

“Giant Mirror Syndrome” of the Dictators

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Abstract: *One of the common features of dictators is to suppress internal dissent, which they perceive as a threat to themselves, out of fear of external powers. They engage in war and conflict much more frequently than democratic regimes. Mostly, their countries come out of their problematic foreign relations with a loss. I can call it the "giant mirror syndrome" when dictators think they are much stronger than they are, but eventually learn how weak they are. This article briefly examines this syndrome, which has been experienced from the Falkland Islands problem to the last Ukraine crisis, with examples.*

1. Introduction

Russia is known as the second most powerful armed force in the world. However, the armed power of a country that is not economically and diplomatically strong cannot mean much.

Edmund Burke said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for the good to do nothing" or if we say it differently "for the bad to win, it is enough for the good to stand by" (Stanlis 1997).

Aggression to overcome the inferiority complex and narcissism is another characteristic of dictators. Inferiority complex is underlying their aggression psychologically (Lambe 2018).

Insecurity and low self-esteem, inability to reach your goals, or feeling "stuck", wanting to give up easily, assuming the worst, feeling the need to withdraw in social situations, often feeling down on yourself, experiencing anxiety and depression, being sensitive to criticism are most common signs and symptoms of an inferiority complex.

There are historical or personal psychological factors as well as economic and political factors under the causes of every war and aggression could be considered as a very important and basic psychological cause of war (Kogan 1976).

Leaders who try to overcome their inferiority complex can apply different leadership styles (Basran 2019). Most common style is dictatorial leadership.

The most well-known example of this syndrome is Adolf Hitler. He gradually occupied all of Europe, tried the Jewish genocide, and tried to suppress his inferiority complex with his cruelty. Seeing himself in the giant mirror, Hitler is a dictator who caused the Second World War, which resulted in the death of millions of people. In the end, he paid with his life that he was not at all as strong and big as he appeared in his giant mirror.

Another dictator with giant mirror syndrome is Argentine leader Leopoldo Galtieri. In 1982, Argentina occupied the Falklands and South Georgia Islands, was defeated at the end of the war that lasted for six weeks and withdrew from the occupied territories. In Argentina, the ruling Leopoldo Galtieri regime was overthrown after the war.

Another example of the syndrome is Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. Iraq first fought Iran and later invaded Kuwait in 1990. After Iraq's occupation of Kuwait for seven months, the struggle against Iraq was started by the coalition forces led by the United States, Saddam Hussein paid the price with his own life, and the Iraqi people suffered unbelievably.

The philosopher Georg Hegel famously said, "The only thing that we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history".

The case of "giant mirror syndrome" is Putin's attempt to invade Ukraine. Whatever the end of this occupation, it should not be difficult to predict how the dictators will end.

1.1 Russian Economy

How strong is the Russian economy and is it at a level to run a war economy despite sanctions?

Considering the place of the Russian economy in the world economy and its comparison with the Ukrainian economy, which it is trying to invade, the following important topics seem important (atlas. cid. harvard. edu/rankings).

A country's development index and economic resilience are more related to its complexity index (Hartman 2017).

- 1) 2020 GDP is 155.6 b USD in Ukraine and 1.485b USD in Russia. USA is 1st ranking with 66.300 USD GDP per capita, Russia has 11.436, Ukraine has 3500 USD.
- 2) Ukraine is 47 in ranking of ECI 2019 (Economic Complexity Index), Russia 52 (atlas. cid. harvard. edu/rankings). Japan is 1st one, USA is 11th, Japan 1st and Switzerland 3rd, Germany 4rd. France 19th, UK 12th.
- 3) One US dollar is equal to 29 Ukrainian Hryvnia and to 95 Russian Rubles. While the Hryvnia depreciated by 15% last year, the ruble depreciated by 25%.4-In the First of March 2022, 1 Ruble is 0.30 Hryvnia. The ruble is depreciating rapidly.
- 4) The Russian stock market had a big drop in the last week of February and was closed for trading. The loss was 150 billion USD within a days (www.bloomberght.com/doviz).
- 5) Russia's central bank more than doubled its key interest rate to 20%, and the Ruble fell to a record low

after a weekend that brought strict new economic sanctions from the U. S. and the European Union. The punishments for Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to mount a full-scale invasion of Ukraine are now hobbling Russia's economy. The Central Bank of Russia is grasping for ways to prop up the ruble. It last raised its key rate two weeks ago, to 9.5% (www.npr.org/2022/02/28).

- 6) 60% of Russia's exports originate from oil and its products, gas and natural resources. In other words, most of the export products are based on energy (atlas.cid.harvard.edu/countries/186/export-basket). Ukraine's export complexity index is higher than that of Russia. So it's diversified.
- 7) 60% of Russia's exports are to countries that impose sanctions on them in Europe. However, Ukraine, which has diversified its export countries more, receives help from the west and is supported.
- 8) While the Gini coefficient, which is the income distribution index, is 42 in Russia, it is 28.2 in Ukraine. All this shows that the Russian economy is not strong enough to enter the war and that Russia is a poor country except for a few oligarchs.
- 9) More importantly, the Russian economy is highly fragile.

More than an economic collapse, Russia, which is left alone in the world, is on the verge of a real collapse.

Joined by allies and partners, the United States imposes devastating costs on Russia (www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room). The unrealistically dreams of a dictator led to the deep drama of the civilian populations in both Russia and Ukraine.

Whether Russia invades Kyiv or not, it seems to have already Russia lost the war.

1.2 Putin's Policy; Putinism

Russia attacked Ukraine several times in history. This aggression is similar the aggression between China and Japan. According to the historical records Japan has attacked China seven times, but China has never attacked Japan. The irrationality of Japan's behavior is demonstrated by the repetition of this hostile behavior despite the enormous human and economic costs that Japan has suffered because of it. There could be several explanations to explain this aggressivity of Japan by projected paranoid aggression, collective Zeigarnik compulsion, perceived weakness exciting aggression, national inferiority feelings, cultural narcissism, and Oedipal-like hatred of a parent culture (Wang 2016).

Arnold Beichman argued that Putinism in this century became as an important code of Stalinism. Putin's foreign policy are used to support the populist approaches in Putin's domestic politics and the lies of foreign threats (Tsygankov 2010).

Putin and his inner circle do not seriously fear NATO military attacks, but they fear popular discontent, public questioning of their wealth, open criticism of the basic tenets of Putinism and, of course democracy and revolution

opinions (Appelbaum 2012).

Putinism is characterized by the concentration of political and financial powers in his own hands (Franz 2018). Narrowing inner circle, loyal security force, oppression, bans and antidemocratic approaches are the main characteristics of Putinism. Liberalism, pragmatism, and a racist nationalism are Putin's political understanding.

Combining his dream of becoming a national hero with historical obsessions, Putin has long been a threat to European security.

2. Conclusion

The most important approach to prevent the leaders of the giant mirror syndrome from harming their countries is to hold a mirror that shows them correctly and to allow them to see their true dimensions.

Psychologists participate in international political and economical bodies to clarify the psychological factors leading to war (Kogan 1976). The social scientists are very interested in that prevention of war be a current subject matter in psychological courses.

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