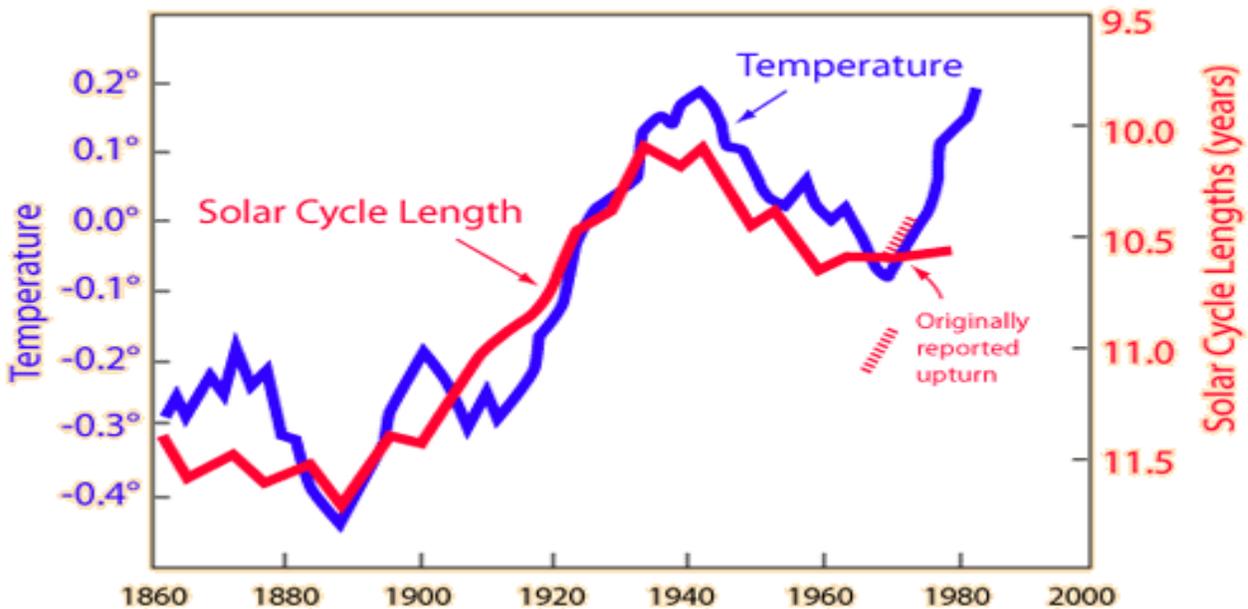


THE SUN, CROPS AND THE WAR.

The sun appears to be heating up. The previous solar cycle 24 which ended in 2019 (although experts are not exactly sure of the termination date) was the weakest solar cycle in 100 years. Since the 1950s there has been no net change in solar irradiance showing that global warming is entirely (wo)man made. Variations to solar cycles can impact earth weather, but not immediately. Climate scientists have been too defensive about the role of solar irradiance less it detracts from the primary cause of global warming – society’s greenhouse gas emissions. However there is evidence, though controversial, by a scientist called [Durkin](#) that up until the 1970s, the effect of irradiance was detectetable until it was overwhelmed by the cumulative effect of greenhouse gas emissions.

Graph 1.
Temperature and Solar Activity
120 years



See this primer from [NASA for the official view](#). Given that the current solar cycle 25 has been stronger up to now compared to earlier predictions, could it affect earth weather? I believe this may happen because the ecosphere has become so fragile with so many of the buffers depleted, that it could be affected by irradiance in ways not yet understood nor anticipated. We will know shortly because the maximum will be reached in 1925-6.

What is happening in India currently could be the canary in the coal mine. Over a billion people have been sweltering in the hottest April and May since records began 122 years ago, and it is getting hotter. And yet the flare of global warming continues to be obscured by the fog of war. It could be the case that many more people on the Indian sub-continent could die from heat stroke than the war in Ukraine, which in turn is making matters worse by accelerating global warming through creating a reliance on coal as a substitute for Russian gas.

