



It Seems That a War between Europe and Russia is Inevitable

Andras Hugyik

Association of Hungarian Peacekeepers, Hungary.

Abstract

The author intends for this research article to shed new light on the problems of ending the Russian-Ukrainian war. The article presents the interests behind the European Union's full support for Ukraine, the EU policy on the Russian-Ukrainian war, and the expected consequences of this policy. Considering that the EU could have prevented the escalation of the conflict on three occasions over the past ten years (through implementation of the agreement between the Ukrainian opposition and President, of the Minsk agreements and the support of the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian peace plan), as well as the EU's current position on ending the war (to use proxy warfare to force Russia an unconditional ceasefire along the current front lines and then into indefinite peace negotiations with unknown agenda, and during this time with Western military support, prepare the Ukrainian armed forces to restore the country's territorial integrity), the author concludes that the only obstacle for ending the war in Ukraine through negotiations is the EU. The result of the EU's policy will be the continuation of the war and, sooner or later, a military clash between NATO and Russia. This option is heightened by attacks on Russian oil processing infrastructure with Western (American, British) long-range weapons and with direct Western technical, operational, and intelligence support. Given Russia's new nuclear doctrine, these attacks could also lead to the use of tactical nuclear weapons from the side of the Russian Federation.

Keywords: Ending the Russo-Ukrainian war, EU positions.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Problem

In the Russian-Ukrainian war, which has been ongoing for nearly four years, neither side can achieve a military victory. The ceasefire agreement and the settlement of the conflict can therefore only be a solution that gives both sides a sense of victory and prevents the outbreak of a new war by eliminating the causes of the conflict. This solution should take into account the following facts: - Ukraine and its Western supporters have not implemented the Minsk agreements, so they must at least accept Russian de facto control over the occupied territories. - The normalization of the situation of the Russian minority will be automatically resolved with Ukraine's accession to the EU, and Moscow is not opposed to this accession. - EU membership, more specifically the security clause of the Lisbon Treaty, provides Ukraine with even stronger security guarantees than the much-discussed Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. Therefore, with the restoration of neutral political status and, in parallel, the acquisition of EU membership, Ukraine's security situation will not deteriorate but improve compared to the pre-war situation, and there will be no need for a direct Western military presence in Ukraine. The only obstacle to ending the war is that Ukraine (or, more precisely, the EU, as Kiev's main military supporter) refuses to acknowledge the above realities. It wants to force Russia into an unconditional ceasefire and, at the same time, into peace talks with an undefined agenda. Accepting such a situation would allow the Ukrainian armed forces to regenerate, reorganize, and train in the use of new Western weapons, preparing them to recapture the annexed territories, i.e., to continue the proxy war. The real goal of the proxy war is therefore to eliminate Russia in the long term, as it poses a constant threat to Europe, whatever the consequences.

1.2. Research Objectives

To shed new light on issues related to the end of the war, this research article presents the real reasons for Western support to Ukraine, the aims and approaches of the conflict's direct and indirect participants, and their possible consequences.

1.3. Research Questions

The author seeks answers to the following questions: What interests dictate the EU's full support for Ukraine? Why is Ukraine important to the EU? Who are the actors in the proxy war in Ukraine, and what are their goals? To what extent does the policy of the new US administration influence the negotiated settlement of the war? What is the main obstacle to a negotiated settlement, and what could be the consequences of continuing the war?

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Most political and military experts agree with the Western approach to and evaluation of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The majority of them can not do objective deep inside analyse of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, due to lack of understanding of the Russia's security concerns, permanent search for and finding Russian threats everywhere. They are incapable for objective assessment of any problem in Russia or Ukraine, because they have never worked or lived in Russia or Ukraine and are unfamiliar with the language, culture, national psychology and history of either country. In many cases, the studies by these authors attempt to draw new conclusions, based on standard western assumptions (Russia started the war, Russia should finish it; Russia should be weakened to force it to negotiation table; Russian financial assets in Belgium can be used for support of Ukraine). Such works were not used in the present research. The American, German, Hungarian, and Russian studies included in the list of literature studied and used during this research, are noteworthy, easy to understand, informative, and their assumptions and conclusions are original and interesting, although they do not always coincide with the author's conclusions since he represents the realistic school of internal relations.

3. Method

In this research, the author studied contemporary American, German, Hungarian, and Russian political studies using qualitative, content, and document analysis.

