



“Explaining the Russian War in Ukraine: How Did We Get There?”

Speaker: Allen Lynch (University of Virginia)

Chair: Sergio Fabbrini (Luiss)

Date and Time: June 15th, 2022, **12:30 – 14:00hrs**

Aula 205AB - Viale Romania

Abstract (introduction of the main paper)

The war that Vladimir Putin’s Russia has been waging in Ukraine since February 24, 2022 violates one of the central lessons of Russia’s international history: do not go to war in Europe without some powerful European allies on your side, not to mention without such allies or even the unimaginable scenario of all of Europe (even neutral Switzerland, Finland, and Sweden) aligned against you. Just to cite the most famous examples: Between 1700-1721, Peter the Great defeated Sweden for predominance in the Baltic in alliance with Denmark, Poland, and Saxony; Russia’s territorial gains were recognized in the multilateral Treaty of Nystad of 1721. Between 1772-1795, when Russia under Catherine the Great eliminated Poland from the political map of Europe, it did so in close collaboration with Prussia and Austria, who each received their share. Between 1812-1815, Russia defeated Napoleon and sealed the peace at the Congress of Vienna in league with Britain, Austria, and Prussia. When Russia crushed the Hungarian constitutionalist revolution in 1849, it did so at the express invitation of Austria. And between 1941-45, Stalin’s Russia defeated Nazi Germany in a “Grand Alliance” with the United States and Britain.

Where this rule has been violated, or rendered null and void by circumstances, the results have been disastrous for Russia: Russia was defeated on Russian soil in the Crimean War fighting alone against a Franco-British-Turkish coalition, supported from afar by Austria. In 1878, at the Congress of Berlin, a diplomatically isolated Russia was forced by a united German and British front to give up most of its gains the previous year in the Russo-Turkish War. During the First World War, while Russia was formally allied with Britain and France, British inability to force the Turkish straits meant that Russia had to fight the combined armies of Germany, Austria and Turkey practically unaided, resulting in the collapse of the Tsarist system and the rapid emergence of Soviet Communism. And by the early 1980s, the strategic incompetence of the Brezhnev generation had led to a situation where the Soviet Union stood isolated against a

Luiss

Libera Università Internazionale
degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli

Viale Romania 32, 00197 Roma
T +39 06 85 22 52 90-57 00-57 02
scienzepolitiche@luiss.it

www.luiss.it

LUISS



coalition of powers including the United States, NATO Europe, Japan, and China whose combined economies were at least seven times higher than that of Soviet Russia's and whose technological superiority was much vaster still. Gorbachev understood the impossibility of this situation and made his bold break with the Soviet past. Putin has repeated this blunder, as retired Russian colonel Mikahil Khodoryonok stated to a shocked viewership on Russian television on May 16, underscoring Russia's dangerous strategic isolation.

Of course, Putin did not think that he would be waging a major war in Europe: he did not believe that Ukraine was European, he did not even believe that it was a real nation (as he told U.S. President Bush in April 2008), and he certainly could not have believed that Ukraine—even with the support of NATO countries—could put up much of a fight against the Russian Army. Such a war would be over in a matter of several weeks, at most, as Putin has boasted on a number of occasions since 2014.

About the Speaker

Allen Lynch is Professor at the Woodrow Wilson Department of Politics at the University of Virginia (1992 to the present), where he teaches international relations and Russian. In 2018, he was also appointed Senior Research Associate at the Center for Russian Studies, East China Normal University, Shanghai.

In addition to his teaching and research at Virginia, between 2010-2012 he was Director of Research at the University's Center for International Studies; between 1993-2008 he was Director of the University's Center for Russian and East European Studies, raising \$1.5 million for graduate fellowships in Russian and East European Studies. He has held the White Burkett Miller and Cumming chairs at the University and also the Dragas Chair at Old Dominion University.

Between 1989-1992 he was Assistant Director of the Harriman Institute for Advanced Study of the Soviet Union at Columbia University.

Between 1984-89 he was Research Associate (1984-86) and then Deputy Director of Studies at the Institute for East-West Security Studies in New York City.

From 1988-2012, Mr. Lynch was Executive Vice President of the Feris Foundation of America, in which pro bono capacity he helped raise and disburse more than \$1 million in Albert Gallatin Fellowships in International Affairs. He is currently Co-Treasurer of Friends of the Graduate

Luiss
Libera Università Internazionale
degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli

Viale Romania 32, 00197 Roma
T +39 06 85 22 52 90-57 00-57 02
scienzepolitiche@luiss.it

www.luiss.it

LUISS



Institute, Geneva, Switzerland, a foundation that has raised millions for international doctoral fellowships and the building of a new library at the Graduate Institute.