We are effectively running out of time to reverse climate change. The window of opportunity to limit warming to 1.5^c is now only a few years, but it seems the British Government is more intent on reigning in demonstrators by jailing and bankrupting them with new laws, than it is on reigning in global warming. *“The chance of temporarily exceeding 1.5°C has risen steadily since 2015, when it was close to zero. For the years between 2017 and 2021, there was a 10% chance of exceedance. That probability has increased to nearly 50% for the 2022-2026 period.”* [World Meteorological Organisation](#). We are in a climate emergency and yet a few thousand capitalist families are more intent on rescuing their profits through war than they are on rescuing our planet.

Ukraine.

This is a war which need not have happened and should not have happened had a failing empire not found a willing stooge in Zelensky. The USA deployed a classic bait and trap tactic on the Russians. The last time they used this tactic, resulting in global consequences, was in the Gulf. To paint the background. After the Ayatollahs overthrew the Shah whom the USA had installed, the West feared this would destabilise the Gulf Region. They instructed yet another one of their stooges, Saddam Hussein, whom the CIA had imposed on the Iraqi people in what the CIA called their “perfect coup”, to invade Iran.

This led to the brutal 8 year ‘Iran Iraq War’. During the War, Kuwait lent \$14 billion to Iraq and provided infrastructural support. After it ended Kuwait demanded repayment. In the meantime Kuwait had increased its oil production to keep prices down and much of that additional oil came from the oil field which straddled the Kuwaiti-Iraq border.

This border was drawn up in Whitehall, London. Kuwait effectively became part of the British Empire (a Protectorate) after the First World when the British opportunistically defined its borders with Saudi Arabia and Iraq. [However](#): *“Throughout the nineteenth century and up to World War I, Kuwait was a “Qadha,” a district within the Basra Province, and it was an integral part of Iraq under the administrative rule of the Ottoman Empire.”* Of course the English professors in their ivory towers funded by the proceeds of Empire denied this history, concluding that Iraq’s claims were “vague” while Britain’s was strong. Thus Iraq bore a double grievance, firstly the recent behaviour of the Kuwaitis, and secondly the legacy of Empire.

After the end of the war tensions with Kuwait increased as Kuwaiti oil production remained elevated helping to depress the global price of oil, thereby making it more difficult for Iraq to repair its finances. Saddam had made it quite clear that he would resort to military means to resolve the dispute should the Kuwaitis refuse to negotiate. The US was on guard. Were Iraq to take over Kuwait it would control 20% of the global oil supply, enough to finance and maintain the most powerful and battle-hardened military in the region reaching as far as Israel. Clearly the lieutenant the CIA had put into power was judged by the USA to have grown too big for his boots.

This set the scene for the meeting with the US Ambassador prior to the invasion who typically spoke with the forked tongue of the Imperialist. At no time did she warn Hussein in their meeting that the US would not allow a military incursion into Kuwait. Quite the opposite, she pretended the US would look the other way, as if the global hegemonic power would ever do that. There was the bait, draw in the Iraqis and destroy them in Kuwait. That way the USA could portray itself as the defender of nations.

The same ‘bait and trap’ tactic was deployed against Putin. This is graphically illustrated in the following article written by an expert in his field who had intimate knowledge of developments in the Ukraine having

been seconded to NATO. <https://www.thepostil.com/the-military-situation-in-the-ukraine/?print-posts=pdf> This ex-Swiss Intelligence Officer describes the systematic provocations by the Kyiv government after the 2014 coup against the populations of Luhansk and Donetsk resulting in 14,000 civilian deaths, and in particular the March 2021 declaration by Zelensky to attack the Crimea. And if there is any doubt about the seriousness of this intent, consider the 60,000 Ukrainian troops sent East long before Putin massed troops on his side of the border. Though Putin unlike Hussain was to tread lightly, in the end the bait which had been prepared by NATO became irresistible because it kept being ratcheted up.

