

RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR: 500 DAYS OF CHALLENGES AND CHANGES

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Abstract. 500 days of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian War allow us not only to analyse the course of hostilities but also to determine the tendencies in the development of the situation in the world. In the current article the author will grasp the main dimensions of the biggest challenge to global stability in the 21st century, including the international dimension of the war and the influence of it on other countries, especially bordering ones; the information tools used during the war and what their impact has been on ongoing military activities; and internal political changes which happened after the beginning of war. The author also discusses the future of the international relations system as it became obvious that it has to be reformed after the end of the hostilities.

Keywords: Russian-Ukrainian War, Nuclear Blackmail, Fakes, Majorwar, Rammstein Format

1. Russian-Ukrainian War: global dimension

On the morning of 24 February 2022 the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which had begun back in February–March 2014 with the annexation of Crimea, moved from the phase of hybrid confrontation to the format of large-scale military operations on land, in the air and at sea. This war has become a powerful challenge for both states and its scale has significantly affected the situation in the world as a whole. Despite the fact that in February 2022 the Russian Federation felt strong enough to try to subjugate Ukraine¹, the Kremlin’s “blitzkrieg plan to overwhelm Ukraine” turned out to be unrealistic.

It is worth paying attention to the global dimension of the confrontation. The Russian-Ukrainian War has become the largest armed confrontation in the world in the 21st century; its influence on world politics and the economy remains noticeable and growing. It has demonstrated that in post-World War II Europe countries have practically not prepared for large-scale hostilities.

¹ **Matthews, O.** 2022. Inside Putin’s bunker: how he kept the plan to invade Ukraine secret. – The Times, 02 November. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/how-putin-kept-the-plan-to-invade-ukraine-a-secret-nlw087729>.

Russia was an unfortunate, thus predictable, exception. The development of the situation proved that the Kremlin's aggressive rhetoric was a kind of warning about Russia's further actions.

The large-scale invasion objectively proved that the Kremlin's bet on hybrid methods of conquering Ukraine has not worked. After the annexation of Crimea and the instigation of the war in the east of Ukraine in 2014, Ukraine's internal stability has grown significantly and acquired real manifestations. The parameters of stability and the degree of consolidation of Ukrainian society have been significantly underestimated by both the Kremlin and the expert community in the West. Although in February 2022 the territory of Ukraine turned into the "bloody lands" of the Baltic-Black Sea region, it has retained its statehood and governance.

Ukraine has solved the issue of its geopolitical survival on the battlefield, proving its viability as a state. Its foreign policy subjectivity allows us to assume a new role for the Ukrainian state in the post-war world. This seems to be key to the transformation of the Baltic-Black Sea region. Unfortunately, the low organizational efficiency in the crisis conditions of the OSCE and the International Committee of the Red Cross has become obvious to everyone. Besides discussion about reforming the UN, we will have to talk about the transformation of the system of international relations as such. First of all, such transformation would have to take into consideration the realities of the post-bipolar rather than bipolar world, in particular the possibility of the change of format of the UN Security Council and the liquidation of unnecessary piety in front of the country-aggressor.

NB: Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine has become a challenge for the world system of international relations and a catalyst for transformations in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. The Kremlin's desire to carry out a blitzkrieg and enter the space of the international relations of the post-Soviet countries, having Ukrainian resources under its control, has failed. The desire to tame Ukraine became an unbearable burden for the Russian Federation and caused, in particular, the introduction of the largest economic sanctions against it in its whole history.

2. Divorce through deaths

The status of the "former republic of the USSR", which both participants in the Russian-Ukrainian War hold, does not fully convey the scale of the contradictions between Russia and Ukraine. Russia traditionally played the role of metropolis in Moscovia/ Russian Empire/ Soviet Union. Ukraine was not

only colonized by a neighbouring state, but for centuries it was a donor of resources (human, natural, financial) for its development. For centuries, the Kremlin's imperial ambitions leaned on the conquered Ukraine, but in the 21st century this bet has not played out. Therefore, the Russian-Ukrainian War will be a moment of truth for the post-Soviet space, at least in view of the scale of losses and destruction caused by the actions of the aggressor.

The illusion of Russian dominance over the ruins of the USSR after 1991 is rapidly disappearing. In the South Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Armenia they are increasingly looking for ways to reconcile.² If negotiations on mutual recognition and the conclusion of a peace treaty are successful, the issue of liberating the territories of Georgia occupied by Russia will gradually arise. Let me remind you that, after the August War in 2008, Russia has controlled 20% of the territory of the largest republic of the South Caucasus. The current position of the ruling Georgian Dream Party should hardly be misleading because anti-Russian sentiment in Georgian society is noticeable.

No less revealing was the speech of the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, at the Russia-Central Asia summit in October 2022, calling on the Kremlin to respect the states of Central Asia³. After the beginning of Russian aggression, the Kremlin began to significantly lose its leverage over the post-Soviet space. The participation of a group of leaders of the post-Soviet states in the celebration in Moscow on 9 May 2023, the Day of Victory over Nazism, was the culmination of the decline of Russian influence. The Kremlin proved capable only of using the presidents of Central Asian countries and the leaders of Belarus and Armenia as human shields. Let us also mention the China-Central Asia summit which took place in May 2023 in the city of Xi'an⁴. During its proceedings, Beijing officially offered the countries of the region a number of measures of political, economic, and military support, which testify to its desire to intensify its policy in Central Asia.

Belarus, led by Aleksandr Lukashenko, remains Russia's only public ally today. The 2020 presidential election was a Pyrrhic victory for him, and in

² Алиев и Пашинян встретились в Брюсселе. – Коммерсантъ. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5985573>.

³ Рахмон – Путину: Мы хотим, чтобы нас уважали. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0pIRt5-eUE>.

⁴ Си Цзиньпин возглавил саммит Китай – Центральная Азия. – Russian News, 20.05.2023. <https://russian.news.cn/20230520/2561030bbd5a49c7b8c79e3b4c67bd4c/c.html>.

2021, due to the “Protasevich affair”⁵ and the migration crisis, the Kremlin significantly strengthened its control over its own ally. In February 2022, the territory of Belarus became a bridgehead for the invasion of Ukraine. Later, Belarus turned into a rear base for the aggressor, becoming a place for Russian servicemen to train. During March–October 2022 missile attacks on Ukraine were carried out from the territory of Belarus⁶. However, this was not enough for the Kremlin, and Vladimir Putin announced the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus in July 2023⁷. Together with the possible transfer of a part of the “Wagnerians” to Belarus, this looks like a practical attempt to expand the territory of the armed conflict and to create the prerequisites for involving Belarus in hostilities. At the same time, we remind you that hundreds of citizens of Belarus who are opposed to Lukashenko are fighting in the ranks of the Defence Forces of Ukraine.