His Ph.D. is in Political Science, Columbia University, 1984; he has a Certificate from Columbia's Russian Institute (1979) and a B.A. from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1977, where he majored in History and graduated magna cum laude. At Stony Brook he was also All-American kicker/punter in 1975 in the 50-team National Club Sports Association. In 2017, Mr. Lynch was recruited to be the placekicker on the Virginia Silverbacks semi-pro football team (NFL rules) of the Atlantic Football Association: he made the All-Star Team in 2017, 2019 & 2021.

In 2011, Mr. Lynch published an interpretive biography of Vladimir Putin, "Vladimir Putin and Russian Statecraft" (Potomac Books), which has since been translated into Chinese (Jilin University Press). His other major works include:

- How Russia is—Not—Ruled (Cambridge University Press, 2005);
- Does Russia Have a Democratic Future? (Foreign Policy Association, 1997);
- Europe from the Balkans to the Urals (Oxford University Press, 1996)—co-authored with Reneo Lukic;
- The Cold War Is Over—Again (Westview Press, 1992);
- The Soviet Study of International Relations (Cambridge University Press, 1987), winner of the Marshall D. Shulman Award for Best Book by the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies.

Mr. Lynch has been a Visiting Professor at the German Council on Foreign Relations (Berlin) and the Free University of Berlin (both 2001); East China Normal University (Shanghai, 2008 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016), the University of Lyon (2014), Sichuan University (Chengdu, 2015), The Graduate Institute for International & Development Studies (Geneva 2014), Old Dominion University (2007), the Graduate School for Social Sciences (Paris, 2005), the Radio Free Europe Research Institute (Munich, 1993-94); the Albert Gallatin Fellow at the Graduate Institute for International Studies (Geneva, 1981-82); Visiting Scholar at the Russian Research Center, Harvard University (1980-81); International Fellow at Columbia University (1977-79); and Regents Scholar at SUNY Stony Brook (1973-77).

In 2007 Mr. Lynch received Teaching Awards from the University of Virginia and the American Political Science Association. In 1997, he received the Kleinhans Award for Service to UVA's School of Continuing and Professional Studies.

Luiss
Libera Università Internazionale
degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli

Viale Romania 32, 00197 Roma
T +39 06 85 22 52 90-57 00-57 02
scienzepolitiche@luiss.it

www.luiss.it



His articles have appeared in The New York Times, The Christian Science Monitor, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, CNN Today, and numerous other journals & newspapers in North America, Europe, Russia and China. He has consulted for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, the FBI Academy, the U.S. Air Force's Special Service School, the U.S. On-Site Inspection Agency, the U.S. Army's National Grounds Intelligence Center, and the Kettering Foundation, among others.

Mr. Lynch is fluent in Russian, French and Italian and reads in several other European languages (German, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish).

He is married to the former Tullia Maffei. They have one son (Thomas), who is now working in New York City.

Recent items published by Mr. Lynch include:

- "Putin's Russia," Great Decisions 2022 (Foreign Policy Association), pp. 77-88.
- "Vladimir Putin: Russia's Neo-Patrimonial Façade Democracy," in Klaus Larres, ed., Dictators and Autocrats: How They Obtained Power & How They Kept It (UK: Taylor & Francis, 2021), pp. 157-173.
- "Russian Realists on the Art of Diplomacy," Russian Review, vol. 79, no. 4 (Fall 2020), pp. 654-657 (Featured Review).
- "Why Putin Did Not Try to Help Elect Trump," East European Review (University of Warsaw), vol. X (Winter 2020), pp. 105-116.
- "The Eagle, the Dragon, and the Bear: The United States & the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1950-1965," Russian Studies (Center for Russian Studies, Shanghai), no. 6 (Fall 2019), pp. 61-90 (in Chinese).
- "What Russia Will Be: Four Scenarios for the Future of Putin's Russia and of Russia's Putin," The American Interest (January-February 2019), at: <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/10/25/what-russia-will-be/>
- "Russia's Foreign Policy," in the annual Great Decisions volume (January 2018) published by the Foreign Policy Association (pp.23-34).
- "[Russian] International Relations," in Understanding Contemporary Russia, second edition, Michael L. Bressler, ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2018), pp. 175-208.
- "Putin and Trump," Diplomatic History, vol. 42, no. 1 (September 2018), pp. 583-585.
- "Russia and the United States: Stuck at Empty," Virginia Policy Review, Vol XI, issue 2 (Spring 2018), pp.1-5.

LUISS



- “Ne na chto rasschityvat’, nechego boyat’sya” [Nothing to hope for, nothing to fear], Rossiya v global’noy politike [Russia in World Affairs], vol. 16, no. 5, September-October 2017. In Russian: <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/global-processes/Ne-na-chto-rasschityvat-nechego-boyatsya-19003>.
- “The Influence of Regime Type on Russian Foreign Policy toward “the West,” 1992-2015,” *Communist & post-Communist Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1 (March 2016), pp. 101-111.

Luiss
Libera Università Internazionale
degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli

Viale Romania 32, 00197 Roma
T +39 06 85 22 52 90-57 00-57 02
scienzepolitiche@luiss.it

www.luiss.it