4. Findings

- The EU feels that, after being temporarily sidelined, it has been given a free hand to bring peace to Ukraine, as the Putin-Trump meeting in Alaska failed to produce a breakthrough, and Trump turned spectacularly against Russia after his official visit to the British monarch.
- The US remains the biggest beneficiary of the war: – Europe will only buy American gas in the future, – the EU has accepted the increase in tariffs on its export products to the US, – the EU has taken over the financing of US arms supplies to Ukraine, – exports of goods to US from major Russian oil importers (India, China) will be significantly hampered by the irrational increase in import tariffs, – the European position on ending the war (Russia must be forced to the negotiating table with further sanctions), strengthens the US, as it reduces the offensive potential of its greatest military rival. Based on all this, despite Trump's desire for the Nobel Peace Prize, the US is not really motivated to end the war, and no American initiative aimed at ending the war should be taken too seriously.
- The EU official policy on the war remains comprehensive support for Ukraine and introducing new anti-Russian sanctions to force Moscow into negotiations on an unconditional ceasefire and on a lasting and just peace. However, the parameters of a just peace or of weakening Russia are unknown.
- Since the EU does not support the elimination of the most fundamental causes of the war (Ukraine's planned NATO membership, Western military presence in Ukraine, and oppression of the Russian minority), any peace initiative by the EU will remain at the level of presumed good intentions.
- For the time being, Russia has the resources to finance the war, society is willing to accept or even support the war efforts, there is no internal political pressure on Putin, he has successfully sold the idea that he is fighting a war against the entire West, so the fact that it is dragging on and he has not yet achieved his military objectives is not seen as a failure.

4.1. Discussion of Findings

4.1.1. *The History of the Russian-Ukrainian War so Far: A Series of Wrong Situation Assessments*

Incorrect assessments of the situation on both sides significantly contributed to the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the current stalemate in its outcome.

Following the events in the Maidan revolution, Ukraine assessed that Russia would tolerate the US military presence in its immediate neighborhood, Ukraine's pro-NATO and strongly anti-Russian policy, and the oppression of the Russian minority. This was not the case. Russia launched a war against Ukraine.

At the start of the war, Russia did not anticipate that the NATO, the EU, and many countries around the world would unite in an unprecedented manner to provide political, economic, financial, humanitarian, and military support to Ukraine and to impose sanctions on the Russian Federation. It was assumed that the war against Ukraine would be short-lived, resulting in the overthrow of the Kiev regime and the rise to power of a pro-Russian government. That's not what happened.

The EU has failed to adequately assess the consequences of the West supporting a Ukraine that does not recognize the existence of its own Russian-speaking national minority, restricts its use of language, makes access to Russian-language literature impossible, removes Russian cultural monuments, and rewrites its national history, glorifying those Ukrainian forces and organizations that fought on the side of the Nazis in World War II. All this proves to the average Russian citizen that the West, with Ukraine's full support, is in fact attacking Russia, questioning the existence of the Russian Federation, the Russians, and the Russian culture, and Russia's victory over Nazism. History has shown time and again what sacrifices Russians are capable of when they feel their homeland is threatened. It will be the same this time.

Ukraine and Europe (the EU and NATO) have misjudged the military situation and refuse to accept that, after three years of fighting, it has become clear that neither side can achieve military victory in this war.

Having misjudged the impact of sanctions, the resilience of the Russian economy, and Russia's military potential, the EU, with the full support of Ukraine, and by introducing more and more anti-Russian sanctions, wants to weaken Russia and force it into negotiations on an immediate unconditional ceasefire and the "establishment of a lasting and just peace." However, little is said about the content of a just peace or the extent and parameters of weakening Russia. A misinterpretation of military realities (the situation on the battlefield, Russia's military potential, the expected Russian response to the destruction of Russian oil processing infrastructure with American and British missiles, intelligence and expert support) leads to the EU and Ukraine being unwilling to eliminate the causes of the war, namely, at least de facto recognition of Russian sovereignty over

the occupied territories, restoration of Ukraine's neutral status, resolution of the situation of the Russian minority, and elimination of the Western military presence in Ukraine. All this is difficult to understand, because: – Ukraine, due to its anti-Russian, extremist nationalist policy, essentially lost first Crimea and later the Donbas back in 2014. (As it later transpired, Ukraine and its Western supporters refused the Minsk agreements aimed at settling the fate of Donbas.) – If there is no winner in a war, a ceasefire agreement can only be reached after opposing parties have committed to eliminating the causes of the war to avoid the breakout of a new war. (The monitoring of the ceasefire is not a problem; it could be monitored by the UN, for example.) – The security clause in the Lisbon Treaty provides even stronger security guarantees for EU member states than Article 5 of the NATO Treaty without the permanent presence of designated EU countries' troops in a member country with security concerns. So Ukraine, as a future EU member, should not worry about security guarantees against a possible new Russian invasion. – The situation of the Russian and other national minorities in Ukraine must be resolved if Ukraine wants to join the EU.

