

Taking Stock of Russia's War against Ukraine

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Greenfield Hill Congregational Church

Olena Lennon, Ph.D.

University of New Haven



State of Play

- Russia currently controls ~15% of Ukrainian territory
- At least 8,000 Ukrainian civilian casualties
- ~ 25% of Ukraine's population displaced
- Widespread destruction of mil and civ infrastructure (including hospitals, schools, train stations, etc)
- ~ 6,000 children are believed to have been transferred to Russia forcibly (genocide)
- Early June: Ukraine launched its long-awaited counteroffensive
- Ukrainian forces have had to break through Russian minefields and heavily fortified trenches (Ukraine has no air support)
- Ukraine is short on artillery munitions, demining equipment, drones, enabling capabilities, etc
- Russia has continued airstrikes on ports, energy infrastructure, residential areas
- "The war has come down to a balance of attrition over time, which side has more reserves, and who can better manage their combat power in a prolonged war." (Michael Kofman & Rob Lee, 4 Sept, 2023).



Escalation Dynamics

- Drone warfare
- Russia's room for escalation is shrinking, moving toward nuclear
- June 6: Russia blew up the Kakhovka dam, endangering the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Plant
- Russia (allegedly) has moved nuclear weapons to Belarus
- Increasingly frequent references to deploying nuclear weapons among Russian elites
- Putin's appetite for risk has noticeably increased
- BUT, breaking the nuclear taboo risks losing China's (and India's) support



Prospects for Negotiations: Grim

- Zero appetite for negotiations in Ukraine; Western leaders have not called for negotiations recently either
- Jan 2023: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres: “I do not see a chance at the present moment to have a serious peace negotiation between the two parties.”
 - The UN facilitates:
 - Prisoners of War exchanges
 - UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitors Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station
 - Grain export deal (repeatedly violated by Russia)
- No stalemate (both sides believe victory is achievable and defeat is unacceptable)



This will be (has been) a long war...

- Long-term security assurances for Ukraine remain a question
- One way or the other, Ukraine will remain a bulwark of European defense against Russia. This imposes a duty upon Western states to sustain Ukraine.
- Can the United States equip Israel while simultaneously equipping Ukraine and Taiwan?
 - The short answer is "yes, but with some difficult tradeoffs later... if the war in Gaza continues for an extended period." (Mark Cancian (Col, USMCR, ret.), 12 Oct, 2023)
 - "The Israel Defense Force is a Western-style military, with air-based firepower, which can be handled more easily. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian military remains a Soviet-era-legacy force with the majority of firepower that is ground-based, which is a lot harder for the U.S. to sustain." (Franz-Stefan Gady, 16 Oct, 2023)
 - The forces involved in the Israel-Hamas war are smaller, and the war will likely be shorter.
 - The U.S.'s support infrastructure for Israel is well-established.



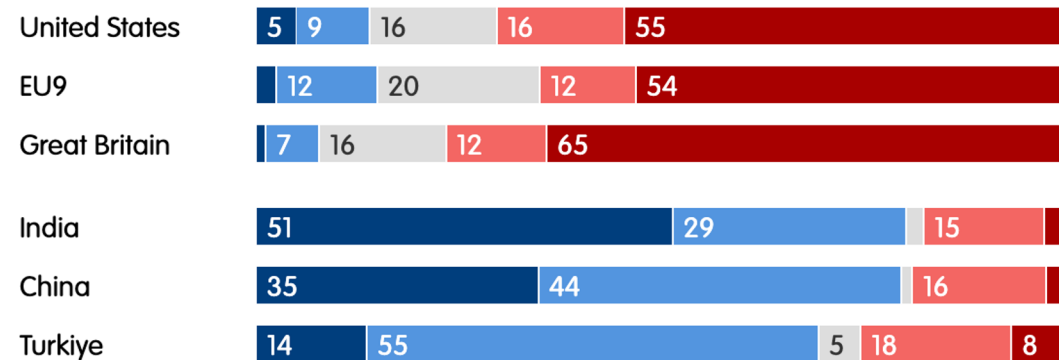
Challenges to the West's commitment to sustaining Ukraine

- Difference in threat perception between Eastern and Western Europe (eg., Poland + Baltics v Germany + France)
- Only 7 out of 30 countries have met the 2% of GDP spending on defense this year
- Europeans worry about depleted stockpiles
- Industrial base in Europe is not adequate for war-time production
- Pre-election in-fighting in the U.S. (\$6 bln of U.S. aid to Ukraine was stripped out of compromise budget deal to avert a government shutdown)
- The U.S. faces the challenge of ramping up ammo production quickly

Western alignment is strong... as is nonwestern nonalignment

Which best reflects your view on what Russia is to your country? In per cent

- An ally – that shares our interests and values
- A necessary partner – with which we must strategically cooperate
- A rival – with which we need to compete
- An adversary – with which we are in conflict
- Don't know



Source: Datapraxis and YouGov (DK, FR, DE, GB, IT, PL, PT, RO, ES), Datapraxis and Norstat (EE), Gallup International Association (US, CN, TR, RU, IN), December 2022/January 2023.
ECFR · ecf.eu

Public Opinion in Ukraine

- Rating Group's Public Opinion Poll (Feb 10-13, 2023)
- Ukrainians' confidence in victory - 95%, compared to 56% in Jan 2022.
- The main emotion respondents felt when thinking about Ukraine was pride (an increase from 34% to 75%)
- Trust in the Armed Forces of Ukraine has grown from 65% to 97%, in the President - from 36% to 90%.



Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

OLennon@NewHaven.edu