In the autumn of 2022, after the announcement of partial mobilization in the Russian Federation, hundreds of thousands of its citizens left for neighbouring countries not requiring a visa for entry.⁸ The subordination of the Federal Border Guard Service to the FSB of Russia shows that this algorithm of the actions of Russian citizens is not accidental. It is worth remembering that the hybrid methods of influence which have not worked in Ukraine remain relevant for the countries of the post-Soviet space and the Balkans which survived difficult trials in the 90s of the 20th century. Therefore, the countries of Central Asia, the South Caucasus and the Balkans can be considered by the Kremlin as springboards for its own activity in various forms.

Moldova deserves a special mention which, in June 2022 together with Ukraine, received the status of candidate for membership in the European Union. Systemic provocations by pro-Russian forces still continue there. In the spring of 2022 the struggle of pro-Russian forces against the banning of

⁵ Бывшего главного редактора Nexta Романа Протасевича помиловали в Беларуси. – BBC News, 22.05.2022. <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-65671763>.

⁶ Левашкевич, Э. 2022. Сколько ракет запустили по Украине с территории Беларуси? – Deutsche Welle, 14.05.2022. <https://www.dw.com/ru/mnogo-li-raket-bylo-zapushheno-po-ukraine-iz-belarusi/a-61792791>.

⁷ Рофе, Ж. 2023. Путин: РФ разместит ядерное оружие на территории Беларуси. – Deutsche Welle, 25.03.2023. <https://www.dw.com/ru/putin-rossia-razmestit-svoe-aderno-oruzie-na-territorii-belarusi/a-65118734>.

⁸ Тофанюк, Е.; Сапронова, Ю. 2022. Россию после 21 сентября покинули около 700 000 граждан. – Forbes, 04.10.2022. <https://www.forbes.ru/society/478827-rossiu-posle-21-sentabra-pokinuli-okolo-700-000-grazdan>.

the St. George ribbon on the territory of Moldova⁹ was carried out against the background of informational provocations on the subject of a possible invasion of the Armed Forces of Ukraine on the territory of the self-proclaimed Transnistria. According to Russian propagandists, the goal of the invasion was to capture the artillery warehouses in the village of Kolbasna¹⁰ where more than 20,000 tons of ammunition were concentrated.

In the autumn of 2022, protests organized by the Shor Party began in Chisinau, their reason being the deterioration of the economic situation in the country. Ilan Shor replaced Ihor Dodon as the leader of Kremlin policy in Moldova. However, the appointment of Dorin Recean as Prime Minister of Moldova allowed the situation to be stabilised. Ilan Shor received a court verdict in the case of embezzlement of a billion euros¹¹ and the Constitutional Court of Moldova declared the “Shor” Party illegal¹². The holding of the second Summit of the European Political Community in the country contributed to the strengthening of Moldova’s position in the European arena¹³. However, the coming to power in Gagauzia (an autonomous region within Moldova) of Yevgenia Hutsul¹⁴, candidate of the “Shor” Party, and the upcoming local elections do not allow the situation in Moldova to be overlooked.

NB: Russia’s armed aggression against Ukraine has become a signal for the countries of the post-Soviet space to seek new opportunities for their own development. Only Belarus remains in the sphere of unconditional influence of the Kremlin; others are in search of their own independent development paradigm

⁹ В Молдове запретили георгиевскую ленту и символы Z и V. – Radio Svoboda, 14.04.2022. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/v-moldove-zapretili-georgievskuyu-lentu-i-simvol-y-z-i-v/31803320.html>.

¹⁰ **Кох, А.** 2023. Вопрос Приднестровья. Молдова и Украина стоят перед сложным выбором. – Glavcom.ua, 23.02.2023. <https://glavcom.ua/ru/think/vopros-pridnestrovja-moldova-i-ukraina-stojat-pered-slozhnym-vyborom-909603.html>.

¹¹ Молдавский олигарх Илан Шор осуждён заочно к 15 годам лишения свободы. – Radio Svoboda, 13.04.2023. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/moldavskiy-oligarh-ilan-shor-osuzhdyon-zaочно-k-15-godam-lisheniya-svobody/32362783.html>.

¹² В МОЛДОВЕ ПРОРОССИЙСКУЮ ПАРТИЮ «ШОР» ОБЪЯВИЛИ ВНЕ ЗАКОНА. – Зеркало Недели, 19.06.2023. <https://zn.ua/europe/v-moldove-prorossijskuju-partiju-shor-objavili-vne-zakona.html>.

¹³ **Назаренко, С.** 2023. Политический знак для Москвы: зачем в Молдове встретятся 47 европейских лидеров. – 24 Канал, 30.05.2023. https://24tv.ua/ru/v-moldove-1-ijunja-2023-sostoitsja-sammit-evropejskogo-politicheskogo-soobshhestva-detali-24-kanal_n2324382.

¹⁴ Кандидат от пророссийской партии Шор победила на выборах в Гагаузии – предварительные данные ЦИК. – Европейская правда, 15.05.2023. <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/rus/news/2023/05/15/7161668/>.

or new patrons. The future defeat of Russia in the war against Ukraine will complete the process of decolonization of the post-Soviet space and will cast doubt on the existence of the “Russian world”.

3. Worth knowing: the peculiarities of the major war of the 21st century

Russian aggression against Ukraine has become a catalyst for the War of Independence for the Ukrainian people. The successful actions of the Defence Forces of Ukraine, which rely on the massive support of volunteers and caring citizens, contribute to the completion of the process of formation of the Ukrainian political nation. It is significant that the completion of the nation-building process is taking place (of course, according to other algorithms) in Belarus and Moldova. Such a process obviously includes the influence of the Russian-Ukrainian war (as both countries share more than 1,000 km of border with Ukraine), however without a direct military component. It is worth understanding that the chances of the involvement of Belarus in the Russian-Ukrainian war are higher than Moldova's, mostly due to the fact that Moldova does not border Russia, on the contrary to Belarus. In the foreseeable future these tendencies will have a positive impact on the political climate of the Baltic-Black Sea region and Europe as a whole.

Although in most modern states the church is separated from the state, the Russian-Ukrainian War is a confrontation between the states with the largest Orthodox denominations in Europe. Therefore, the role of the Orthodox Church in ideologically ensuring the functioning of the state institutions of both states is at least noticeable. If in Russia the Russian Orthodox Church takes an exclusively pro-government position¹⁵, then in Ukraine there is an ongoing confrontation between the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine, formed in 2019, and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, which is the largest component of the Russian Orthodox Church. The nature of the conflict allows us to predict significant changes in world Orthodoxy after the end of the Russian-Ukrainian War.