The parties involved (Ukraine, Russia, the EU, NATO, the US) are unable to interpret the concept and content of a negotiated settlement of the conflict in a uniform and unbiased manner, and they lack the necessary willingness to compromise. The leadership of Ukraine envisages resolving the military conflict by regaining Ukraine's occupied territories, with Russia paying compensation, the EU rebuilding the country, and Ukraine becoming a member of the EU and NATO. In other words, it is unwilling to make any compromises, which is understandable given that Ukraine has been the victim of aggression. Russia, on the other hand, is not willing to compromise on eliminating the causes of the war, and is rejecting of the conclusion an immediate and unconditional ceasefire agreement in parallel with maintaining Western arms supplies, and then the start of peace talks on unspecified agenda, because it could easily end up like the Minsk agreements, which Ukraine and its Western supporters did not want to implement and used the transitional situation to strengthen Ukraine's military capabilities to regain the territories annexed by separatists. This position is also understandable. With the Western long-range missiles, intelligence, and expert support of Western powers, attacks against Russian oil processing infrastructure, which are in fact no longer "Ukrainian" attacks, US punitive tariffs imposed on Russian oil buyers (India and China), the EU's 19th package of sanctions and preparations for a 20th package, and Trump's inconsistent policy on war only strengthen Ukraine's self-confidence and Russia's determination. They do not help to improve the willingness of the opposing parties to compromise, i.e., they do not serve the cause of a negotiated settlement, but rather the continuation of the war.

4.1.2. A Geostrategic Approach to the War in Ukraine

From a moral and international legal perspective, Russia bears sole responsibility for the war in Ukraine. However, geopolitical realism suggests that the West essentially provoked Russia by questioning its ability to assert its interests. Thus, the West also bears responsibility for the outbreak of war.

The war in Ukraine was preceded by nearly two decades of confrontation, centered on the country's integration with the West. In 2008, the United States overruled the veto of Germany and France on Ukraine's NATO membership and established de facto NATO organizational integration with Ukraine.

American policy has had the most serious consequences for Ukraine itself, as the country has been placed in a completely vulnerable position in relation to the USA, US-led NATO, and the US vassal EU, which is not viable without Western support, and has been pushed by its allies into a hopeless West-Russia proxy war aimed at "bringing Russia to its knees."

We may wish for Ukraine's victory in our hearts, but this would be dangerous, as the more unsuccessful Russia's traditional warfare is, the greater the likelihood of Russian tactical nuclear strikes or the threat of the destruction of critical infrastructure in western Ukraine using conventional means. It is also highly likely that Russian capitulation, or the surrender of conquered territories, would mean the end of the Russian empire. A Ukrainian victory would lead to the collapse of the Moscow regime and, as after the breakup of Yugoslavia, would trigger a war among the subjects of the federation, primarily over the possession of nuclear weapons.

Concerning the threat to Europe from Russia, it is important to emphasize that Putin was unable to occupy either Kyiv or the entire Donbas region. After nearly four years of warfare, the threat of a Russian attack on Europe is no longer justified. Putin does not threaten Europe, and he cannot do so in the near future, even if he wanted to. He has enough problems maintaining the fragile Russian empire.

The European Union and the US-led NATO played a decisive role in the emergence of the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict, its escalation into war, and then – with unprecedented military expertise, weapons, training, and intelligence support provided for Ukraine, and coordinated international sanctions against Russia – in turning it into a proxy war between the West and Russia.

Regarding the European Union, it is important to note that, after accepting its status as a vassal of the US, it now considers the whole world to be its sphere of influence, including Ukraine, even though it is not a member of either the EU or NATO. While in the case of Tibet or Hong Kong, for example, the EU accepted the real balance of power, in the case of Ukraine, under American pressure, it did not. According to the EU, the Maidan revolution served to overthrow the democratically elected Ukrainian government, which was indifferent to the West. The EU forgave the Ukrainian opposition and Western supporters of the coup because the takeover of power served the right goal of democratizing and Westernizing Ukraine.

