



## *Putin's Ukraine war could mean more Sustainable Change*

**Any war is disgusting and repulsive, but the current conflict playing out in Ukraine highlights the futility of warfare more than most.**

For the first time in decades Europe is host to a major war. Russia, one of the planet's superpowers, aims to subjugate its neighbour Ukraine: to pummel its so-called brother-state into submission. The result of this aggression is that Ukraine has resisted with all the strength it can muster, backed by the western alliance.



In real terms the consequence of Russian hostility is to galvanise Ukrainians into resentment and revulsion, taking any thoughts of compliance off the table. In addition, the wider picture underlines the total failure of Putin's assault to divide western powers; in fact, producing the opposite effect, strengthening the resolve of Europe and NATO to work together against such unbridled aggression, and embrace more humane attitudes towards refugees.

Looking more closely at potential long-term outcomes, it's possible to see a positive result in terms of *Sustainable Change*. Germany, Austria, Italy and other EU nations have become increasingly

reliant on oil and gas from Russia, but now that dependency on an unreliable partner is being seriously questioned, and in all likelihood will be severely reduced.

So what could come in its place?

In the short-term, Europe will turn to other sources for oil and gas: particularly Middle-Eastern countries and USA. But Europe also realises that some of these sources could be as unpredictable as Russia, and that oil and gas anyway are fossil fuels, which – in response to the climate crisis – they intend to reduce their dependency on.

Hence the longer-term outcome could be a more rapid changeover to renewable energies as a source of powering their domestic and industrial needs:

hydropower, solar, wind, wave and geothermal sourced energies in the main. It could also result in a resumption for some countries (Germany is the prime example) of the nuclear power option, to support these renewables.

Coupled with such changes to sourcing of energy, there could be a stronger drive to move away from anything which connects to and depends on fossil fuel derivatives. Thus, a change to transport systems which are driven by electrical or hydrogen-sourced power, as well as a more rapid move to mass transit systems for people and cargo, that depend on rail, rather than road.

Some of these choices will be difficult to make. The nuclear option comes with its long-term dangers, and renewables such as hydropower, wind, or solar can be unsightly or *land-hungry*, and thus unfriendly or inappropriate. Tough decisions will need to be made, but because of Ukraine, are likely to be more readily accepted by the European population.





Here in Kenya, as we look on from afar at the plight of our friends in Ukraine, brought about by an unwarranted invasion, and unjust war, it is useful to think that good could spring from bad, helping in the longer term, to support a more sustainable world. We can only hope and pray for peace.

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