The trap of course was the long preparation by the Ukrainians under the tutelage of NATO for just such a war. This included building fortifications, military training both within the Ukraine as well as in Britain, the USA and Canada, the re-arming of the Ukrainian military with advanced short-range weaponry and finally, and never to be excluded, the financing and shaping of the Fascist elements in Ukrainian society into a fanatical fighting force increasingly integrated into the Ukrainian military.

And despite the emergence of all of this, the putrid SWP continues to peddle the pro-western myth that this is a war between two imperial blocks, the West and Russia, and therefore a pox on both their houses. So instead of educating British workers about the nature and machinations of imperialism in order to build working class political independence, they join in the chorus condemning Russia and Putin. Well at least they are consistent. When it comes to strategic issues they always get it wrong. They got it wrong in 1989 when the Berlin Wall fell, they got it wrong over Brexit and now they have got it wrong over the Ukraine. Unfortunately, ossified groups like the SWP don't abide by the rule, 'three strikes and you are out.'

This war above all other wars has been drenched in misinformation. Day after day the free (to lie) press in the West drips with accusations of Russian massacres and abuse. The atrocities they declare are indisputable and they have all been caused by the Russians. You see the Ukrainian army is above reproach because it abides by the NATO ideal as demonstrated in Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Afghanistan. To get a clearer picture of what is really taking place who better than Scott Ritter, the ex-US marine who helped destroy Iraqi weaponry, who then became a weapons inspector for the UN, until he finally could not stomach US foreign policy and the carnage it was causing before being honey-trapped to destroy his reputation.

What he shows is that most of the accounts of atrocities such as Bucha were fabricated, and more importantly, that Ukrainian civilian deaths relative to military deaths are significantly lower compared to the carnage around the US military in its wars. In Iraq after 2 months over 200,000 civilian deaths were recorded compared to [3381](#) (official UN data) in the Ukraine, both countries having similar populations. He shows that the ratio of 7 civilian deaths to 1 combatant death in Iraq, is far higher than that found in the Ukraine. In the end it will all trickle out, notably that the barbarism was mainly on the Ukrainian side. <https://mronline.org/2022/04/14/the-ukrainian-conflict-is-a-u-s-nato-proxy-war-but-one-which-russia-is-poised-to-win-decisively-scott-ritter/?msclkid=c81b8b9aceeb11ec82952f806fb94174>

In this regard it is interesting looking at Mariupol. Originally, whenever a refugee-corridor was opened up it was fired upon with the western media blaming the Russians for this, despite the fact they had set up these corridors. This only ended when the Ukrainian military was expelled or confined to the steel works ensuring free passage. And yet the western media has not commented on this change.

However, the trapping of civilians fits in with the NATO doctrines developed during the Cold War before the large-scale production of tactical nuclear weapons, when it was felt the cities needed to be turned into battle fields to arrest the movement of the Red Army. Zelensky defended this strategy together with

the siting of weapons in urban areas as evidenced in his a reply to a direct question from the [Washington Post](#). *“In response to written questions from The Post, Alexei Arestovich, adviser to the head of the office of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, said the country’s military doctrine, approved by parliament, provides for the principle of “total defense.”* (my emphasis) However, the doctrine of total defense violates the rules of war as the paper went on to point out. *“The Ukrainian military has “a responsibility under international law” to remove their forces and equipment from civilian-populated areas, and if that is not possible, to move civilians out of those areas, Weir said. “If they don’t do that, that is a violation of the laws of war,” he added. “Because what they are doing is they are putting civilians at risk. Because all that military equipment are legitimate targets.”* But in strategic hotspots that is exactly what the Ukrainian military did not do, especially the Azov regiment, which made a virtue of trapping civilians in the urban structures they had fortified to use as human shields.

