

A Russian journalist predicted a year ago how it turns out: Russia attacks Ukraine, and this becomes a humiliation for Russia ¹

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March 27th 2022

Translated from the Finnish by Dr. Jouko Vaskimo ²

Aleksandr Nevzorov said in April 2021, that for Russia the war is above all an opportunity to steal from its own army, writes international news journalist of Helsingin Sanomat, Pekka Torvinen.



Aleksandr Nevzorov in Helvetia hotel in St Petersburg in July 2019. PHOTO: KSENIA IVANOVA / NEW YORK TIMES

¹ How to cite this article: Torvinen, P. (2022). A Russian journalist predicted a year ago how it turns out: Russia attacks Ukraine, and this becomes a humiliation for Russia, originally published in Helsingin Sanomat on 27 March 2022, republished in *PM World Journal*, Vol. XI, Issue IV, April.

² Translated and republished on approval of Helsingin Sanomat.

THROUGH the propaganda cranked out by the Russian administration, it is sometimes difficult to see that in Russia there are also clearly thinking public figures, who have not yet been put behind bars or silenced in other ways.

One of them is 63-year-old Aleksandr Nevzorov, an end-of-the-Soviet-times major TV star, a revealer of corruption and charismatic presenter of the *600 seconds* -program broadcast from Leningrad. He served also as an independent Member of Parliament in the Russian State Duma from 1993 to 2007.

Through many twists and turns, Nevzorov has turned into a bitter critic of the Russian regime, although he supported Vladimir Putin back in the day, and among other things, supported starting the first Chechnyan war in 1994.

He is no longer on television, but his Youtube channel has more than 1.6 million subscribers.

Nevzorov speaks with the appropriate words about the large-scale offensive war started by Russia in Ukraine.

“I see a war and I call it a war. And not just any war, but a criminal and schizophrenic war that destroys Russia completely”, Nevzorov wrote on Twitter in mid-March.

And when the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov claimed in early March that the Russian “special military operation” was intended to prevent a war in Ukraine or a starting war from Ukraine, Nevzorov said that there is no better example of “idiot logic”.

“Earlier this kind of reasoning could only be found in psychiatric textbooks, but thanks to the Russian Foreign Ministry, it can now be found in diplomatic telegrams. By this logic, accidental burning of the house can only be prevented by burning the house.”



Aleksandr Nevzorov filming the 600 seconds -program in Leningrad in 1989. PHOTO: PRESSENS BILD

VERY well put! However, after the large-scale Russian offensive in Ukraine, one of Nevzorov's earlier sarcastic news reports is much more delicious material. In hindsight, the review is in part even prophetic. Exaggeration, of course, but to what extent?

Nevzorov said on April 11th, 2021 (the same clip was published in March subtitled in fluent English), that the Russian war against Ukraine is inevitable, unfortunately. In the wake of propaganda about military exercises, "everyone now believes in the power of the Russian military machinery".

However, military exercises are just performances on an imaginary piano: Any great master can be performed, Nevzorov said. But when someone provides a real piano, humiliation begins.

"An awesome theoretical pianist can't even play even *Twinkle, twinkle little star* with one finger."

However the war turns out, it will end in a terrible defeat and tragedy for Russia, according to Nevzorov's assessment in April 2021.

According to Nevzorov, this is because there are only two outcomes from the war, and both of them are fatal for Russia: Either "a giant, angry and cruel monster named Russia tramples its small, proud and unprotected neighbor" or "a small, proud and defenseless neighbor tramples a giant, a cruel monster".

Nevzorov spoke of Russian war experts, who should never be listened to in any war-related matter. They expect Russian armored and infantry columns to just march on Kiev, as long as the defenses are first destroyed by missile strikes. According to Nevzorov, this can happen in military exercises and perhaps with huge bribes to Ukrainian forces. Maybe then Ukrainian troops will put their weapons down, when they have first obediently taken a few hits from missiles.

"All war analytics are largely performed by fools, fools who have long since lost their touch with reality or never had anything to do with it."

According to Nevzorov, no "expert" takes into account the beyond-fierce resistance of the Ukrainian forces or the complete inability of the Russian army to wage war.

"The first Chechnyan war was lost by the old Soviet army that still had some traditions, generals and war experience. There is nothing now."

"What is war for Russia? Above all, it is an opportunity to steal from its own army without fear of punishment, because everything can be written down. -- All the best deals are made at the front line."

According to Nevzorov, the first Chechnyan war showed that Russia has long since learned, how its own tanks can be sold to the enemy.

"It all starts with the disappearance of a couple of divisions. You can't do without it. Inevitably, the Russian Air Force will bomb those divisions. In Chechnya, it acquired a miraculous ability to bomb its own."

It is unlikely, that the Air Force has yet managed to lose this ability through drunkenness, Nevzorov said.

Conscripts will also be sent to the front lines, as is tradition, Nevzorov said. And so it happened. Russia even had to admit it.

"No soldier or officer has the slightest idea of why the hell they're here and whose yachts and palaces they're fighting for."

Nevzorov mentions the ambush humiliation of the Chechnyan war at Grozny's main railway station and is certain that similar ones will take place in Ukraine. And in Chechnya, Russia didn't even fight the right army, but against "some poets, gynecologists and surveyors," Nevzorov exaggerates.

"[In Ukraine], Russia is biting so much humiliation, that it cannot swallow it."

Ukraine, however, would be only half the problem, Nevzorov said. This may show his Russianness but also his sarcasm. The war would also have to be waged against Odessa, Nevzorov said. Odessa has traditionally been a very pro-Russian city.

"In other words, it's the best way to cheaply and eternally become a laughingstock of the world."

Nevzorov believed in April 2021, that the internal anti-war movement in Russia would eventually unite all who hate the current regime. That day has not been seen yet, but the future is unknown.

In Russia, Nevzorov is now suspected of publishing "false information" about the Russian armed forces because he proceeded to tell the truth about the bombing of the Mariupol Maternity Hospital on both Instagram and Youtube.

Following the March amendment to the Russian Penal Code, disseminating "false information" about the Russian armed forces, that is, any other than the "official truth" as defined by the Russian administration, can result in up to 15 years in prison.