The EU was founded to unite and strengthen nation-states that are too weak on their own to assert their interests. However, this plan has already failed from a foreign and security policy perspective. The EU was unable or unwilling to build a security system independent of the US, including a military one, and is therefore forced to participate in US wars around the world. This is why it became involved in the Russian-Ukrainian war, where it is now forced to play a more prominent role due to the change in US policy, and where the EU's unwillingness to compromise is increasingly hindering the establishment of peace.

Neither side is achieving its goals in the war in Ukraine; however, Russia's aggression has ultimately strengthened NATO's cohesion, which had previously been declared brain-dead. However, the Atlantic Alliance cannot win this proxy war. No matter how effective the EU's 19th sanctions package and the US's planned 500%

punitive tariffs on Russian oil and gas buyers may be – an open military confrontation between NATO and Russia with an uncertain outcome is more likely than a Russian capitulation. In this regard, it should be noted that China cannot allow Russia to capitulate either, because the consequences would jeopardize its efforts to counter increasingly aggressive US hegemonic ambitions and establish a multipolar world order.

Unfortunately, the mediocre, untalented political leaders of the West have forgotten the lessons of history, even though "history is the teacher of life." Napoleon's failure, the unsuccessful Western intervention in the civil war following the communist takeover in 1917, the defeat of Nazi Germany, and the rapid regeneration of the Russian state after the collapse of the socialist world system and the Soviet Union could not shake the coalition of the willing's belief in the defeat of the Russian Federation.

The US has successfully prevented Eurasian cooperation between Russia and Europe, but at the same time has provoked closer cooperation than ever before between Russia and China, Iran, India, and North Korea. Moscow, as a geostrategic rival, has been pushed out of Europe, but it seems that a huge new alliance system is emerging, for now without the West, but perhaps against it in the future.

If Europe wants to have a say in world affairs, it will have to become independent from the US in the future and give up its vassal status, unless the Americans decide to distance themselves from the unipolar world order and American exceptionalism.

Today, the basic prerequisite for international security is a multipolar world order in which the West must learn to coexist with Russia and several other authoritarian, even totalitarian powers. Coexistence would be conceivable based on the principles of self-restraint and peaceful coexistence, as opposed to a policy of expansion, spheres of interest, and double standards (Theisen, 2023).

4.1.3. The New US Administration's Policy on the Russian-Ukrainian War and the Consequences of this Policy

The new US approach to the Russian-Ukrainian war and its reception is indicated by the fact that in February 2025, „the US administration initiated a resolution in the UN Security Council that did not link the resolution of the conflict to either the condemnation of Russia as the aggressor or to the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty”. The resolution called for an immediate end to the conflict and the establishment of lasting peace, and was adopted by the UN Security Council in an interesting vote. Alongside the United States, Russia and China also supported the resolution, while the other two permanent members of the Security Council, the United States' allies France and the United Kingdom, abstained from voting. „However, these two European countries, which had unsuccessfully attempted to amend the text of the resolution to condemn Russia and support Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, did not veto the resolution submitted by the United States” (Fouda, 2025).

Another important indicator of change is that, before the Alaska meeting, US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin did not consider it necessary to consult with Europe on ending the most serious war to ravage the European continent since World War II. This is obviously not to the liking of Ukraine, nor of the leading European states, as they have been pushed to the periphery of the negotiation process, where the future of the European continent itself is being decided. This makes it extremely difficult for the EU to prove that Europe is still respected and counts for something in global affairs.

The strategic goal of the United States – to maintain and strengthen its global economic, trade, and financial leadership – has not changed. However, unlike the liberal-globalist elite behind the Biden administration, the national-globalist American elite is seeking to achieve this not by hypocritically invoking democratic values, but by forcefully implementing plans to maintain its global economic, trade, and financial leadership. What will happen to Ukraine, which trusts the West, and what Europe thinks, is not important to Washington.

At the same time, Putin positions himself and his country as an opponent and alternative to a Russophobic, immoral, and declining Europe, and he does not wish to negotiate with the leaders of the dominant European states about ending the war. It is a fact that these leaders have indeed become increasingly insignificant in recent decades since that political titans such as Churchill and de Gaulle, Brandt and Thatcher, Mitterrand and Kohl have been replaced by politicians of Macron's caliber which reinforces French writer Maurice Druon's observation: "In tragic times, history elevates great men to the top, but the tragedies themselves (the tragic times) are the work of mediocre men."

It is not surprising that Trump does not even consider it necessary to call on Europe to negotiate with Moscow to end the Russian-Ukrainian war. At the same time, he holds Europe and the EU responsible for financing US military aid to Ukraine.