Since the model of exercising power and its sacredness in Russia and Ukraine are significantly different, it is worth paying attention to a kind of “exchange of roles” between the presidents of these states. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who had no political experience before being elected to the post

¹⁵ Смерть в Украине смывает все грехи? – Euronews, 27.09.2022. <https://ru.euronews.com/2022/09/27/web-patriarch-kirill-on-ukraine>.

of head of state, turned into a symbol of Ukraine's resistance to aggression after 24 February 2022, becoming one of the most popular politicians in the world¹⁶. Instead, Vladimir Putin, who has been in power in various forms for over 20 years, is in serious decline and becoming politically passive. It is becoming more and more difficult for the head of the Russian Federation to respond to challenges. Alarming signals for the Russian establishment were Putin's New Year's greeting¹⁷ and his presidential message filled with ideological clichés about Ukraine, Ukrainians, and the West which supports them. Putin is using a pre-packaged record about "Ukrainian neo-Nazis"¹⁸ and "the West that wants to destroy Russia"¹⁹. The short, unsuccessful, but eventful mutiny of the Wagner group which took place at the end of June 2023 demonstrated the weakness of Russia and its authorities.

The Russian-Ukrainian confrontation in the international arena, in the United Nations in particular, looks paradoxical. The vote in the UN General Assembly on the issues of pseudo-referendums²⁰, which the Russian authorities led in the occupied territories of Ukraine, demonstrated the attitude of the world community to Russia's actions. It managed to gather a "coalition of rogues": Nicaragua, Syria, Belarus and the DPRK (in March 2022, Eritrea voted for the UN General Assembly resolution condemning the invasion of Ukraine, but Nicaragua did not)²¹. We can also call Iran another informal but effective member of this coalition as it supplies Russia with kamikaze drones which it uses to launch strikes on critical infrastructure facilities in

¹⁶ **Собенко, Н.** 2022. Зеленський і Дух України стали «людиною року» за версією журналу Time. – Suspilne.media, 07.12.2022. <https://suspilne.media/333606-zelenskij-stav-ludinou-roku-za-versieu-zurnalu-time/>.

¹⁷ Путин записал новогоднее обращение на фоне военных и снова назвал «российскими землями» оккупированные области Украины. – Настоящее Время, 31.12.2022. <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/putin-zapisal-novogodnee-obraschenie-na-fone-voennyh-i-snova-nazval-rossiyskimi-zemlyami-okkupirovannye-oblasti-ukrainy/32202353.html>.

¹⁸ Владимир Путин: неонацисты Киева хотели братоубийственную войну. – BaltNews, 26.06.2023. <https://baltnews.com/v-mire/20230626/1026012786/Vladimir-Putin-Neonatsisty-Kieva-khoteli-bratoubiystvennyu-voynu.html>.

¹⁹ Цель Запада – ослабить, разобщить и уничтожить Россию. – TASS.ru. <https://tass.ru/politika/15816309>.

²⁰ Росія починає псевдореферендуми на окупованих територіях. – Radio Svoboda, 23.09.2022. <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-psevdoreferendumi-okupovani-terytorii/32047516.html>.

²¹ Генасамблея ООН засудила псевдореферендуми на захоплених територіях України. – Ukrinform.ua, 12.10.2022. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-politics/3592059-gena-samblea-oon-zasudila-rosijski-psevdoreferendumi-na-zahoplenih-teritoriah-ukraini.html>.

Ukraine. At the same time, the activities of the UN Security Council, in which Russia abuses the right of veto, are increasingly criticized. Its apogee was in April 2023 when Russia presided over the UN Security Council²². Therefore, discussions about the necessity of reforming the UN Security Council and excluding Russia from its membership are becoming more and more active²³.

I would remind you that the Defence Forces of Ukraine have achieved a number of successes at sea and in the air, where Russia's superiority seemed unconditional. The flagship of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, the missile cruiser "Moskva"²⁴, was destroyed by a missile doublet of the Ukrainian-made Neptun anti-aircraft missile defence system. This allowed the Defence Forces of Ukraine to regain control over Zmiinyi Island (Snake Island) in the summer of 2022²⁵. Hundreds of enemy planes and helicopters have been destroyed in the air, Russian strategic aviation airfields have been attacked²⁶, and an A-50 anti-aircraft defence aircraft was damaged at the Machulyschi airfield (Belarus)²⁷.

At the beginning of the large-scale invasion an attempt was made to negotiate between Russia and Ukraine. Three rounds (28 February, 2 and 7 March 2022) took place on Belarus territory where the Russian and Ukrainian delegations arrived by predetermined routes²⁸. However, the negotiations turned out to be unsuccessful, in particular due to the exposure of war crimes committed by Russian occupiers in the suburbs of Kyiv. The Istanbul

²² Лавров председательствует на заседании Совбеза ООН: поспорил с генсеком, обвинил США и оправдывает войну. – Европейская правда, 24.04.2023. <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/rus/news/2023/04/24/7160445/>.

²³ **Иванова, А.** 2022. Киев инициировал процесс исключения РФ из ООН и Совбеза ООН. – Deutsche Welle, 26.12.2022. <https://www.dw.com/ru/ukraina-iniciirovala-process-isklucenia-rf-iz-sovbeza-oon-i-oon-v-celom/a-64214540>.

²⁴ Пентагон: крейсер "Москва" был потоплен украинскими ракетами. – Radio Svoboda, 15.04.2022. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/pentagon-kreyser-moskva-byl-potoplen-ukrainskimi-rocketami/31805346.html>.

²⁵ Від захоплення до звільнення. Хроніка битви за острів Зміїний. – Radio Svoboda, 08.07.2022. <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/deokupacia-ostriv-zmiinyi/31933571.html>.

²⁶ Аэродром в Энгельсе второй раз за месяц атакован украинским дроном. – Radio Svoboda, 26.23.2022. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/aerodrom-v-engelkse-vtoroy-raz-za-mesyats-atakovan-ukrainskim-dronom-/32193604.html>.

²⁷ В сети появилось видео с дрона. – Зеркало Недели, 03.03.2023. <https://zn.ua/war/ataka-narossijskij-a50-v-belarusi-v-seti-pojavilos-video-iz-drona.html>.

²⁸ Переговоры между Россией и Украиной: есть ли прогресс и насколько близко соглашение? – BBC News, 21.03.2022. <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-60822040>.

Communiqué²⁹, proposed by Ukraine and which included a number of compromise positions, quickly lost its relevance due to the large-scale war crimes committed by the Russian occupiers in Bucha and other suburbs of Kyiv. The fact that Vladimir Putin tried to use this in the summer of 2023³⁰ to undermine confidence in the political leadership of Ukraine testifies to the Kremlin's technological approaches to negotiations.