The western media speculates about disobedient Russian soldiers and defective equipment. In reality much of the war in the East is a civil war. Most of the cutting-edge fighting is being done by soldiers from Donetsk or Luhansk with the Russian military providing the artillery, rockets and planes. If the [daily briefing](#) by the Russian military is accurate then Ukrainian military casualties exceed 40,000 since the beginning of the war, a large number which the Ukrainian and Western media dare not report lest it undermine their fantastical claim that Ukraine will win this war.

While much has been written and said about military aid from NATO, less has been said about the intelligence provided to Ukrainian forces. And less will be said in future now that the Biden administration has told the CIA and the Pentagon to shut up about their intelligence wins. It is likely that the intelligence about the disposition of Russian troops, the movement of senior officers, the location of ships and so on has been more important tactically than the physical hardware which has been supplied to Ukrainian forces.

Gains made by the Ukrainian army in the Kharkiv region is constricting Russian supply lines in the East. This represents the main thrust from the Ukrainian army which was previously concentrated around Kyiv and which is likely to be met by a counter-attack launched from Russia itself. Together with the use of Odessa as a military base on the far side, these two prongs are designed to relieve pressure on the strategic centre around Donetsk and Luhansk where Russian forces are making decisive progress. It is here where the battle will be won or lost as tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers are now in danger of being bottled up. The use of Odessa as a military base and hub is a big gamble by Zelensky because it will force Russia to engage with this city cutting off the last available Ukrainian port. This will have devastating economic consequences for what is left of the Ukrainian economy. The fighting in the steel works at Mariupol is now without military significance retaining only symbolic relevance.

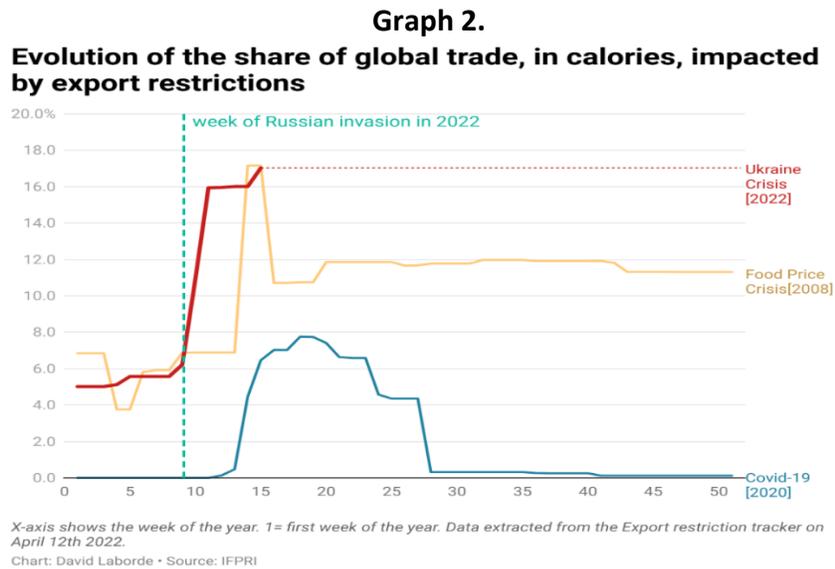
Finally, a quick word on Fascism. Reporters within the western media have been fired for describing the Azov regiment as Nazis rather than simply the far-right as instructed by their editors. People can be patriots without being Nazis, but only a Fascist believes in purity of race casting others as sub-human, only a Fascist believes in expelling or purging foreigners and others, only Fascists militarise religion and other myths, only Fascists seek the destruction of the organisations of the working class reflecting their petty bourgeois aspirations and because of this petty bourgeois inclination Fascists always hanker after an elevated and strong leader, and only Fascists are assembled to bolster a weak capitalist state in its hour of need. Finally, the soil on which Fascism grows is the demoralisation of the working class through

repeated betrayals by its representatives, nowhere more so than in the Ukraine which has been on the edge of being a failed state for a number of years.

The Azov regiment fulfils all these requirements including that of shoring up the Ukrainian army.

