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**Mr. Jacques FAURE**

**What peaceful policy for Europe  
in the face of Russian military aggression against Ukraine?**

The president of the association Ad Pacem servandam (For Peace and Against War) Mr. Claude Pantaleoni thanks the speaker Mr. Jacques FAURE for accepting the invitation. Mr. Jacques Faure is a **former French diplomat** who served in the Central Administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was Deputy Director for Eastern Europe, Deputy Director for European Cooperation and Director for Continental Europe. Until 2014, he was French co-chair in the OSCE Minsk Group on Nagorno-Karabakh. He was the French ambassador to several Eastern European countries and in Kyiv from 2008 until 2011.

The president of the Ad Pacem association recalls how difficult it was **in 2017**, when it was created, to describe the war in Donbas as a Russian invasion and the annexation of Crimea as contrary to international law. While all the Ukrainian speakers and refugees invited by the association have since asserted loudly that the armed conflict in their country concerns all of Europe, most Europeans have continued to deny this, believing that it is some kind of civil war in which Russian-speaking independentists or separatists want to detach their territory from the rest of Ukraine. At the same time, most Europeans, politicians and European security officials have been aware for years that the Russian president is abolishing all freedoms in his country and behaving like a dictator. But that he would invade Ukraine militarily is something most did not expect.

Since the **fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989**, and after years of more or less tolerable coexistence, Europe has been experiencing **its greatest crisis with Russia** since 24 February 2022. To understand the obvious reasons for this crisis, most of which have been hidden from Europeans for a long time, the leaders of the Ad Pacem Servandam association invited Mr Jacques Faure, a specialist on the issue, to give his answers to the subject set out in the title of the conference: "What pacifist policy should Europe adopt in the face of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine?"

Before coming to the military aggression itself, Mr Faure recalls **two quotations** that are important to him. One was from **Paul Valéry**: "War is made by people who do not know each other, but it is organised by people who do know each other. The

other is from the preamble of **the founding act of UNESCO**: "War is in the minds of men". And for Mr Faure, it is in the minds of men that we must try to fight it.

**On 21 February 2022, Mr Putin announced** to the Russians, on the country's television channels, the start of a special military operation to help the Russians and Russian speakers of the Donbas who were threatened with genocide by the Nazi power in Kyiv. To this end, he set **three objectives for Ukraine: demilitarise, denazify and restructure**. In saying this, Mr Putin is, in Mr Faure's view, a liar who is simply making a mockery of the world. And the speaker showed in his presentation, point by point, the unfoundedness of the assertions of the Russian president. Concerning **demilitarisation**, Mr Faure said that the Soviet Union had existed formally as a state from 1922 until its collapse at the end of 1991. Around the Russian Socialist Republic, there were fifteen other Soviet republics, one of which was Ukraine. In 1991, at the end of Michael Gorbatschow's presidency, the Soviet republics decided in turn to become independent. The **Russian Republic** became the Russian Federation, which also claims to be **the sole legal heir of the Soviet Union**. However, with the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the question of **how to share the legacy** of this union also arises. During the USSR, Ukraine accounted for around 40% of its industrial potential and 35% of its agricultural heritage. And on the territory of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, important industries had been established in the field of steel, **iron and steel industry, chemical industry and a whole military-industrial complex** that served the army. The military power of the USSR owed much to these Ukrainian industries; for example, the SS 24 and SS 25 intercontinental rockets were manufactured in Dnipropetrovsk (now Dnipro). Near Kyiv, the largest aircraft carriers were built in the Antonov factories. In Ukraine, there was also an entire **Red Army nuclear arsenal**, including about 1,300 intercontinental rockets with as many nuclear warheads. **In an agreement in 1994**, all the former Soviet republics that had become independent agreed with the Russian Federation to return all the nuclear arsenal on their territory. In return, the Russian Federation signed a bilateral agreement with Ukraine in which it **respected Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity** within its existing borders. And it undertook not to use political or economic pressure or force against Ukraine to coerce it in its political direction.

In **1997**, in a second important agreement between Russia and Ukraine, the Soviet **Black Sea fleet stationed in Sevastopol** was to be divided between the two countries. About 100 ships (the best, according to Faure) went to Russia and the rest to Ukraine.

In a third agreement in 2010, the pro-Russian Ukrainian president Yanukovich wanted to obtain gas from Russia at a favourable price. In return, President

Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin asked to extend the duration of the Russian-Ukrainian agreement, which authorised the contractual stationing of the Russian fleet in Sevastopol as well as the stationing of a contingent of some 25,000 soldiers (sailors, airmen, infantrymen) on the territory of Crimea, until 2042 (whereas it was only planned to end in 2017).

