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# War In Ukraine: Putin Can't Win - But the US Can Lose - The Globalist

*Markus Heinrich*

7–9 minutes

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Russia's latest atrocity – the destruction of the Kakhovka dam – [demonstrates that the war in Ukraine needs to end quickly.](#)

Because Russia can't win this war.

If the fighting goes on even another year, the West may find itself losing – with dramatic repercussions for the United States' leadership role in the world. Following the three failed early 21st century wars – in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria – the global image of the U.S. was badly tarnished. Its ardent pursuit of global leadership had been dealt a triple blow.

## **A godsend for the U.S.**

Against that backdrop, Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine was in many ways a godsend for the United States.

In addition to tangible economic benefits – such as increased sales of liquified natural gas and arms – the United States has not only seen NATO revived and solidified, but broadened with the addition of Finland (and, soon, also Sweden).

Given the brutality of the Russian attack, NATO member states are

finally expanding their military budgets, which has been Washington's long-standing demand.

## **Russia's military machine completely demystified itself**

What's more, as the U.S. military leadership recognized early on in this conflict the insights gained into the (in)ability of the Russian military from its brutal, but largely inept actions against Ukraine are a tremendous strategic benefit to the West.

Nobody had ever expected that, absent a major global conflict, the opportunity for such a "live" experiment would ever arise. Russia's military machine has completely demystified itself.

On top of all that Ukraine's heroic, battle-hardened military – after its potential victory – could become a highly valuable addition for the Western alliance as.

## **As if we are back in the early post-World War II era**

In sum, the United States' [leadership position in the alliance has been bolstered](#) and, most importantly, the country once more sees itself – and is regarded around vital parts of the world – as a defender of freedom, self-determination and rule of law.

It is as if we are back in the early post-World War II era, when the United States was viewed with hope by people around the world.

[Vladimir Putin's blitzkrieg having failed](#), one thing is for sure: No matter what the Russian propaganda may claim, Putin can no longer defeat Ukraine.

He not only lacks modern weapons and advanced technology but, equally crucially, the Russian people's lukewarm desire to wage a

war of conquest is no match for the determination of the Ukrainians to defend their country and to liberate occupied territories.

### **Towards a war of attrition?**

However, unless things on the ground change dramatically, those facts of life do not mean that Putin is lacking the resources to keep on fighting indefinitely.

A war of attrition is what the United States and its allies seem to have in mind as well. Fearing to be drawn into the conflict, NATO under the direction from Washington has been providing weapons by dribs and drabs.

Accordingly, NATO allies have been favoring defensive armaments and holding back more advanced systems. Even the F-16s, fighter planes developed half a century ago, have not yet been given to Ukraine, to say nothing of more modern sophisticated flying machines.

Considerable restrictions have been placed on the use of Western weapons, especially in attacking Russian territory, for fear of “provoking Putin.”

If Ukraine is not allowed to win decisively and if the war drags on for another year, the United States will risk missing out on the exceptional opportunities provided by Putin’s blunder and squandering many of the benefits it is now enjoying.

### **How many more atrocities?**

In addition to the flooding that destroyed or damaged numerous

settlements, the Kakhovka dam and power plant was vital for much of Ukraine's south. Cities and towns, highly productive farms and industrial plants relied on the water and power from that source. Jobs will disappear and the region will lose a substantial portion of the population.

The destructions of the dam and the massive human, environmental, economic and social calamity it will cause is a warning what the prolongation of the conflict will mean. There will be other atrocities which Putin will commit in his impotent rage against Ukraine which is refusing to submit to his will.

### **Ukraine's ability to recover economically**

But even if no other comparable war crimes will be committed by Russia, a long war will be a disaster for Ukraine, since it will impair its ability to recover economically. Some eight million Ukrainians are already refugees abroad — mainly women and children since draft-age men are not allowed to leave.

As the war continues, many will choose to stay where they are rather than return, given that Russian bombings destroy more and more houses and factories in Ukraine. Their kids are already assimilating in their new countries. Exhausted and depopulated, Ukraine may become an enormous failed state in the heart of Europe.

### **Many possible scenarios**

There are many possible scenarios of what will happen to Ukraine if the war drags on. For example, Volodymyr Zelensky's pro-Western government may fall and, Ukraine may turn on the West.

It may look to form other alliances, notably with China.

Ukrainians know that they are fighting not only for their own independence but for the freedom, democracy and peace in the rest of Europe. To that end, they are losing tens of thousands of their best and brightest young men while the Western world remains on the sidelines. Eventually, this will breed resentment.

### **NATO unity will come under strain**

Moreover, in a long war, NATO unity will come under strain. As it is, Turkey and Hungary already pursue their own agendas. Right-wing parties have seen their strength grow in other European countries as well, and a Republican may win the White House next year.

Eventually, the countries in Europe that are further away from the conflict may insist on freezing the conflict. On the other hand, Poland, the Baltic states, Finland and other frontline nations will be concerned with the future fate of Ukraine.

They have been strong supporters of Ukraine in its resistance to the Russian invasion, but they will certainly not want to see Ukraine become a pauperized failed state in the heart of Europe. Before long, they may feel they need to get involved directly – if only to safeguard their own security.

This may be what former NATO Secretary General Anders Rasmussen had in mind when he warned that some alliance members may have to send troops to Ukraine.

### **Conclusion**

In short, Washington must make sure not only that [Ukraine liberates its occupied territories](#), but that it does so quickly. Ukraine must get all the modern weapons it needs, including advanced fighter planes and long-range artillery.

But if the war shows signs of stalling, both Russia and the United States may find themselves losing the war in Ukraine – with dramatic repercussions for U.S. leadership role in the world.