The scale and impact of the Russian-Ukrainian War on the world have made the search for ways to reconcile its participants promising, in view of the possibility of receiving dividends from the process. It is obvious that, on this issue, plaudits for efforts made belong to the President of Turkey, Recep Erdogan, who has repeatedly stated his desire to bring Russia and Ukraine to the negotiating table³¹. On 24 February 2023 the People's Republic of China³² presented its own peace plan while the special representative of the Chinese leader Xi Jinping, Li Hui, visited Kyiv, Moscow and a number of European capitals in the spring of 2023. The visit to Kyiv and St. Petersburg by a delegation of representatives of African states led by President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa³³ should be perceived as an additional lever of pressure behind which Beijing stands (the Peoples Republic of China has a significant influence on the course of events in a number of African countries). Mediation efforts were also carried out during 2022–2023 by Pope Francis³⁴,

²⁹ **Березіна, А.** 2022. Стамбульське ком'юніке і гарантії безпеки: що відомо про переговорах України з РФ. – RBC-Ukraine, 22.05.2022. <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/stambulskoe-komyunike-garantii-bezopasnosti-1653113781.html>.

³⁰ **Герейханова, А.** 2023. Путин впервые показал проект стамбульского договора РФ с Украиной. – RG.ru, 17.06.2023. <https://rg.ru/2023/06/17/reg-szfo/putin-vpervye-pokazal-proekt-stambulskogo-dogovora-rf-s-ukrainoj.html>.

³¹ Ердоган знову запропонував Зеленському посередництво у переговорах з РФ. – Европейская правда, 05.01.2023. <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2023/01/5/7153639/>.

³² Китай опублікував “мирний” план із 12 пунктів. Там общі фрази і призови к переговорам. – LIGA.net, 24.02.2023. <https://news.liga.net/politics/news/kitay-opublikoval-mirnyy-plan-iz-12-punktov-tam-obschie-frazy-i-prizyvyy-k-peregovoram>.

³³ **Богданьок, О.** 2023. Президент ПАР Рамафоса прибув до України. – Suspilne.Media, 16.06.2023. <https://suspilne.media/508679-prezident-par-ramafosa-pribuv-do-ukraini/>.

³⁴ Папа Римський Франциск обратился к главам РФ и Украины с призывом положить конец конфликту. – TASS.ru. <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/15932657>.

French President Emmanuel Macron³⁵ and Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer³⁶.

The fierce military confrontation between Russia and Ukraine has not become an obstacle for the transit of Russian energy resources through the territory of Ukraine in the interests of the EU countries, with no noticeable decrease in the volume of transit. Obviously, its possible termination for one reason or another can be used by the Kremlin to undermine support for Ukraine within the European Union.

It is worth emphasizing the significant humanitarian and economic components of the Russian-Ukrainian War. After 24 February 2022, millions of Ukrainian citizens were forced to leave the state or become internally displaced persons³⁷. Verification of their number has not been completed today. The Russian invasion has caused the largest migration crisis in Europe since the Second World War, the consequences of which will be felt even after the end of hostilities. The Ukrainian authorities will have to make titanic efforts to return their citizens home because the assimilation of Ukrainian temporarily displaced persons is an obvious goal for a number of European states.

Although the Russian-Ukrainian War has not spread beyond the continent, its impact is global. This was evidenced by the signing of the grain agreement between the UN and Turkey, Russia and Ukraine (the warring parties each signing their version of the agreement)³⁸. Thanks to its functioning, Ukraine has managed to export more than 32 million tons of grain³⁹, confirming its own significant contribution to world food security. However, it is worth noting that the extension of the grain agreement is being used by the Kremlin for the purposes of blackmail and putting pressure on the world community. Russia is very interested in reviving the export of its own

³⁵ **Неверова, А.** 2022. Макрон призвал Украину и РФ вернуться к переговорам. – Deutsche Welle, 13.10.2022. <https://www.dw.com/ru/makron-prizval-ukrainu-i-rossiu-vernutsa-k-peregovoram/a-63421209>.

³⁶ **Марков, З.** 2022. Канцлер Австрии Нехаммер призвал Россию и Украину вернуться за стол переговоров. – Gazeta.ru, 10.10.2022. <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2022/10/10/18763591.shtml>.

³⁷ Ukraine Refugee Situation. – Operational Data Portal. https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine?fbclid=IwAR0vuID_3ySZmWe8loqp73KI9Ml8PSkJL-54HbvnaV14UINnTvXR5hce24U.

³⁸ Оpubлiкован текст зернового соглашения, подписанного сегодня в Стамбуле. – UkrAgroConsult, 22.07.2022. <https://ukragroconsult.com/ru/news/opublikovan-tekst-zernovogo-soglasheniya-podpisannogo-segodnya-v-stambule/>.

³⁹ Попри війну, Україна експортувала більше 20 млн тонн зерна. – Voice of America, 26.12.2022. <https://ukrainian.voanews.com/a/6891741.html>.

grain and fertilizers, emphasizing its own grain export capabilities to African countries.

A forced change in the logistics routes of Ukrainian grain caused a crisis in Ukraine's relations with its Central European neighbours in the spring of 2023. Ukrainian grain has become a problem for farmers of countries bordering Ukraine, causing corresponding restrictive measures to be introduced first by the governments of these countries, and later by the European Commission⁴⁰.

These examples clearly demonstrate the economic impact of the Russian-Ukrainian War in the field of world food security.

NB: The Russian-Ukrainian War has not only become the largest military conflict in the modern world, but has also given rise to a number of significant challenges. Their classification, analysis, and determination of ways of response will allow the establishments of civilized countries to better understand the origins of Russian policy and form an algorithm of measures to adequately respond to these challenges. The invasion of Ukraine has become a turning point for discussion about the place and role of Russia in the system of international relations and the attitude of the civilized world towards it.

4. Kremlin's Dirty Games

Since the start of hostilities on 24 February 2022, the political leadership of the Russian Federation has not declared war on Ukraine. Due to the desire to carry out a blitzkrieg, the Kremlin made a bet on the phrase "special military operation". However, the development of events, in particular significant losses on the side of the Russian army, forced Vladimir Putin to announce a partial mobilization in September 2022⁴¹. Another interesting fact is that even the military mutiny of the "Wagner" PMC, which became the biggest political crisis in Russia since October 1993, has not forced the Kremlin to declare martial law or at least the regime of a counter-terrorist operation. The Russian leadership does not dare to recognize the existing reality and respond to

⁴⁰ Єврокомісія пом'якшила обмеження на імпорт українського зерна та буде поступово його скасовувати. – Latifundist.com, 05.06.2023. <https://latifundist.com/novosti/61780-yevrokomisiya-pomyakshila-obmezhennya-na-import-ukrayinskogo-zerna-ta-bude-postupovovo-jogo-skasovuvati>.

⁴¹ Указ «Об объявлении частичной мобилизации в Российской Федерации». – Kremlin.ru. <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69391>.

challenges in accordance with the requirements of Russian legislation, which confirms the hypothesis about Russia as a *failed state*.