Bearing in mind that the power differential between the Russian and Ukrainian armies is 1 to 20, Mr Faure concluded that from a security point of view, **Ukraine was not threatening the Russian Federation in any way until 24 February**. The Ukrainian army had about 300 000 soldiers in the army, air force and navy. While Russia could have had at least nine hundred and sixty thousand soldiers. How could Ukraine threaten Russia?

Mr Faure then tackles Putin's second objective, which is **to denazify Ukraine**, even though there are no Nazis there. Ukraine is not a Nazi power because it has been democratically elected since 1991, with an alternation every four years. Five different presidents have been elected since then. **And what about Russia**, where Putin has remained in power since 2000? If we disregard the Medvedev interlude, who was president from 2008 to 2012, and after his term of office, in the following elections, the presidential chair was again given to Putin. This ploy was done because the Russian Constitution did not allow the nation to be elected for a third consecutive term. Now Putin has had the Constitution of the Russian Federation transformed to ensure that he remains in power until 2036.

Why does **Putin claim that the power in Kyiv is a US-inspired fascist and Nazi power?** There are two reasons for this move by Putin. On the one hand, it comes from the importance of the **historical narrative**, first Soviet and now Russian, about the Second World War, which in Russia is called the Great Patriotic War. In this discourse, the Russian authorities forget to say that for the Soviet Union, this **Great Patriotic War began on 22 June 1941**, when Nazi Germany attacked the USSR. But from 23 August 1939 to **22 June 1941**, there was the **Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact** and Stalin's USSR was the ally of Hitler's Germany. These two allies agreed very well to attack Poland and divide it between them. And the USSR killed about twenty-two thousand Poles near Katyn. But it is also clear that for Russia today, it was a heavy toll of about **twenty-two million Soviets who died in that Second World War**. But Putin forgets to mention that in this figure, there were about **8.6 million Ukrainians** who served in the Red Army. They were not Nazis because they were fighting Nazism.

So why does Putin insult the Ukrainian government for being a Nazi power? It has to do with the **annexation of Crimea to Russia in 2014** which the Ukrainians did not accept. At that time, the Ukrainian army was too weak to counter the twenty-five

**Kommentar [L1]:** It said in the original war 26 June 1941, which is a factual mistake

**Kommentar [L2]:**

**Kommentar [L3]:** The original document said 24 June, which is also not correct, because the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact lost its efficiency in the day of the invasion

thousand Russian troops stationed there. So the annexation was done without much resistance from the Ukrainian army. But at the same time, the Ukrainian people **revolted against their president Yanukovich** who refused at the end of 2013, under pressure from Putin and Medvedev, to sign an association agreement with the European Union. The Ukrainian people rebelled against this measure and in January-February 2014 there was the Maidan uprising. Yanukovich ordered his police to shoot the demonstrators and a hundred died. **The Rada**, the Ukrainian parliament, **voted to remove President Yanukovich from office**, and he escaped, flown by helicopter, to Russia. At this point, Russia spoke of an illegal coup in Ukraine, although Ukrainian constitutional procedures were followed to the letter. The President of the Rada became the interim head of state, with the sole obligation to prepare for the next presidential elections which took place in May-June 2014. Only then did the new President Poroshenko send the Ukrainian army against the coup plotters in the Donbas. **These separatists claimed that it was an insurgency against Kyiv**, while everything had been **prepared and organised in Moscow**. The insurgency in Donbas was led by Russian FSB agents, including Guirkin. Since 2014 until today, Ukraine has been at war in Donbas against Russia. The two self-proclaimed republics of Luhansk and Donetsk were not armed before. It was the Russian army that came to fight for them and brought its military equipment. So **Putin calls the Kyiv government a Nazi** because he says that events **that took place in 2014** were not a revolution but an illegal coup. So he calls the current Ukrainian government a Nazi because he cannot stand it. For him, Yanukovich would be the legal president who was illegally overthrown. That is why he calls the Ukrainian government a Nazi.

