**Horror in Ukraine**

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The tragic, illegal war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine should end now, with a ceasefire and then a comprehensive peace agreement. It could be based on the previously negotiated 2015 Minsk II agreement, which is quite detailed and balanced in seeking to resolve territorial, political, cultural and linguistic disputes. What makes this war so ghastly is the eventual outcome was widely known and achievable before Russia invaded, namely Ukrainian neutrality, no Nato membership, and territorial, legal and political accommodations over Crimea and the Donbas region.

Nato expansion eastward toward Russia’s borders and US/Western post-Cold War triumphalism was and is a problem. It was a strategic mistake to treat Russia, with its justifiably proud history and culture, as a miserable, groveling loser that had no choice but to swallow Western supremacy in Eurasia and the world after the collapse of the Soviet Union. But none of that excuses Russian President Vladimir Putin’s illegal invasion. Moreover, it has backfired horribly, as Finland and Sweden are now likely to join Nato.

Ukraine has the right to defend itself, and US and Western arms manufacturers and politicians are glad to oblige with military aid and weapons transfers, but the risk of escalation, up to and including threats of using nuclear weapons, needs to be taken seriously. Unfortunately, the conflict also has potentially dire ripple effects. The Middle East and Africa face a serious food security crisis as wheat, other grains and food, and fertilizer prices are soaring from shortages due to the war, which has and will continue to decrease agricultural production in Ukraine and Russia, the breadbasket for hundreds of millions of people.

“I have to say that I am deeply concerned, namely with the risks of hunger becoming widespread in different parts of the world because of the dramatic food security situation we are facing because of the war in Ukraine,” UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said recently. The solution to ending this tragic war might well be to go big and go broad, with multilateral negotiations to address areas of common interest to the US, Russia, Ukraine, Europe and the world, on the following issues:

End the war now, as noted above. Not one more Ukrainian civilian, or Ukrainian or Russian soldier, needs to die or be maimed for life in this senseless slaughter. As noted, the issues to resolve are clear and well-known to all parties. Let’s get on with peace talks, brokered by whomever is most trusted to bring them to a successful conclusion.

Revive negotiations on nuclear disarmament. As the Doomsday Clock stands at a mere 100 seconds to midnight, the two most heavily armed nuclear powers cannot be allowed to dither, or worse, accelerate a nascent new arms race.