233). Indeed, this indicates the low effectiveness of traditional mechanisms for maintaining a global stability both at the level of the UN and other international organizations and creates the need for their transformation in accordance with the challenges of today. The researchers analyse the success important for Ukraine on the diplomatic front and predict that they open “prospects for the post-war arrangement of the system in Europe and the world with an active participation of Ukraine” (p. 149), which should be agreed to.

In the Conclusions, the authors once again emphasize the key issues of their research and confirm that the democratic world, consolidated by the idea of Ukraine’s victory in the fight against the Russian aggressor, provides our country with a military, technical, financial,

humanitarian assistance, a moral and political support, although there are also supporters of appeasement of aggressor at the cost of Ukraine's survival. However, according to the researchers' conviction, which we fully share, "there can be no compromise between these positions" (p. 262).

Summing up, it should be noted that the authors collected, processed and systematized an extremely large amount of information about the attitude of various states of the world and intergovernmental organizations to the Russian aggression against the Ukrainian state, about the reflections on the Russian-Ukrainian war of famous politicians and intellectuals, and used different sources. The final result looks multidimensional, in some sense eclectic, in some places the information is repeated. In general, the monograph meets the requirements of the scientific style of the modern Ukrainian language, however, there are elements of artistic, journalistic, and even conversational styles that are characterized by openly expressed emotionality, imagery, and the use of idioms (brutal Russian aggression; brutal "hot" war against Ukraine; brutal invasion; the kremlin dwarf; the kremlin Führer; the war issue has become almost a litmus test for the Hungarian government and society; Austria is trying to sit on two chairs – to be part of the European Union and not to burn bridges with the Russian Federation; post-imperial phantom pains of Serbian national consciousness; "honeymoon" in the relations of the European Union with the new American administration; hypothetical prospects of autonomous sailing in the stormy waters of international politics; Venice Commission, etc.

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