There were **only two Nazi groups in Ukraine** at the beginning of the country's independence: **the Svoboda (Freedom) party and the Right Sector** (supported by the oligarch Kolomoisky). The latter was very visible in 2014 during the Maidan and in the defence of the Donbas, where it stood alongside the regular army in the defence against Moscow. Both groups had a far-right ideology. They fielded candidates in the June 2014 elections and made 0.8% and 1.8% of the vote respectively, with six MPs for Right Sector. **In Russia**, on the other hand, we see **large far-right parties encouraged by the street and by the government**. For example, Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia has thirty-six deputies in the Duma. With his military invasion of Ukraine, Putin is pursuing a third objective: to restructure the country. But Mr Faure notes that since its independence, Ukraine has only reformed and restructured itself democratically, politically, economically and militarily. **Ukrainians are indeed building their history**. During the long history of the tsarist empire, Ukraine already existed but was always denied the right to a state existence. Already the Russian empress Catherine II put an end to the **Cossack state**

in the 17th and 18th centuries by abolishing all its privileges. It is also false, as Putin claims, to say that **Kyiv is the mother of Russian cities**. Even though it was the largest city when the tsarist empire was being formed in the 16th and 17th centuries. Kyiv was founded in the 9th century by the Varegans, Vikings from Scandinavia when Moscow did not yet exist. Their rule lasted until the Mongols from Central Asia broke in and conquered the country. The Russian origins of Kyiv are false and Putin does not take into account the **strong Russification policy under the Tsarist empire**. This Russification was accompanied by a repression of the Ukrainian language and literature. The leading poet Taras Shevchenko was condemned by the tsarist empire as a nationalist. He was deported to a desert in Kazakhstan because he wrote in Ukrainian and wanted to speak in that language, while the Tsarist Ministers of Education, notably through decrees in 1863, prohibited teaching and publishing in Ukrainian. On the copy of Taras Shevchenko's sentence, the tsar himself wrote: "with a ban on writing and painting". But with his work Kobzar, Shevchenko created the beginning of Ukrainian literature.

Mr Faure had to answer several questions put to him. The first was whether the entry of several Eastern European countries into **NATO after 1991 was seen as a threat by Russia** and the **cause of its military aggression in Ukraine**. Mr Faure explained that from 1945 to 1991, the world was bipolar with the United States on one side and the Soviet Union on the other. These two poles ruled everything in their camp. In 1991, this bipolar world had disappeared and for ten years the United States behaved as if it were the only great power. A French foreign minister spoke of the 'American hyperpower'. **The independence of the fifteen Soviet republics** led them to reduce their dependence on Russia by establishing contacts with the European Union, the United States, the countries of Asia and the Middle East. They have developed their orientation, which has greatly displeased Vladimir Putin who sees himself, in **his historical role, as the unifier of the former Russian lands**, as Peter the Great and Joseph Stalin were before him. Faure insisted that there had never been a treaty between NATO and Russia that stipulated that the NATO pact could not be extended to Eastern Europe. Why would NATO member countries refuse to allow countries that have emerged from the former socialist camp to join the Atlantic alliance? **These countries remain free to choose NATO** if they think they can ensure their security after eighty years of Soviet domination. Putin and the Russian leadership want to prohibit such rapprochement because they want these countries to remain in the Russian fold with limited sovereignty.

**NATO made several proposals to Russia:** a NATO-Russia partnership and then a NATO-Russia Cooperation Council. Each time, Russia refused, because when

**Kommentar [L4]:** Not the translation problem, but factual mistake. Ivan Kotliarevsky is regarded as the pioneer of modern Ukrainian literature, and his Eneida was published in 1798, before Shevchenko was born.

negotiating economic, political, economic and military issues, the mindset of Russian officials was always **"what's ours is ours (Russians) and what's yours (Westerners) is negotiable"**. As a result, the Eastern European states joined NATO to ensure their security. In this sense, Faure considers that France and Germany made a **mistake in 2008 by not accepting Georgia and Ukraine's applications for NATO membership**. Asked why diplomats had not succeeded in preventing the war in Ukraine, Faure replied that diplomacy was always about the need and obligation to talk to one's opponent or enemy. We had two agreements, one in 2005 and the other in 2014. Both of them, signed in Minsk, provided for the possibility of a negotiated settlement in the war in Donbas started by the Russians. The three key provisions of these agreements were firstly the achievement of a ceasefire through a withdrawal of both sides of the front to a certain distance from each other, and secondly, the need for free and internationally monitored elections by the OSCE in the two separatist republics of Donetsk and Luhansk. But the Russians did not want these free elections because they wanted to organise them themselves, as in Crimea. Only those who shouted "Long live Putin" would-be candidates and the elections would be held in the presence of Russian soldiers and not under the international supervision of the OSCE. The third provision was for the Kyiv parliament to establish a special status for the two breakaway entities of Donetsk and Luhansk in the Ukrainian parliament. But these two representations could only be formed if there were free elections in these two entities. As Russia did not accept these elections, a special status for these two self-proclaimed entities never came into being.

