



Solidarity Ukraine – issue 50- Number 4 – 4th dimension

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The Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering (iriv) joins the international solidarity in favor of Ukraine attacked by Russia on February 24, 2022. The Covid pandemic has weakened democratic countries. Conspiracy theories and hate speech have exploded. This war in Europe is existential for the European Union. This Newsletter is the 4th published in 2026 and the 50th since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine. April, fourth month of the year begins with another war in the Middle East that is just as strategic and important for the Europeans. For the generation born in the 1960s, the strange feeling of a flashback 40 years ago. The 1973 Yom Kippur war provokes the first oil shock and a global economic crisis. The unbridled growth in energy sources and hydrocarbons has stopped. The 1972 Meadows

report (1), commissioned by the Club of Rome, already warned about «The limits to growth. This research work addressed the impossibility of infinite economic growth and the inevitable shortage of raw materials. In 2026, Russia is again on the wrong side of history by supporting Iran, which has been martyring its population and directly or indirectly harassing its neighbors and the West since the advent of the mullahs' regime in 1979. Ukraine was able to react by offering its assistance to the allies of the Europeans in the Persian Gulf in a field of expertise that has done wonders - the drones' industry. Europe is directly concerned by this new war in the Middle East. The two European nuclear powers - France and the United Kingdom - sent their naval ships (French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, British destroyer "HMS Dragon") to the Mediterranean. This fourth dimension may be rich of hopes for Europe

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* logo designed by Caritas Canada in February 2022

Number four – the quaternary key

In Christian cosmography, number four is even more emblematic than number three. The medieval symbolism is «in quaternary key» according to the medievalist Fransesc Relano (2). He evokes "the cruciform plan of the churches, with almost always the apse and the altar oriented towards the East so that the main angles of the construction coincide with the four cardinal points". In Christian literature, the symbolism of number four is extended 'to a whole series of correspondences between man, the world and the heavens. The whole universe and its parts, from microcosm to macrocosm, were united in a close sympathetic relationship. He quotes Isidore of Seville (ca 560-636), "one of the most influential compilers of medieval science" who "illustrates in various 'wheels' the staging of this analogical issue: the four cardinal directions are related to the four seasons, the four material properties (cold, heat, humidity, drought), the four moods and the four sublunar elements. He adds other "quaternary associations" present in medieval Christian literature such as "the four main winds, the four evangelists, the four rivers of Paradise, etc.)." Finally, he recalls the «quadripartite division of the world» which consists of «three known parts of the oecumenism (Asia, biblical contribution of the location of Paradise in the East, Africa and Europe) plus an additional fourth part: the region of the Antipodes.»

In French history, under the Ancien Régime (1555-1610), King Henry IV remained famous for his religious conversion "Paris is well worth a mass", and his tragic end, assassinated in Paris, in a kingdom still traumatized by the wars of religion (1562-1598) which opposed Catholics and Protestants. In modern history, the Fourth Republic (27 October 1946 - 4 October 1958) remained associated with chronic instability. But it also allowed France to lay the foundations of a modern democracy after the ordeal that constituted for four years the Vichy regime, a "past that does not pass" for many historians, and French people (3).

In geometry, the square is a quadrilateral with four equal sides and four right angles. The symbolic charge is strong: the square evokes stability, robustness, and fullness. In design and architecture, it is closely linked to the notions of community and equality. A 'square' is a well-designed garden that has its base or a square face. The courtyard of French museum the Louvre is an example of architectural harmony. A square character is also the trait of a direct and upright personality, which does not support false appearances, but which can be as abrupt and sharp, therefore divisive. The conflicts in Ukraine since 2004 (and even since its independence in 1991), and in the Middle East since 1979 with the advent of the Islamic Republic are part of a quadrature of the circle, an insoluble problem, an unachievable thing, unless considering a radical solution to get out of the circle. It can surprise in a first place but it can be judicious in redistributing the cards (a New deal) – both the end of Putin's regime and that of the Mullahs.

Four walls for Russia and its allies

An expression has remained famous - four walls are useless, only one is enough. This radical solution is advocated by military extremists who prefer to execute the prisoners of war (a wall for the firing squad) rather than put them in prison (four walls). They thus violate the rules of war, universal since the 1951 Geneva Convention (4). The way an army treats its prisoners is revealing of its state of mind. The fate reserved for its own nationals, in prison, is very revealing of the degree of oppression of a regime. Russia under Vladimir V. Putin has been supporting the bloodiest and most corrupt regimes in the Middle East since he became president in 2000. Who looks alike assembles.