It is clear that under Trump, America will not spend money on Ukraine, nor will it provide the military aid that the Biden administration generously provided for free. Trump has also openly set his sights on Ukraine's natural resources, making no secret of his intention to use them to compensate for all US spending on military aid to Kiev. Washington insisted on gaining access to Ukraine's rare earth metal reserves through a bilateral agreement. Since the procurement of rare earth metals from China, where 90% of the world's rare earth metals are mined, will sooner or later become impossible, the US government has an urgent need for this agreement (Fouda, 2025).

With its rich natural resources, its industrial potential that remained intact even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and finally its significant human resources and intellectual potential, Ukraine had every chance of becoming one of Europe's strong nation-states. To do so, however, it should not have needed to become a plaything of the West, primarily the United States.

It should not have been allowed that rejecting Russian dictates and refusing to participate in the CSTO (the military alliance of Soviet successor states) and other intergovernmental structures led by the Russian Federation have led to unconditional subordination to Euro-Atlantic interests.

The Ukrainian political elite made a mistake of historic proportions. On the one hand, it believed the West's promises of early NATO membership and agreed to Ukraine becoming a military staging ground for NATO against Russia. On the other hand, it was believed that Moscow would stand idly by and watch Ukraine's extremely anti-Russian policy and would not attack the country.

"The geopolitical games between the West and Russia have led to a terrible war. Now, more than three years after the outbreak of the war, Washington and Moscow are trying to negotiate new rules of the game on the European continent, while a miserable Europe begs "Uncle Sam" to let it sit at the negotiating table. The great bargaining for Ukraine and its wealth has begun" (Nazimoglu, 2025).

For the time being, Ukrainian public has been convinced that support for the "coalition of the willing," and the ongoing destruction of Russian infrastructure in the rear (essentially with active Western participation) will force Russia to the negotiating table in the foreseeable future and stop the Russian invasion, but even they no longer believe in the complete recovery of the occupied territories.

This is supported by a survey conducted by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KMI) on Ukrainian citizens' views on various plans for ending the war and negotiations with Russia. The survey was conducted in late July and early August 2025, before it became known that Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, the presidents of the United States and Russia, would hold talks on the Ukrainian ceasefire in Alaska on August 15.

The survey involved 1,022 people, was conducted by telephone, and was only among Ukrainians living in the country. Sociologists named the hypothetical peace plans to be evaluated the "American plan," the "Ukrainian and European plan," and the "Russian plan." The "American plan" assumes security guarantees for Ukraine from European states, accepts Russia's sovereignty over the occupied territories, recognizes Crimea as part of Russia, supports Ukraine's accession to the EU, and assumes the lifting of sanctions against Russia. The "Europe and Ukraine" plan provides security guarantees for Ukraine from Europe and the US, *de facto* (not *de jure*) recognizes Russia's sovereignty over the occupied Ukrainian territories, Ukraine could begin the process of joining the EU, and after a lasting peace is established, Western sanctions against Russia would be gradually eased. According to the "Russian plan," Ukraine would significantly reduce its army, limit its armaments, renounce NATO membership forever, and the cities of Kherson and Zaporizhia, as well as the Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson regions would come under Russian control, Ukraine would officially recognize all occupied territories as belonging to Russia and permanently renounce them, Ukraine would begin the process of joining the EU, and the US and Europe would lift all sanctions imposed on Russia.

In the opinion poll, 39% of respondents supported the American plan and 54% supported the European/Ukrainian plan, meaning that the absolute majority rejects the Russian plan, which in fact amounts to Ukraine's capitulation. The most common objection to the American plan was that it would involve the relatively rapid lifting of sanctions against Russia and recognition of Crimea as part of Russia (Tokar, 2025).