**Do the sanctions against Russia have an influence and force Russia to back down?**

For Mr Faure, **these sanctions are of three kinds**. Firstly, they target the political figures who voted for Russia's recognition of the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk and the start and continuation of the war against Ukraine. These different packages of sanctions have resulted in consequences for Russia, which is the only state in the world where the entire political staff is under sanction. The second category of sanctions provides for the slowing down or even stopping of trade with Russia, especially the trade that drives Russian military production (arms, missiles, shells). The aim is to deprive Russia of the raw materials for the electronic components of the military industry. The third type of sanction affects retailing, food and medicine. For the moment, according to Faure, the effect of these sanctions is not too noticeable in the Russian market. But when these sanctions were established, the Europeans were careful not to include hydrocarbons because some European states are very dependent on them.

It is also noticeable that a good number of states in the world do not share the European sanctions. This is because they are dependent on raw materials, arms or other products that Russia sells them.

Is Vladimir **Putin a frustrated man** because he cannot impose his political view on the Ukrainians and wants to subdue them by force of arms? Putin has repeatedly said that he does not believe in the existence of a Ukrainian state, a Ukrainian nation and a people. **Belarussians, Ukrainians and Russians are the same people for Putin**, with the same language and the same culture. For him, there is only one Russian world. Through his aggression against Ukraine, Putin wants to bring this country into the Russian world (russkiy mir). He **refers to the tsarist conquest**, which, from 1763 onwards, called the newly conquered territories in the southeast of Ukraine and the Crimea 'New Russia'. And as in the days of the tsars and Stalin, Putin is expelling and deporting the local population and bringing in Russian settlers. When Russians are living in these territories, the Russian leadership can say that these Russians there must be protected and defended.

Asked whether Europe was on the road to peace or war with Russia, Mr Faure recalled the old saying "**Si vis pacem, para bellum**" (if you want peace, prepare for war). Europe is in this phase by supporting the Ukrainians' fight because, for Mr Faure, Putin is **waging war on the territory of Ukraine against Western Europe**. He doesn't like Ukraine because he can't stand the fact that the Ukrainian people kicked out the predatory and corrupt former president Yanukovich. For Putin, the Maidan revolution was not a revolution but a coup d'état prepared by the CIA and the US. But for Faure, there was no need for the US intrusion for the Ukrainian people to rise in 2004 and 2014. The Ukrainians rose on their own. If Europe does not help Ukraine militarily, there is a risk that Ukrainian territory will be considerably reduced. And Europe-US unity must be sustainable. Indeed, each state has its own economic and political interests which are not necessarily those of the others. At this level, it is interesting that count, not friends.

Above all, **we must help Ukraine to resist**, because when the Russians consider that it is necessary to negotiate, Ukraine must be in a position of strength, not weakness. And we must not accept that Russia should occupy a quarter or even half of the Ukrainian territory. According to European and American military specialists, the weapons that Ukraine receives must increasingly be offensive weapons (tanks and artillery) to stop the Russian advance. As Ukrainian soldiers will have to train for several weeks, or even months, with the new weapons, the conflict will last a long time.

French President E. Macron prefers to call Vladimir Putin often because it is important for him to keep a channel of discussion open in order to be able to negotiate a way out of the conflict later on, even though all the phone calls have not produced any results. The French President especially asked for the creation of humanitarian corridors in the combat zones to evacuate civilians who were trapped in the fighting, as in Mariupol and Kyiv. There were one hundred and seventy-two requests for the creation of humanitarian corridors. The Russians only accepted about ten. In some cases, these evacuations turned into tragedies because, as the Russian army often does, it bombed the convoys even though it had given a pass. According to Macron, **Putin remains stuck in his historical narrative** and lives in his world. Although he was a former KGB spy, he still cannot get an accurate picture of the world today. He can't see reality. He went into this war against Ukraine **believing in the reports of the FSB special agents**, especially the commander of the 5th secret service directorate, General Bessama. The latter had produced a number of advance reports in which he specified that the Russian troops would be welcomed as liberators by Russian speakers who would offer them flowers. They could no longer bear to live under the dictatorship of the Ukrainian Nazi regime. However, these special service files did not correspond to reality. And Putin, the generals and their army were surprised by the Ukrainian patriotism shown by the inhabitants of the occupied territories. At the beginning of the aggression, eight Russian army corps were positioned all around Ukraine. Their battle plan was to converge on the capital and bring about a regime change in Kyiv. That is, to seize President Zelenski and his government and replace them with a government open to Moscow's demands. But it was rather naive of Putin to believe that the Ukrainian population would welcome back the former president Yanukovich whom Ukrainians had ousted in the Maidan revolution.