Russia first supported the Assad clan (5) which led to the death and disappearance of hundreds of thousands of opponents in more than fifty years of dictatorship (1970-2025), not hesitating to use chemical weapons against its own population (Hafez and Bashar Assad), resulting in the exile of millions of Syrians. Bashar al-Assad took refuge with his family in Moscow at the end of 2024, taking away the millions diverted by his clan, leaving the country bled dry. Putin's regime is an unconditional support of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which came to power in 1979 with Ayatollah Khomeini and then Ali Khomeiny (since 1989). As soon as they took power, the Revolutionary Guards (200,000 people), the terrible Pasdarans, helped on the ground by Basij (600,000 people) practiced terror on their population, increasing arrests and summary executions, using torture, rape, blackmail and extortion. The Iranians tried several times to protest the bloody regime. Demonstrations have multiplied since 2009, mobilizing all segments of the population (young people, students, and their families). Since 2022, and the murder of a young Kurdish-Iranian woman arrested then killed by the morality police for having worn her veil incorrectly, protests have developed with the rise of the 'Woman, Life, Freedom' movement which has mobilized the entire population. In January 2026, the merchants of the bazaar of Tehran were the first to demonstrate in a capital on the edge of asphyxia and against increasingly harsh living conditions, as public funds were diverted. Millions of Iranians walked peacefully through the streets of all cities in Iran. The repression of the Revolutionary Guards was of the bloodiest kind, using weapons of war against unarmed protesters, of all ages, and killing in two days (January 8 and 9, 2026) more than 30,000 Iranians.

Like the war in Ukraine, latent since 2004 (and probably 1991), the conflict in the Middle East, insidious since 1970 in Syria and since 1979 in Iran, came to light on February 28, 2026 with the American-Israeli attacks against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The regime of the mullahs and the Assad clan have multiplied reprisals against Western democracies. Since the 1970s, terrorist attacks financed by their regimes have often been perpetrated through their proxies (6). Russia is on familiar ground with Syria and Iran.

4th letter – D for drone in Ukraine

The fourth letter of the Latin alphabet, D, is synonymous with drones, a main feature of conflict and modern wars (notably hybrid against civilians). The kamikaze drones of the Shahed type, manufactured by Iran, are massively sent by the Russian army against Ukrainians, both civilians and military. Appeared in the fall of 2022, they have become a constant threat to Ukrainians. Russia massively produces them under the name "Geran". They improved their capabilities, for example by being able to drop 500 drones in a single night to saturate the Ukrainian air defense. (7)

From the beginning of the conflict, the Ukrainians have done wonders with their own drones, on land and at sea. They allowed them to inflict severe losses, human but especially material, on the Russian army, on the Black Sea or land frontlines. Ukraine has become a technological laboratory. As of 2022, it has deployed hundreds of "mobile shooting groups" composed of soldiers installed on vans equipped with spotlights and machine guns. The new war in the Middle East surprised and worried Ukraine, fearing that it might distract its allies from its own conflict with Russia. It was able to react. The Ukrainian president has multiplied the signals of collaboration since March 2026. He offered to share Ukrainian technologies with the Gulf countries attacked by Iran, Russia's unwavering partner. He wishes to put at the service of West's allies an expertise acquired by four years of war. Western missiles are crucial for the Ukrainian defense. If used in the war in the Middle East, they will be missing in Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelenski offers an exchange of services with Ukrainian interceptor drones that will allow the Gulf countries to defend themselves against Iranian drones. The United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Jordan or Bahrain are interested; other countries have shown their interest. The Ukrainian proposal is to exchange the American Patriot missiles available to the Gulf countries for highly effective Ukrainian interceptor drones against the Iranian drones, the Shahed. For the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Ukrainian Parliament, Oleksander Merejko, the transactional approach of President Volodymyr Zelenski aims to show the Americans that Ukraine can be a real partner in conflicts that are not its own with allies of the Americans. He insists on the fact that the first enemy of the United States, Iran under the Mullahs' regime, is strongly supported by Russia.

On the night of Thursday, March 12, 2026, a drone offensive in Iraq, claimed by a pro-Iran Islamist group, caused the death of the first French soldier of the seventh battalion of Alpine chasseurs in Varcès (France) (8). According to the French General Staff of the Armed Forces, the military personnel targeted were "engaged in training activities on counterterrorism with Iraqi partners". As part of an international anti-jihadist coalition led by Washington, soldiers from several countries, including Italy and France, are training members of the Kurdish security forces in Iraqi Kurdistan. According to the French Ministry of the Army, more than 600 French soldiers are deployed between Iraq and Syria as part of this operation. Ukrainian expertise is an essential asset for all its allies, in the Persian Gulf, in Europe and the USA.