The confrontation between the military leadership of the Russian Federation, represented by Sergei Shoigu and Valery Gerasimov, and the owner of the private military company “Wagner” and the media group “Patriot”, Yevgeny Prigozhin⁴², became one of the key events of the 500 days of the Russian-Ukrainian War. Prigozhin has long been the executor of “delicate assignments” on a national and global scale for Vladimir Putin, and in the autumn of 2022 he legalised his leadership of the private military company “Wagner”. The involvement of tens of thousands of prisoners in its ranks under the sanction of the authorities⁴³, the participation of the “Wagnerians” in fierce battles for Vugledar and Bakhmut, ultimately the unsuccessful but high-profile rebellion of Prigozhin on 24 June 2023⁴⁴, and the reaction of the Russian leadership to it, all demonstrate the depth of the crisis of relations within the Russian government. The Kremlin relied on various forms of nuclear blackmail during the large-scale invasion of Ukraine. The systematic nature of the actions of the Russian authorities allows us to talk about the planning of the measures; there is some possibility that the deputy head of the Kremlin administration Sergei Kiriyenko, who had been heading the Rosatom corporation in 2005–2016, is responsible for this⁴⁵.

Russian troops took control over the Chernobyl and Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plants in the first weeks after a large-scale invasion in 2022. The first one is the most famous nuclear facility in the world, decommissioned more than 20 years ago. The second one is the most powerful nuclear power plant in Europe. In March 2022, the occupiers were forced to leave the territory of the Chernobyl NPP, however the Zaporizhzhya NPP became the subject of constant manipulation. Vladimir Putin’s decree on the transfer of the

⁴² **Барабанов, И.** 2023. “Когда командовал Суровикин, проблем с боеприпасами не было”. Как Пригожин собирает союзников против Шойгу. – BBC News, 20.02.2023. <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64709870>.

⁴³ “Петухов” в ЧВК не берем: новые видео вербовки Пригожиним эзков на войну в Украине. – Апостроф, 20.02.2023. <https://apostrophe.ua/news/world/ex-ussr/2023-02-20/petuhov-v-chvk-ne-berem-novyie-video-verbovki-prigojinyim-zekov-na-voynu-v-ukraine/291349>.

⁴⁴ Это не театр. Как именно пригожинский бунт ударил по Кремлю, Путину и почему он может означать конец ЧВК Вагнера — ISW объясняет последствия мятежа. – New Voice, 25.05.2023. <https://nv.ua/world/countries/bunt-prigozhina-rezultaty-posledstviya-dlya-putina-i-kremlya-chto-vse-eto-znachit-poslednie-novosti-50334324.html>.

⁴⁵ Кириенко, Сергей Владиленович. – Rosatom. <http://www.biblioatom.ru/evolution/rukovodstvo/kirienko/>.

Zaporizhzhya NPP to Russian ownership became an example of the largest theft of an energy infrastructure object carried out publicly.⁴⁶ Despite the visit to the NPP by the IAEA delegation led by the president of the organisation Raphael Grossi, IAEA observers remained at the Zaporizhzhia NPP but this did not prevent the occupiers from mining this energy facility⁴⁷.

Russia did not limit itself to measures of a military nature. In the autumn of 2022, the Kremlin conducted a large-scale informational and psychological operation aimed at discrediting Ukraine. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu⁴⁸, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov⁴⁹, and State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin⁵⁰ accused the Ukrainian leadership of preparing to use a nuclear bomb in the south of Ukraine. Corresponding hints were also made by Vladimir Putin⁵¹. With their statements, the representatives of the Russian Federation sought to create the image of Ukraine as a terrorist state, but they did not succeed in this matter.

It should be recalled that in October 2022 the Russian invaders began regular shelling of Ukraine's energy infrastructure facilities. In this way, they sought on the one hand to stop Ukraine's export of electrical energy to EU countries, and on the other hand to cause a blackout and a communal disaster inside Ukraine. If the first task was accomplished thanks to powerful missile strikes, the Russians failed to provoke a systemic blackout in Ukraine. I would like to note that the Ukrainian experience of countering such attacks is being widely studied by partner countries since attacks on energy infrastructure facilities have become a kind of Kremlin know-how.

⁴⁶ Найбільша ядерна крадіжка в історії. Навіщо Росія анексувала Запорізьку АЕС. – Liga.net, 06.10.2022. <https://biz.liga.net/ua/ekonomika/tek/article/podarok-na-den-rojdeniya-putinu-zachem-rossiya-anneksirovala-zaporojskuyu-aes>.

⁴⁷ Оккупанты дополнительно заминировали Запорожскую АЭС и пруд-охладитель – Буданов. – Экономическая правда, 20.07.2023. <https://www.epravda.com.ua/rus/news/2023/06/20/701374/>.

⁴⁸ Keskin, O. 2022. Шойгу обсудил тему о «грязных бомбах» Украины с коллегами из Индии и КНР. – АА, 26.10.2022. <https://www.aa.com.tr/ru/мир/шойгу-обсудил-тему-о-грязных-бомбах-украины-с-коллегами-из-индии-и-кнр/2721223>.

⁴⁹ В ответ на российскую ложь о «грязной бомбе» Украина пригласила экспертов МАГАТЭ. – Golos Ameriki. <https://www.golosameriki.com/a/ukraine-rejects-dirty-bomb-allegations/6803173.html>.

⁵⁰ Володин счел США и ЕС пособниками ядерного терроризма из-за помощи Киеву. – Rbc.ru. <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/24/10/2022/63561eee9a794730c7b9c5e9>.

⁵¹ Путин провел тренировку стратегических сил, отрабатывался «массированный ядерный удар». – BBC News, 26.10.2022. <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-63380771>

The destruction of the Kakhovskaya HPP in the Kherson region which occurred on the morning of 6 June 2023 was not only a large-scale man-made disaster. The consequences of this tragedy for local residents, the environment, and the economy can be compared to the consequences of using a tactical nuclear charge without the direct use of weapons of mass destruction. The destruction of the Kakhovskaya HPP dam aggravated the problem of nuclear safety at the Zaporizhzhya NPP because the reservoir for cooling the reactors was fed with water from the Kakhovskaya reservoir.

The announced placement of Russian tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus can obviously also represent a danger for Ukraine, but it seems that the main direction of psychological pressure in this case was chosen by the Kremlin to be towards Lithuania and Poland. Lithuania is experiencing a political crisis and hosted the NATO summit on 11–12 July. Parliamentary elections have started in Poland and the socio-political situation is quite tense. Information manipulation around nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus, a combination of military (tactical nuclear weapons) and non-conventional measures (prospect of placing units of the “Wagner” PMC on the territory of Belarus) testify to the Kremlin’s plans to exert psychological pressure on countries that are quite clearly aware of the scale of the Russian threat. This is evidenced, in particular, by the publications of one of the ideologues of the current Russian government, Sergei Karaganov⁵².