Despite the fighting, there have been regular meetings between Russian and Ukrainian delegations whose exchanges have not led to much other than prisoner exchanges.

**In 2012**, President Yanukovich had a Ukrainian law passed that declared **Ukraine a non-bloc state**. It was therefore neither a candidate for union with Moscow nor a candidate for NATO. However, when Crimea was occupied by Russia in 2014, this "non-bloc status" did not protect Ukraine. Indeed, **in the agreements of 1994, 1997 and 2010, the Russian Federation** had in each case committed itself to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its recognised borders and to refrain from using force to coerce the policies of the Ukrainian government. Since these three agreements did not save them from the Russian invasion of 24 February, it is clear that the Ukrainians have no desire to enter into another such agreement.

Faure insisted that Russian citizens live in a regime where **there is no democratic opposition to speak out**. As soon as a potential opposition figure appears, Putin's government manages to sentence them to long prison terms (Mr Navalny) or to have them killed (Boris Nemtsov). The Russian population does not have access to a multi-party press. It is only through the four public television channels, which broadcast news all day long and which only support the regime in power, that Russians are informed. The best example is the information in the Russian media that Russia is not waging a war against Ukraine but a "**special military operation**". Those who talk about the war in Russia risk **imprisonment for three to fifteen years**. Some Russian citizens still claim not to know that their army is at war in Ukraine. Only the younger, more social network-savvy ones know that Russia is waging war in Ukraine. Many of these young people have already left Russia.

In the first phase of the war, the US said it wanted to help the Ukrainians defend themselves against aggression; then it said it wanted to prevent the Russian military apparatus from continuing to produce all the military equipment that Russia is using to attack Ukraine. Since 24 February 2022, another objective has been added for the Americans: they want to weaken the Russian army and industry so that this country cannot afford to attack other countries as it has just attacked Ukraine. On the European side, they clearly want to defend Ukraine without wanting to completely break with Russia. At some point, we hope to be able to discuss again with Russia the security context in Europe that the Trump administration had completely discarded by withdrawing from all disarmament agreements. But the Russians had already walked out on their side too. For the Europeans, it is important to be able to discuss the resumption of social, political and economic relations, provided that the Russian state stops being an aggressor state.

Mr Faure reminds us of **Putin's interest in returning to a bipolar world** because he cannot stand the unipolar world that the Americans would try to impose. He wants a multipolar world in which the Russia-US dialogue returns to what it was during the Cold War and which Pompidou had described as a "condominium", a kind of status where Moscow and Washington act as equals and as main interlocutors. But, according to Faure, Putin has lost this status of equal interlocutor with Washington. Now there is also the power of **China**, which has a very ambiguous role in refraining from condemning the Russian aggression in Ukraine. At the opening of the Winter Olympics, the Russian and Chinese leaders gave a glimpse of their vision of the world that does **not correspond to that of the Western world**. They want a world with several poles of balance, including their own. The Chinese newspaper "People's Daily" recently published an interview with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro

Kuleba, in which he said that Russia was an aggressor state for Ukraine and that after the end of the war, Ukrainians wanted to participate in building a peaceful and democratic world. Although not in line with the Chinese view, these words of Mr Kuleba were published.

Mr Faure insisted **that peace will surely also come through the Russian population**, which still supports Putin's way of operating in the four wars he has waged (the second war in Chechnya, the war against Georgia, the war in Syria, the war against Ukraine). Each time, his popularity grew. But this time, when the population will feel the concrete effects of the European economic sanctions, **there will be times when the Russians will hold Putin to account**. Faure sees the 1962 Cuban nuclear rocket crisis as a parallel to the Russian war on Ukraine. To achieve his goal, Nikita Khrushchev blackmailed John Fitzgerald Kennedy's America with nuclear rockets. For his part, during this crisis, President Charles de Gaulle told the Russian ambassador that under these conditions "they would die together". In 1964, however, the Soviet generals reproached Khrushchev for having taken too many risks and "proposed" that he withdraw from politics.

Russian military generals and FSB officials could in the near future, as in the Cuban crisis, propose that Putin step down because he is weakening the Russian military and the development of the military-industrial complex too much. Mr Faure ended his lecture with the possibility that this war against Ukraine could eventually mean **Putin's withdrawal**, as it had for Khrushchev in 1964.