A fourth dimension full of hopes in Europe

Since February 28, 2026, the generations born before the 1970s (boomers and generation X) have the strange feeling of reliving a familiar situation. They entered a curious fourth dimension - from the Yom Kippur war in 1973 to the war against Iran in 2026. The energy weapon already used by Russia against the Europeans is the one brandished by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2026. It attacks its neighbors in every way, claiming the establishment of American or European military bases. Iran wants to trigger an energy crisis, with oil price inflation. The Revolutionary Guards have been blocking the Strait of Hormuz since March 2026, a strategic area, one of the most feverish on the planet, with the passage of hydrocarbons from the world's largest producers (Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait). Indispensable for the supply of hydrocarbons (oil and gas), it is vital to the global economy (9). But the forces involved have changed. Western democracies have many allies among the oil monarchies of the Persian Gulf, very destabilized by Iran, with which the Westerners have concluded trade, cultural or security agreements. The French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle and the British missile carrier destroyer HMS Dragon were sent to the Mediterranean in March 2026 to support our traditional allies, Cyprus attacked by Iran, the United States and Israel on the front line, and to defend the interests of our allies in the Gulf countries with which we have concluded assistance treaties. Iran's strategy of chaos isolates it and could redistribute the cards to the benefit of Europe.

The war of drones, and the threat they pose to strategic places (industrial, military, nuclear...) as well as to civilian populations, is characteristic of modern conflicts, in Ukraine and the Middle East. Since mid-November 2025, outside the war zones, Russian drones are massively used against European countries. About forty events have been recorded in Europe - in Sweden, France, Poland, Romania, Germany or Belgium. If Ukraine has developed real expertise in drones, European industrialists, and particularly French ones, are positioning themselves on the increasingly civilian anti-drone market (10). The European Defense Financing Plan (SAFE) aims to support this industry. (11) The expected oil shock will have major effects on the European energy strategy. We must reduce our dependence on suppliers who are too exposed by threatening neighbors (Gulf countries) or hostile ones (Russia). The oil from the North Sea will not be sufficient for our supply. This new hydrocarbon crisis makes it crucial to develop alternatives. The renewable energies planned by the European Green Deal are recovering. (12). Nuclear power has returned to the agenda of many Western countries and their allies, particularly in the military field, first steps towards a common European defense according to Romano Prodi, former President of the European Commission (13).

The Europe of 2026 is no longer that of 1973. The war in Ukraine, like that in the Middle East, is reshaping a new European industrial, energy, and defense strategy . Stronger together, and with more allies, “don't give up the fight” (14). *Slava Ukraini* !-

- (1)) Meadows Report published by MIT in 1972
- (2) Relano, F. (2003). *Cosmographia Arithmetica: le monde, ses parties et la numérogie médiévale*. Le Moyen Age, Tome CIX(1), 113-127. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rma.091.0113>.
- (3) **Eric Conan et Henry Rousso** « Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas », *Paris : Fayard, sept. 1994*
- (4) signed in 1951 and ratified by 196 States, war, International Red Cross (IRD)- <https://www.icrc.org/fr/document/les-regles-de-la-guerre-pourquoi-sont-elles-importantes>
- (5) Radio France, Podcast December 2024- <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/podcasts/le-zoom-de-france-inter/le-zoom-de-france-inter-du-lundi-09-decembre-2024-9132043> .
- (6) Pro-Palestinian terrorist organizations that multiplied the attacks in Europe in the 1970s in France or Germany (1972) or pro-Iranian Shiite militias – Hezbollah in Lebanon from 1982, Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Houthis in Yemen, pro-Iranian Iraqi militias
- (7) Thomas d'Istria « L'Ukraine tente de se rendre indispensable dans la guerre des drones » ; Le Monde, 7 mars 2026
- (8) France Info- vendredi 13 mars 2026- https://www.franceinfo.fr/monde/iran/guerre-entre-les-etats-unis-israel-et-l-iran/ce-que-l-on-sait-de-l-attaque-de-drones-en-irak-dans-laquelle-un-soldat-francais-a-ete-tue-et-plusieurs-autres-blesses_7865090.html
- (9) Vie publique, 6 mars 2026- <https://www.vie-publique.fr/parole-dexpert/277081-le-detroit-dormuz-verrou-strategique-du-golfe-persique>
- (10) Olivier Pinaud « Les industriels préparent la lutte antidrone », Le Monde, vendredi 13 mars 2026
- (11) SAFE funding plan - <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/policies/safe/>
- (12) European Commission - Green Deal- https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en
- (13) Romano Prodi « La France propose un moyen concret de prévenir la prolifération nucléaire en Europe », tribune publiée par Le Monde, vendredi 13 mars 2026
- (14) Peter Tosh / Bob Marley “Get Up, Stand Up « , Jamaïca, 1973

Newsletter written on Friday, March 13, 2026 – 12th visit to Paris of Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenski, updated on April 1st, 2026