NB: Since 1945, mankind has had no experience in the combat use of nuclear weapons, which turned into a factor of political deterrence in the conditions of a bipolar world. Russia seeks to impose its own logic on the existing multipolar world and demonstrate its readiness to use nuclear weapons, using the “Chernobyl factor” and control over the Zaporizhzhya NPP. The Kremlin will continue to try to play on the “nuclear fears” of the world in its own interests.

5. The edge in the struggle between Good and Evil

Ukraine has become the edge in the struggle between Good and Evil after the large-scale Russian invasion. The realisation of this fact by representatives of the West has caused a number of organisational steps to ensue. In April 2022,

⁵² Прокремлёвский политолог Караганов призвал применить ядерное оружие. – Radio Svoboda, 13.06.2023. <https://www.svoboda.org/a/prokremlyovskiy-politolog-karaganov-prizval-primenitj-yadernoe-oruzhie/32457534.html>.

on the initiative of the USA and its NATO partners, the Ramstein⁵³ format was created which allowed not only discussion of the prospects for strengthening the Armed Forces of Ukraine, but also the coordination of new supplies of military equipment and ammunition to Ukraine. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg emphasised that the countries of the Alliance have provided Ukraine with 150 billion euros of aid⁵⁴. “Ramstein” can be considered as a prototype of future changes in the system of international relations, which testifies to the global influence of the Russian-Ukrainian War.

Although in the process of the Euro-Atlantic integration of Finland and Sweden, due to the position of Turkey and Hungary, there was an effect of imbalance (Finland became the 31st member of NATO, and the Euro-Atlantic path of Sweden turned out to be somewhat longer than expected) so the factor of the Russian invasion of Ukraine can be called decisive for the next expansion of the Alliance.

Changes in NATO’s approach to the provision of military-technical assistance to Ukraine can be considered through the next stages of supplying arms to our country. It is worth recalling that at the time of the large-scale invasion, Ukraine did not have any binding agreements on the provision of military-technical assistance:

- In January–February 2022 the supply of thousands of Javelin, N LAW ATGMs and Stinger and Piorun MANPADS⁵⁵ was organized for Ukraine. The logic of the choice of weapons was determined by the dominance among Western analysts of the belief that Ukraine would fall apart as a result of Russian aggression. Accordingly, the Armed Forces were strengthened with the help of firearms that could be used during guerrilla operations.
- In April 2022 the delivery to Ukraine of 155-caliber howitzers, which are in service with NATO, began. The first suppliers were the USA, Poland

⁵³ Голишевская, А. 2026. Что такое встречи в формате Рамштайн и как они помогают Украине: все, что известно о 16 заседаниях. – Fakty, 11.10.2023. <https://fakty.com.ua/ru/ukraine/suspilstvo/20230120-pidtrymka-ta-ozbroynnya-shho-take-zustrichi-u-formati-ramshtajn-ta-yak-vony-dopomagayut-ukrayini/>.

⁵⁴ Украина за год получила от союзников 150 млрд евро помощи – Столтенберг. – Liga.net, 08.03.2023. <https://news.liga.net/politics/news/ukraina-za-god-poluchila-ot-soyuznikov-voennuyu-pomosch-na-150-mlrd-evro-stoltenberg>.

⁵⁵ Від переносної зброї до танків Leopard: 7 сходинок західної допомоги Україні. – Ukrinform.ua, 02.10.2023. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3653649-vid-perenosnoi-zbroi-do-tankiv-leopard-7-shodinok-zahidnoi-dopomogi-ukraini.html>.

and France⁵⁶. The Western Allies, within just 7 weeks after the start of the large-scale invasion, were convinced that the Armed Forces of Ukraine were capable of resisting the aggressor. The war crimes of the Rashists in the occupied Ukrainian territories can be added to the complex set of factors in the decision-making process. Another factor is the creation of the Ramstein format, discussed above.

- In June 2022 the first American HIMARS surface-to-air missiles were transferred to Ukraine⁵⁷. Only 20 units of this weapon were sent but they not only delivered effective fire strikes but also became a curse for Russian propaganda. Skilled use of HIMARS by the Defence Forces of Ukraine made it possible to significantly influence the course of hostilities.
- On the cusp of 2022–2023 the authorities of the United States⁵⁸, Germany⁵⁹ and the Netherlands⁶⁰ approved the decision to transfer Patriot anti-missile batteries to Ukraine. The catalyst for the transfer of high-tech weapons was the massive missile attacks on the critical infrastructure of Ukraine by Russian troops.
- In January 2023 the formation of a “tank coalition” by a number of NATO countries began with the aim of creating the military and technical prerequisites for a counter-offensive by Ukraine. Despite the fact that the process of transferring heavy offensive weapons to Ukraine involved political decisions, the number of tanks transferred to the Defence Forces of Ukraine is in the tens. In the process of transferring Soviet-style tanks, Poland is the leader⁶¹.

⁵⁶ **Даценко, В.** 2022. От Javelin к HIMARS. Какое западное оружие получила Украина за время войны и почему этого недостаточно. – Forbes.ua, 18.08.2022. <https://forbes.ua/ru/inside/vid-javelin-do-himars-yaku-zakhidnu-zbroyu-otrimala-ukraina-za-chas-viyni-ta-chomu-tsogo-nedostatno-18082022-7783>.

⁵⁷ **Потапенко, А.** 2022. MLRS та HIMARS: які реактивні системи залпового вогню надають Україні союзники. – Suspline Media, 23.06.2022. <https://suspline.media/246866-mlrs-ta-himars-aki-reaktivni-sistemi-zalpovogo-vognu-nadaut-ukraini-souzniki/>.

⁵⁸ Все, про що домовились у США, реалізуємо швидко – Зеленський. – Radio Svoboda, 26.12.2022. <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-zelenskyy-ssha-domovlenosti/32194557.html>.

⁵⁹ Німеччина передає Україні батарею Patriot та БМП Marder. – Military, 05.01.2023. <https://mil.in.ua/uk/news/nimechchyna-peredaye-ukrayini-batareyu-patriot-ta-bmp-marder/>.

⁶⁰ Нідерланди передадуть Україні дві пускові ЗРК Patriot. – Military, 20.01.2023. <https://mil.in.ua/uk/news/niderlandy-peredadut-ukrayini-dvi-puskovi-zrk-patriot/>.

⁶¹ Польща передала Україні чотири «Леопарди», решта буде згодом - Моравецький – Ukrinform.ua, 24.02.2023. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3674643-moraveckij-polsa-zaraz-peredae-ukraini-cotiri-tanki-leopard-2.html>

- The May Decision of Great Britain on the transfer of Storm Shadow missiles to the Defence Forces of Ukraine can be called the last completed stage of providing Ukraine with high-tech weapons. These long-range missiles have already been effectively used, in particular against the Chongar bridge which is strategically important for Russian troops and connects the occupied part of the Kherson region with the Crimean peninsula captured by the Russians back in 2014.