The above preferences of Ukrainian citizens are supported by critical assessments of Russia and its policies, the common features of which can be summarized as follows:

At the beginning of the war, many Russian experts claimed that Vladimir Putin's goals went far beyond resolving the problems with Ukraine and that he actually wanted to destabilize the post-World War II international order and restore Russia's status as a superpower. The Russian demands immediately preceding the war (returning NATO to its pre-enlargement status, abandoning further expansion of the organization) could easily lead to this conclusion. Still, later, only a military action against Ukraine proved to be a realistic objective. Russia has invested enormous resources and political will in its aggression against a neighboring country. But even if it succeeds in holding on to the occupied territories and keeping Ukraine out of NATO, Moscow would only achieve a Pyrrhic victory: - Whatever the outcome of the war, Ukraine will remain an armed and hostile neighbor. Europe is rejecting Russian goods and rebuilding its energy sector without Gazprom. The Russian army is becoming dependent on foreign suppliers for supplies. The army's recovery will take years and cost billions, and by then, the "drone warfare achievements" will be obsolete. Meanwhile, old partners are also distancing themselves from Moscow: - In Africa, Wagner's successors are being pushed back, while China and the Gulf countries are buying up the "liberated" opportunities for influence. - In the Middle East, Russia's role as a mediator rings hollow. The case of Syria is particularly telling: not long ago, the Kremlin called it the scene of Russia's rebirth, but today Turkey, Israel, the United States, and the Arab monarchies are effectively sharing Syria. - Moscow's influence has also disappeared in the South Caucasus. It is no longer Russia but the US that is leading the peace talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Even if the Kremlin wins in Ukraine, its policy will result in a strategic defeat. The most visible manifestations of this are the forging of European unity, the expansion of NATO to include Finland and Sweden, and the increase in member states' military budgets. At the same time, the Russian economy increasingly resembles the former stagnant Soviet model. Factories are producing bullets and missiles, while the rest of the world is investing in artificial intelligence, green energy, and microchips. The defeat is also spectacularly reflected in relations with China. Russia is gradually depleting its stockpiles of precision weapons and increasingly relying on Chinese components and loans. Regardless of the outcome of the war, Russia will end up with a hostile Ukraine, a united Europe, a ruined economy, a weakened military, lost global status, and dependence on China (Shapiro, 2025).

This does not mean that Russia's economic and military capabilities, human and other resources, would not allow the war to continue for several more years. Andrei Nechayev, an opposition politician, the first economy minister of independent Russia, the father of the Russian market economy and stock exchange, whose name is synonymous with price liberalization and who became a symbol of the hated 1990s, a period of poverty and uncertainty, assessed Russia's current economic situation as follows:

Russia has still not reached its 2015 GDP level. Although GDP growth has continued despite the pressure of sanctions, this growth is apparent rather than real. In 2024, there was 4% growth, but this was based on orders financed from the military budget. However, everything that appeared as production in GDP growth was destroyed on the front lines. Meanwhile, military industry workers received their salaries, but they cannot and do not want to buy rockets with their money in stores. Consequently, as there is more money than goods on the market, inflation has occurred, which has now reached double digits.

It is a particular problem that the base rate raised by the central bank, which is fighting inflation, affects the commercial sector in the lending market, not the military industry. The defense industry sector receives all the subsidies, so the actor who causes the imbalance is exempt from the consequences. An economy heated by the military industry and isolation is a dead end, as the example of the Soviet Union clearly shows. GDP growth in this

form is unsustainable, and eventually a recession will come, but it is far from fatal. In 2025, there will be a growth of 1.5 percent, after which a decline of no more than 2.5 percent is expected even in the most pessimistic scenarios. The Russian economy has not collapsed because it still has market mechanisms. This is even though today the state once again produces three-quarters of GDP. Although there is soaring inflation and more and more fuel supply problems due to Ukrainian drone attacks on refineries, the country is far from a crisis. Those working in the defense industry can even expect an increase in real wages. We don't know how long the war can be financed in this way, we don't know how the geopolitical situation will develop, but from the point of view of preserving power, a war kept at a controlled level may even pay off for Putin.

The impact of Western sanctions is smaller than expected, and some of them are downright counterproductive. On the one hand, the sanctions, which primarily hit the middle class, harm the sanctioning countries, as they make Russian tourism to the region impossible, and on the other hand, they have the opposite effect on power from a socio-psychological point of view: society does not turn against power, but rather closes behind it. Of course, a part of the middle class left the country, but the majority consolidated around power. The fact that it managed to convince society that NATO itself is fighting with Russia contributed to this. The additional tariffs imposed by the United States on goods from countries that buy significant amounts of Russian energy may be more effective than the sanctions imposed so far. This step has been taken against India, but not yet against China. The latter would be more effective, as China is becoming increasingly indispensable for Russia in terms of goods and technology imports; however, it would not risk losing its Western markets in the event of punitive sanctions (Nilash, 2025).

