

The “Iron Curtain” is out there

Vladimir Platonenko

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The statements by Zelensky and a number of Western politicians calling for blocking Russians from travelling to Europe (as well as the actions of Estonia) are of course inhumane in their call and hypocritical in their justification. Even supposing a majority of Russians support Putin, why should the minority who do not support Putin suffer for it? It’s not only “un-Christian”, it’s even “un-Jewish” — as we know from the Book of Genesis, even a single righteous family was given the opportunity to flee the doomed city. But there is undoubtedly a rational, practical point to this call.

Throughout his reign Putin has been getting rid of his opponents by pushing them abroad. Lukashenko has been doing the same, by the way, but we are not talking about him now. So, all or most of the possible fighters against Putin’s regime ended up outside Russia. There are too few of them in the country to bring them down or at least shake up the regime. But if they are brought back to Russia, many of them will have only two choices: either to surrender (which does not guarantee them mercy) or to start an open fight. Many of them are trying to fight even abroad. But the struggle abroad is mostly an agitation to overthrow Putin, while in Russia they will have to take part in this overthrow themselves.

Ineffective? You don’t hammer nails with a microscope? But if there is no hammer and hammering a nail is a matter of life and death, you can sacrifice a microscope too. When anti-tank artillery is not available, suicide bombers armed with Molotov cocktails are thrown against tanks. Even though they know that out of a hundred suicide bombers, ninety will be killed before the bottle is thrown and another nine will burn up with the tanks they set on fire.

Inhumane? But no more inhumane than mobilising people for war without asking their consent. In theory, Putin’s Russian opponents could have been told: “We need partisans and underground fighters in Russia. Therefore we leave you in Russia.” Then they would look like Japanese kamikazes. Or submariners trapped in a burning compartment. And this way they would look like the Soviet “family members of renegades”, sent to “wash away the guilt” of their relatives with blood. But the essence of the matter does not change.

By the way, it could work. The “Iron Curtain” around the USSR prevented not only the “brain drain”, but also the “outflow of explosive material”, which was manifested in 1991 and 1993. Whether the curtain is drawn from inside or outside, what difference does it make?

Whether Zelensky and other politicians understand this and demand that all Russians should be deprived of their visas or whether they are just making populist statements is beyond me.

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