It is worth emphasizing that, if by 24 February 2022 many NATO and EU countries, in particular Germany and France, had considered it impossible to supply our country with lethal weapons, then already in the spring of 2022 the situation changed radically. The catalysts for this change in approach were the war crimes committed by the Russians in Ukraine and the European establishment's awareness of the need to effectively restrain the Kremlin's ambitions.

The adoption of the Lend-Lease law by the United States was a rather demonstrative step on the part of Ukraine's Western ally⁶². The term has come back into active use since World War II. Joseph Biden used this document as an element of pressure on the Kremlin and a tool of political struggle within the United States. The US President's visit to Kyiv⁶³ and his speech in Warsaw⁶⁴ became elements of the formation of Joseph Biden's position on the Russian-Ukrainian War. Let me remind you that he has a high level of expertise regarding Ukraine, and helping our country can become an element of political success for Biden.

NB: Ukraine has received significant military-technical and financial assistance from Western partners. This has allowed her to counter Russian aggression more effectively. However, we should not ignore another fact: arms manufacturers received a unique opportunity to test their products in combat conditions in Ukraine, causing an increase in demand for them in the world. However, the decision to supply weapons to Ukraine was primarily a political, not an economic, step.

⁶² Историчний закон про ленд-ліз для України: що це нам дасть. – Army Inform, 10.05.2022. <https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/05/10/istorychnyj-zakon-pro-lend-liz-dlya-ukrayiny-shho-cze-nam-dast/>.

⁶³ Президент США Джо Байден в Києві: яка мета неоголошеного візиту. – Radio Svoboda, 20.02.2023. <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/bayden-kyiv-vizyt/32279481.html>.

⁶⁴ “Україна ніколи не стане жертвою Росії”. Що Байден сказав у Варшаві. – BBC News, 21.02.2023. <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/cy05je9ynj2o>

6. Ukraine. Integration dimension

Russian large-scale aggression also accelerated the process of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine. The aspiration to become a member of NATO and the EU was reflected in the Constitution of Ukraine as early as 2019, but real steps towards integration had become rather sluggish by 2022. The invasion of Russian troops has caused significant changes in this regard. On 28 February 2022 Volodymyr Zelenskyy, together with the Prime Minister of Ukraine Denys Shmyhal and the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Ruslan Stefanchuk, submitted an application to join the European Union⁶⁵. It was satisfied in record time (together with Ukraine, Moldova has received candidate status)⁶⁶. The reason for the operational decision seems to be the desire of the EU to use the process of the reconstruction of Ukraine after the end of the war as an impetus for its own economic development and to strengthen its own foreign policy subjectivity due to conditions stemming from the activation of the Kremlin.

The Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine looks less successful. In September 2022 Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced the submission of an “accelerated application” for Ukraine’s entry into the North Atlantic Alliance⁶⁷. However, Ukraine has not yet succeeded in implementing the integration process under the accelerated procedure; at the summit in Vilnius it was promised a “powerful political signal”⁶⁸. The Secretary General of the Alliance, Jens Stoltenberg, made it clear that the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO can appear only after the end of the Russian-Ukrainian War⁶⁹.

⁶⁵ **Неверова, А.** Евросоюз начал рассматривать заявку на вступление Украины. – Deutsche Welle, 07.03.2022. <https://www.dw.com/ru/evrosojuz-pristupil-k-rassmotreniju-zajavki-na-vstuplenie-ukrainy/a-61045245>.

⁶⁶ Україна офіційно отримала статус кандидата на вступ в ЄС. – Европейская правда, 23.06.2022. <https://www.euointegration.com.ua/news/2022/06/23/7141922/>.

⁶⁷ Украина подписывает заявку на ускоренное вступление в НАТО – Зеленский. – Европейская правда, 30.09.2022. <https://www.euointegration.com.ua/rus/news/2022/09/30/7147833/>.

⁶⁸ Блінкен анонсував потужний пакет політичної і практичної підтримки Україні на саміті НАТО – Ukrinform.ua, 12.06.2023. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-politics/3722011-blinken-anonstav-potuznij-paket-politichnoi-i-praktichnoi-pidtrimki-ukraini-na-samiti-nato.html>.

⁶⁹ **Ізвощікова, А.** 2022. Першочерговою задачею є забезпечення перемоги – Столтенберг про потенційний вступ України до НАТО. – Suspline Media, 30.11.2022. <https://suspline.media/328550-persocergovou-zadaceu-e-zabezpecenna-peremogi-stoltenberg-pro-potencijnij-vstup-ukraini-do-nato/>.

We have to admit that for a long time Ukraine was among the outsiders of Europe in terms of economic development. Problems with corruption, inefficiency of the economy and dependence on the import of energy resources were not only obvious to the partners, but also created scepticism about Ukraine's ability to repel Russian aggression. However, the development of events during the 500 days of the large-scale invasion have proved the viability of Ukraine as a state. It should be noted that the Russian invaders consistently destroyed the economic infrastructure of Ukraine during the entire period after 24 February 2022, seeking to inflict as much damage as possible. The statement from the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, about the readiness of the EC to become an operator of the recovery of Ukraine⁷⁰ shows the desire of the European Union to help our country and keep it in the sphere of its own political influence. At the same time, in the matter of rebuilding Ukraine after the end of the war, the EU will have to compete as a systemic investor with the USA, the countries of the Persian Gulf and, possibly, China.

NB: Ukraine's path to NATO and the EU has been quite long because, for example, the Charter on a special partnership between Ukraine and the North Atlantic Alliance was signed back in July 1997⁷¹. However, the large-scale invasion of Russia has significantly changed attitudes within Ukrainian society, emphasising the expediency of joining NATO and the EU. Considering the scale of Ukraine, it can be emphasised that any integration project into Europe will not be complete without its participation. Since 24 February 2022 Ukraine has had good reason to position itself as a defender against the Russian invasion, combining this positioning with the acceleration of transformations within the state.

7. Fakes and dehumanization

One important aspect of the Russian-Ukrainian War is the use of fakes and propaganda. For a long time, Russia and Ukraine were in the same ideological paradigm created during the time of the Russian Empire (the myth of the triune Slavic people). For years, the Russian Federation has been consistently

⁷⁰ Шевчук, С. 2022. Платформу для восстановления Украины должны создать до конца года – глава Еврокомиссии. – Forbes, 25.10.2022. <https://forbes.ua/ru/news/platformu-dlya-vidbudovi-ukraini-mayut-stvoriti-do-kintsya-roku-golova-evrokomisii-25102022-9270>.

