



**FRIDAY,
NOV 4, 2022
12:00 PM (ET)
ROOM 302
INTERNATIONAL
CENTER**

CERES Brown Bag Talk:

The Not-So-Surprising Russian War on Ukraine

Natalie Melnyczuk

Euro-Atlantic Security Consultant

**Wayne State University, Department of Political Science
Government Affairs Committee, Ukrainian-American
Crisis Response Committee of Michigan**



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and Eurasian Studies**

Rarely in history do empires collapse in one fell swoop with the peaceful stroke of a pen. Usually much carnage occurs before, during and even after an empire's demise. Yet, in 1991 the West was generally anxious to perceive the collapse of the Soviet Union as a miraculous and complete end of Russian authoritarian, imperial rule. Indeed, the first decade of independence after the collapse exhibited some progress toward a building pluralistic, democratic systems, structures and societies throughout the countries of the former Warsaw Treaty. However, under President Putin's lead, Russia made a u-turn away from its democratic trajectory and returned to its familiar autocratic and colonial past.

Simultaneously, many nations in the region successfully pressed forward and established democracies over the past 30 years. This divergence of paths was underappreciated by many decision-makers in the West, leading to less than perfect policy decisions by some in the areas of energy, economics and national security. Too many focused on what appeared to be an ominous Russian shadow cast over Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus. Their vision of the independent nations and established direct relations became obfuscated as they focused on the shadow. This was not an accident.

Join us to discuss the West's generally over-optimistic hopes for Putin and Russia; successful obfuscation tactics of the Kremlin; underestimation of Ukraine's commitment to democracy, independence and cohesive national identity; and the resulting wars of Russia on Ukraine in 2014 and 2022.



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Ms. Melnyczuk has focused her work in the fields of foreign and security policy making in post-authoritarian States (specifically the States of the former Warsaw Treaty), and the Euro-Atlantic regions since before the Warsaw Treaty collapsed. She has worked in the academic, government, policy, business, think tank and not for profit sectors. Earning a B.A. with a double-major in Russian and East European Studies, and Political Science from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.; an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Illinois at Chicago; earned A.B.D. at The School of International Service, American University, Washington, D.C.; earned A.B.D. at Wayne State University in Political Science where she is currently writing a dissertation on hybrid warfare.



Ms. Melnyczuk's professional experience includes working as NATO Representative to Ukraine as the Head of the NATO Information and Documentation Center in Kyiv, Ukraine; as a Political Officer in the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Section at NATO HQ in Brussels, Belgium; as Manager of U.S.A.I.D.'s Parliamentary Development Project, U.S. – Ukraine Foundation, in Kyiv, Ukraine; in Research Analysis at RFE/RL, Munich, Germany; in Research at The United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C.; at Chicago Research and Trading, Management Partnerships International on the first American-Soviet high tech Joint Venture; at Heartland International, Chicago, Il., on parliamentary reform and democratization in Africa; and in various other academic/policy positions. She is currently a Consultant on Euro-Atlantic Security, a lecturer at Wayne State University, and a Doctoral Candidate in Political Science at Wayne State University where her research focuses on Euro-Atlantic Security, aspects of asymmetric warfare, and coming to a new understanding of Alliances.