The RAND analysis of the global consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war, prepared in May 2025, nuances the picture of Russian self-destruction, as it recommends preserving the unity of the transatlantic alliance, preparing allies for large-scale, protracted conflicts, and preserving their expanded deterrence power, which can only be interpreted in the presence of a potential Russian and Chinese threat. In this regard, the analysis states: "Russia and China seek to undermine the unity of the transatlantic alliance; it has become necessary for the United States and its allies to adapt to this and prepare for possible future large-scale, protracted conflicts and maintain their expanded deterrence." According to RAND's analysis, the Russian-Ukrainian war could have the following global consequences: – the conflict could strengthen existing regional coalitions and alliances, while deepening the divisions between them, – create new coalitions and alliances, – influence the use of new, innovative military technologies, – test existing social systems and ideologies, which do not necessarily lead to revolutionary changes (Frederick and others, 2025).

4.1.4. The Significance of Ukraine's Accession to the European Union

We do not know when Ukraine will join the EU, under what conditions, or at what level of adaptation and development. Von der Leyen has set a relatively close target date for accession, 2030, but this is primarily to motivate the Ukrainians. It is not realistic as an actual accession date, but it is appropriate as a motivational timeframe.

If Ukraine successfully implements the reforms that are essential prerequisites for accession, it will offer many advantages for the EU as a whole. Ukraine is still a promising market of at least 30 million people for European businesses. The Ukrainian workforce is highly skilled. Five percent of the world's raw material reserves are located in Ukraine, and 22 strategically important minerals are available in large quantities, including lithium, cobalt, uranium, and titanium. Of course, it is a challenge that the United States has laid claim to these resources; however, Ukraine has retained its autonomy in decision-making over its mineral resources under the bilateral USA-Ukraine agreement.

After joining the EU, Ukraine could become Europe's breadbasket because of its outstanding agricultural potential. A significant portion of Ukrainian farmland is black soil, the highest quality type of farmland. Fifty to sixty percent of Europe's black soil and 25% of the world's black soil is located in Ukraine. If Ukraine were to join the EU, not only would Europe's agricultural self-sufficiency be ensured, but the EU would also provide 30% of global grain exports.

The West believes there are also security policy arguments in favor of Ukraine joining European integration organizations. According to NATO, Russia currently poses the greatest security threat to Europe and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is important that Ukraine, with one of Europe's strongest, battle-hardened armies, now equipped with modern weapons and direct combat experience, acts as a restraining force against this threat. If Ukraine were excluded from NATO and the EU, it could eventually fall under Russian influence or control, which would increase Russia's war potential through the acquisition of Ukrainian raw materials and other resources, while at the same time weakening Europe's defense capabilities.

Since Russia does not oppose Ukraine's EU membership, this fact calls into question the above NATO threat assessment and the conclusions drawn from it, and at the same time justifies that Moscow does not want war with Europe, its defense organization, the Atlantic Alliance. It wants only to prevent Ukraine's NATO membership (i.e., the deployment of North Atlantic Treaty Organization troops, bases, weapons systems, and command structure elements along Russia's borders) and restrict the strongly anti-Russian policy of Ukraine.

Renouncing NATO membership would not harm Ukraine's security, as the Lisbon Treaty contains a strong defense clause within the EU's common security and defense policy, which would also extend to Ukraine as an EU member. The clause states that in the event of an armed attack against a member state, the other member states are obliged to assist with all available means (Szent-Ivany, 2025).

4.1.5. The EU is the Most Problematic "Player" in the Russian-Ukrainian War

If there are two players in a conflict, there is a good chance they will reach an agreement. However, in the proxy war in Ukraine, there are at least six key players (the US, Russia, Ukraine, China, the EU, and economic and financial players with global influence), so reaching an agreement is a complicated issue. Let's take a look at the main players and their goals: 1) US President Donald Trump takes the "America First!" principle very seriously and acts accordingly. However, in his case, this does not necessarily mean that the US should be responsible for global military and security issues. He is a businessman turned politician, and for him, American primacy primarily