⁷¹ Хартия про особливе партнерство між Україною та Організацією Північно-Атлантичного договору. Підписання від 09.07.1997. https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/994_002.

dehumanising Ukrainians, using the characteristics of “militants”⁷² and “Nazis”⁷³ for this purpose and continuing to demonstrate the limited legitimacy of the Ukrainian authorities by using the term “Kyiv regime”. At the same time, a kind of “digital fortress” continues to exist within the Russian Federation which allows for the formation of a unified perception of the situation in the confrontation with Ukraine. Another important aspect is the confidence of representatives of the Russian authorities that they are fighting in Ukraine with representatives of the USA and NATO.

Ukraine, after a large-scale invasion, took the course of monopolising the information space by launching the “United News” telethon. Unfortunately, the state information machine failed to resist effectively the spread of anonymous Telegram channels in the domestic information field. However, Russia’s attempts to shake Ukrainian society up by criticising the state leadership has not had much success. Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s daily televised addresses can be called an effective way of communication which emphasises the differences in his behaviour from Vladimir Putin’s *modus operandi*. Zelenskyy’s video conferences with European parliaments and meetings with Ukraine’s allies in various configurations have become quite effective.

The war crimes of the Russian occupiers have become one of the factors that shape approaches to the perception of this confrontation in the world. The geographical names of Bucha, Mariupol (the tragedy of the city on the coast of the Sea of Azov is huge) and Izyum have entered the history of mankind as examples of crimes against humanity. We can also mention the name of the camp for prisoners of war Olenivka in the Donetsk region where, in the summer of 2022 as a result of an explosion, more than 50 captured Ukrainian defenders of “Azovstal” were killed⁷⁴. The nature and scale of such war crimes, which are based on the dehumanisation of Ukrainians as part of the Russian Federation’s the state policy, have prompted the creation of the International Group for Documenting Russian War Crimes in Ukraine, and the process of

⁷² Боевики ВСУ на Сватовском направлении сдались в плен и принесли боеприпасы. – Absatz.media, 27.09.2023. <https://absatz.media/news/49149-gruppa-boevikov-vsua-svatovskom-napravlenii-sdalis-v-plen-i-prinesla-boeprisy>.

⁷³ ТАСС: ВСУ ночью обстреляли Токмак в Запорожской области. – Российская газета, 26.06.2023. <https://rg.ru/2023/06/26/tass-vsua-nochiu-obstreliali-tokmak-v-zaporozhskoj-oblasti.html>

⁷⁴ Гуйван, О. 2022. Минуло 40 днів після теракту в Оленівці. Що відомо. – Suspline Media, 06.09.2022. <https://suspline.media/278855-minulo-40-dniv-pisla-teraktu-v-olenivci-so-vidomo/>.

preparing for the creation of an International Tribunal for their assessment continues⁷⁵.

The issuance of an arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin⁷⁶ by the International Criminal Court was a revolutionary step in its content. The accusation of complicity in the abduction of Ukrainian children is unique, and the very fact of issuing the warrant has significantly limited the geographical scope of the Russian president's possible visits. Frankly speaking, the ICJ's decision is unique because a warrant has been issued for the arrest of the head of state who is a permanent member of the UN Security Council with a nuclear arsenal. This step demonstrates the systemic nature of the changes caused in international relations by Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

NB: Intensive dehumanisation of the enemy and the systematic use of fakes have become one of the features of Russia's aggressive policy towards Ukraine. This component should be appreciated by the world community as a component of aggression and an element of the new political realities of the modern world.

8. Unfinished afterword

Today, it is difficult to predict the timing of the end of the Russian-Ukrainian War which has become one of the most important events of the 21st century and the largest war of the current century. The conclusions we draw after 500 days of the Russian-Ukrainian War are intermediate, but they demonstrate obvious tendencies in the development of the situation:

- The large-scale invasion of Ukraine was intended to help the Kremlin fulfil its own geopolitical tasks and gain operational space for further pressure on EU and NATO countries.
- Despite significant human, economic and territorial losses (about 20% of Ukraine's territory is occupied), Ukraine has preserved and strengthened its own foreign policy subjectivity.

⁷⁵ “Юридический Рамштайн”: во Львове началась конференция с участием генпрокуроров и министров юстиции мира. – Зеркало Недели, 03.03.2023. <https://zn.ua/war/juridicheskij-ramshtajn-vo-lvove-nachalas-konferentsija-s-uchastiem-henprokurorov-i-ministrov-justitsii-mira.html>.

⁷⁶ Ордер МКС на арешт Путіна: Німеччина «першою розставила акценти» – Подоляк. – Radio Svoboda, 19.03.2023. <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-orden-mks-aresht-putina/32325026.html>.

- The Russian-Ukrainian War has become a catalyst for tectonic changes in the world security system.
- The Kremlin's desire to quickly seize Kyiv and force Ukraine to end its resistance determined Belarusian complicity in the aggression, its failure becoming a turning point for the initial period of the war.
- In the autumn of 2022 the Defence Forces of Ukraine performed several counterattacks, in particular the liberation of Kherson⁷⁷, the only regional centre that the Russians captured after 24 February 2022.
- There was a situational consolidation of Ukrainian politics around the idea of protecting Ukraine. Pro-Russian parties found themselves on the sidelines of social development, while President Volodymyr Zelenskyy turned into a symbol of Ukrainian resistance and significantly increased his own international authority and influence.
- The West has significantly changed its attitude towards Ukraine, creating the Ramstein format and providing tens of billions of dollars in military-technical support to Ukraine.
- The war crimes committed by the Russian Federation in the occupied territories of Ukraine were unprecedented in the 21st century.
- Propaganda plays an extremely powerful role in the Russian-Ukrainian War and the intensity of the use of fakes has significantly increased.
- The situation in the energy sector is paradoxical: despite large-scale hostilities, the transportation of Russian energy resources purchased by EU countries continues through the territory of Ukraine, but the European Union has significantly reduced its dependence on Russian hydrocarbons.
- Russia is continuing the process of dehumanising Ukraine and the Ukrainians at the state level, seeking to prove to the world that Ukraine is a *failed state*. Instead, the course of events testifies to the existence of significant problems with public administration in the Russian Federation itself.
- The process of demystifying Russia as a participant in the system of international relations, an economic partner and a state capable of participating in the formation of the foundations of the world order, still continues.

⁷⁷ Херсон без Росії. Як живе місто після окупації? – Radio Svoboda, 15.11.2022. <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/novyny-pryazovya-kherson-bez-rosiyi/32131219.html>.

- NATO and EU countries have imposed unprecedented sanctions on the aggressor.
- The European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine has received a powerful boost. Joining the EU and NATO would only be possible, however, after the end of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine.
- The dismantling of Russia in its current form is one of the prerequisites for securing Europe and the world from a repetition of its aggression.
- Although the confrontation between Russia and Ukraine is not a world war, it has created the prerequisites for the revision of the existing system of international relations after the end of hostilities.
- The Russian-Ukrainian War is changing the world but we will only be able to measure the final scale of changes after the end of hostilities and an indeterminate period of post-war aftershocks.

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