Crops.

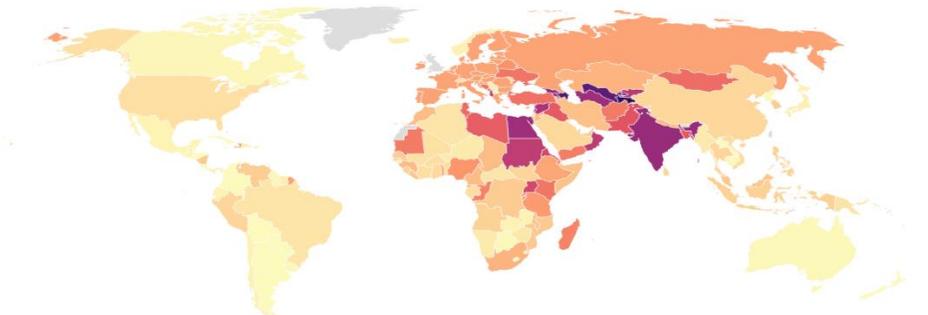
[The International Food Policy Research Institute](#) reports that 23 countries have resorted to food protectionism or national hoarding representing 17% of total global calories. Russia and Ukraine alone account for 12% of these restricted calories. This is equal to the height of the 2008 crisis as Graph 2 below shows, but it is expected to be more enduring.



And of course it will be the poorer, import dependent countries, with little foreign reserves who will suffer the most. They face a double shock because most traded food is traded in Dollars whose exchange rate has shot up recently.

Graph 3.
Impact of restrictions on importers

Cumulated effects since early 2022



Data extracted from the Export restriction tracker on April 12th 2022.
Map: David Laborde • Source: IFPRI

The USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) produces a [World Agricultural Outlook](#). The table below is taken from its April report. I have now updated the report to include May It shows that agricultural production has been downgraded this month (May). Coarse grains have fallen by 6.2% mainly due to the downward revision to corn and wheat. There is now clear evidence that the war in the Ukraine, climate events, shortages of inputs such as fertiliser together with their rise in price as well as that of diesel is starting to impact global food production with acreage and yields falling.

Table 1.

CROP	YoY change % (global April)	YoY change % (global May)
Soybeans	+4.63	+12.97
Oilseeds	+1.1	+8.42
Rice	-1.0	+0.4
Oats	+13.1	+11.14
Barley	+9.4	+2.72
Corn	+7.5	-2.87
Coarse Grains	+4.52	-1.7
Wheat	+0.33	-0.6

With world agricultural output falling, with global food trade restricted, the resulting spike in food prices increases the likelihood of starvation escalating around the world. And it is not only poorer countries but [poorer families in richer countries](#) as well who are suffering. *“Further research by the Trussell Trust has shown that last winter – even before inflation and energy prices soared – one in three people receiving Universal Credit were skipping meals. As the current crisis bites, this is only getting worse. Food banks are hearing more and more of people struggling to survive, unable to afford the essentials and making impossible decisions between heating and eating.”* For the first time since 2008 the income of hundreds of thousands of families in Britain does not cover the essentials they need to stay healthy and fed.

But this government still finds money to stoke the war in Ukraine, but none to feed British people.

Conclusion.

What system is mad enough to provoke a war while the world is still reeling from the aftermath of a pandemic? Which system is mad enough to provoke a war at a time when global emissions need to be reduced not added to by war? The deranged capitalist system.

Many reasons have been given why the Yankee Imperialists intensified their provocations at this fragile moment for humanity. The only viable answer, the USA recognises it is running out of time as China grows and it is this desperation which was the trigger. As for the dummkopf Germans, it was probably their assessment that a dynamic China would be a bigger competitive threat in the future than a declining USA today. Whatever the case, all their calculations were refracted by the prism of profit and nothing else, confirming that the profit motive has now become a curse, and not only a curse, but a threat to all of humanity.

Brian Green, 12th May 2022.