

Are We Dealing with Counterproductive Political Outcomes?

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The latest developments in Ukraine have made me very concerned and sad. Many years of geopolitical tensions have finally led to an open war, to a terrible destruction of Ukrainian cities and, at the moment, to at least a million refugees. I could not have imagined that such things would happen in Europe of our days.

Besides the sorrow I feel for the victims of war, I am especially concerned about the immense damage the “operation” in Ukraine has done for the image and reputation of Russia worldwide. Of course these have been grave problems in the relations between Russia and Ukraine, but it has already now become apparent, that the attempt to sever the Gordian knot with a blow of sword was not wise. If the Russian government had thought that by making an offensive into Ukraine it could ward off attempts to isolate and damage the country, so it must be said that the effects of the operation have been quite contrary. War in Ukraine has been counter-productive for Russia’s aims: it has isolated Russia from the world and turned the opinion against it.

This makes me sad, since I have always been a partisan of good relations with the eastern neighbor of Finland. And the majority of my countrymen have thought in a like manner. Finland has since the World War II stayed neutral and not become member of military alliances. These years of neutrality have been very good times both for Finland and Russia. In Finland, only a small – although maybe loud – right-wing minority has supported a NATO membership, while the great majority of Finns have rejected it. However, now, after the events in Ukraine, there has been a notable shift in the public opinion. Russia’s military actions, which are so massive that nothing comparable has been seen since the World War II, have scared the Finnish people so much that now, first time in history, the opinion polls tell that a majority of the people have become supporters of a NATO membership for Finland. Moreover, according to political commentators, this change does not seem to be a temporary swing only, but signals a more durable shift. It was thus needed only less than a week of war in Ukraine to damage severely the atmosphere of goodwill which both the Russians and the Finns had managed to build up during previous decades.

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