

## UPF-Czech Republic: Ukraine Today - the Prospect of an End to the Conflict

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Two years ago, the war began in Ukraine. Many believed it would soon conclude, assuming it would be just one of many dismal episodes in human history. However, the conflict in Ukraine persists, and people are still awaiting a just and positive resolution. What are the prospects for ending the conflict in Ukraine, and who are the main players?

This was the topic of a lecture and discussion organized by the Czech UPF chapter at the Peace Embassy on January 24, 2024. The guest speaker was Mr. Alex Švamberk, a respected journalist, editor, and renowned expert on Ukraine.

At the beginning of his presentation, the speaker remarked, 'When somebody attacks another, I cannot apply the Biblical 'if your enemy is hungry, feed him.' In politics, this does not hold true. In Ukraine, it is not a civil conflict; maybe initially, it looked like that, but now it is a war between two states and perhaps some more.'

"How to end the conflict?" the speaker asked himself the question. He stated that the time is not ripe yet. Russia does not want to negotiate and is unwilling to give in.

Despite claims that both Russia and Ukraine are the same, Mr. Švamberk debunked this notion. He highlighted that Ukraine does not recruit 18-year-olds for the army. The speaker mentioned that Russia is waiting for the U.S. elections, and there is a possibility that Russia may continue to attack other countries. "Peace is important, but it does not mean allowing one side to dominate the other," proclaimed the speaker.

"Germany has a long history of economic cooperation with Russia, aiming to combine its advanced technology with cheap Russian raw materials, while hoping that this would spur Russia on the path to democracy. " Mr. Švamberk explained. "However, Russia did not want to develop democracy as Germany expected, and instead diverted the profits from this cooperation to different purposes."

"In today's global world, interest groups cooperate to achieve common goals. Coalitions are formed ad hoc, with groups pushing their objectives and collaborating with others for the same purpose."

Following the lecture, there were numerous questions, and participants appreciated the content and insights shared by the speaker.