means economic, commercial, and financial superiority. He may indeed want peace in Ukraine, but only to gain a business advantage. 2) Moscow has similar economic ambitions. Eastern Ukraine has \$14 billion worth of raw materials, half of which the Russians have already gotten their hands on through the occupied territories. That's why Russia won't back down on the Donbas issue. 3) Ukraine is now nothing more than a battle ground where the Americans, Russians, EU, and other players want to achieve and gain a lot. Ukraine is in a complicated, completely vulnerable situation, which even its hoped-for accession to Western integration organizations cannot alleviate, as its vulnerability lies in relation to them. 4) The Chinese are interested in fair global trade, in which everyone – primarily the United States – takes them very seriously, so perhaps the best scenario for them would be if the US and Russia were able to agree on ending the conflict in Ukraine in a way that would allow for further cooperation between the three major powers. 5) The most problematic player is the European Union. The EU is completely on Ukraine's side and believes – or pretends to believe – that Ukraine can win the war. 6) The sixth player is the large corporations and financial institutions with global influence, which have an interest in exploiting Russia's raw materials as well as Ukraine's. They have already done a lot to achieve the latter, as nine of the ten largest agricultural company groups in Ukraine are now owned by global players, who already own 17 million hectares of Ukraine's 42 million hectares of arable land, 15 million hectares of which they lease. Not wanting to lose all this due to a possible Russian victory, global economic and financial players are doing everything they can to ensure that the war continues and Russia is defeated. The EU headquarters in Brussels is doing what this elite, this gigantic global power, wants. The reasons for Brussels' behavior require separate analysis. According to many experts, Donald Trump may also have a problem with this enormous power. A striking example of this power is the BlackRock group led by Larry Fink, which, after receiving unprecedented capital injections from the Rothschild empire, has become virtually the supreme ruler of the global economy. Knowing this, it is understandable that Elon Musk proposed the abolition of the Fed, the US central bank, operating under a mixed public-private system, as the Fed is also partly or wholly owned by Rothschild interests (Fric, 2025).

5. Conclusions

Ukraine and the West still want to use proxy warfare to reduce Russia's political, economic, and military capabilities to such an extent that Moscow no longer poses a threat to Europe, so that it could be forced to the negotiating table to end the war on terms that would effectively mean victory for Ukraine and Russia's military defeat. The West's goal is not to achieve a ceasefire and lasting peace as soon as possible through negotiations and compromises by eliminating the causes of the war, but to achieve Russia's capitulation. This policy could lead to a clash between NATO and Russia with further unpredictable consequences. This seemingly unshakeable position has already been foreshadowed by the events of the past ten years. The West could have prevented the military conflict on three occasions: through effectively supporting the execution of the agreement between the Ukrainian opposition and President Yanukovich, then through the implementation of the Minsk agreements aimed at resolving the fate of Donbas, and later through the support of the Russian-Ukrainian peace plan developed at the Minsk and Istanbul negotiations – but it did not do so. The West wanted and expected this war.

Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, stated in an interview with the Brazilian newspaper *O Globo* in April 2025 that "the European Union considers saving its tarnished reputation more important than achieving lasting peace in Ukraine. The EU accepts only Moscow's unconditional defeat; any other outcome is considered a geopolitical failure." (Volkova, 2025). It is difficult to refute this claim, even though it comes from the minister of an aggressor state.

The above conclusions is supported by the initiative of the United Kingdom and France to establish the "Coalition of the willing" comprising representatives of 33 countries (29 EU/26 NATO, 2 Commonwealth member states, plus Japan and Ukraine) and of EU and NATO leadership and operating in parallel with EU and NATO bodies, and its tasks are: - to provide faster and more effective support to Ukraine, including the delivery of long-range weapons; - deploying a peacekeeping contingent to Ukraine to ensure compliance with the possible ceasefire agreement; - to cooperate more closely in taking effective sanctions against the Russian energy sector and effective measures on the use of frozen Russian financial assets in Ukraine; - to establish a Common Joint Force (CJF) under the leadership of the United Kingdom and France to defend Europe. The formation of the coalition reflects divisions within the EU and EU concerns about US support for Ukraine. Although the creation of the "Coalition of the willing" enables nations willing to support Ukraine to act more quickly than the EU, which operates on consensus decision-making, doubts have been raised about its tasks. On the one hand, according to the generally accepted principle of peacekeeping, only with the consent of both sides can a peacekeeping force consisting of soldiers from countries not involved and not interested in the conflict be deployed on the Russian - Ukrainian front line, which the coalition cannot guarantee as it explicitly supports Ukraine (incidentally, without US intelligence and satellite communications support, this force would not be viable in the long term). On the other hand, the creation of the Common Joint Force (CJF) for the defense of Europe is difficult to understand, as this is a NATO task.

It is much more likely that the real goal of the British-French initiative is to deploy a coalition military force, i.e., not a NATO or EU force, to Ukraine to strengthen the country's defense, ensure the reorganization and regeneration of the Ukrainian armed forces and training of Ukrainian troops on using Western long-range weapons, and to conduct a direct Europe - Russia war in Ukraine.

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