

Four scenarios for the end of the war in Ukraine

Assessing the political and economic challenges ahead

Summary

- After two and a half years of Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine, there are now four main possible scenarios for its outcome:
 - 'Long war' – An attritional conflict that tests each side's limits.
 - 'Frozen conflict' – An armistice that would stabilize the front line where it is.
 - 'Victory for Ukraine' – A Western policy shift on support that allows Ukraine to force Russia back to at least the demarcation line of 23 February 2022.
 - 'Defeat for Ukraine' – Ukraine's acceptance of Russian terms of surrender (change of government, demilitarization, neutrality) and territorial losses.
- Five variables will determine the nature of any peace arrangement acceptable to Ukraine: how much territory the country will control; the extent of economic damage; the level of population loss; the level of security it can maintain; and the level of required investment in its defence to deter further aggression.
- The strategic challenge that will confront Ukraine when martial law is lifted is whether it will be able to maintain sufficient unity and resolve to strengthen its institutions and create the level of economic growth needed to recover and defend itself against future attack. The sociological, economic and political consequences of the war will make this task particularly difficult regardless of which scenario materializes.

John Lough



An endless war?

It is difficult to imagine peace during war. This is particularly true at present when Russia has dug in for a long war and continues to target drones and missiles on Ukrainian cities, killing and maiming civilians and inflicting untold damage on the country's economy.

Understandably, many Ukrainians fear not just a long war, but a potentially 'endless' war. As the Russian historian Sergei Medvedev has observed, Russia finally found its ultimate national idea after a search lasting three decades – since the collapse of the USSR – and that idea is war.¹

For today's Russian authorities, war is a tool for preserving the cohesion of society and ensuring the legitimacy of their rule even if this requires increased repression. However, although the Putin regime is brittle like most personal autocracies that lack reliable mechanisms for succession, the country appears far from a situation comparable to 1917 when war weakened Tsar Nicolas II's grip on power and made revolution unstoppable. On the surface, Russia appears both equipped and motivated to continue the war for several years if necessary.

The risk of a long war for Ukraine is that the country will struggle to consolidate the peace that finally emerges because of the long-term damage to its human and social capital from deaths, migration and trauma, not to mention the destruction and dislocation of its key economic assets.

Predictions are not the purpose of this paper. It considers instead how the war might stop or end, and the condition Ukraine will be in when this point is reached. It seeks to identify the practical challenges that post-war Ukraine is likely to face and how these could impact its future security and stability.

The strategic challenge that will confront Ukraine when martial law is lifted is whether the country will be able to maintain sufficient unity and resolve to strengthen its institutions and create the level of economic growth that will allow it to recover and defend itself against future attack. Ukraine will need to restore a functioning parliamentary-presidential system in line with its constitution, including reactivating checks and balances between and within the branches of power, ensuring media freedom and full access to public information as well as decentralizing authority.

To rebuild the economy and create the underlying strength to resist further Russian aggression, Ukraine must dismantle the deeply entrenched system of crony capitalism² (*systema*) that was such a strong brake on consolidating the country's independence from the mid-1990s up to 2022.

¹ Medvedev, S. (2023), *A War Made in Russia*, Polity Press, p. 155.

² For an explanation of the functioning of *systema*, see Lough, J. (2021), *Ukraine's system of crony capitalism: The challenge of dismantling 'systema'*, Research Paper, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/07/ukraines-system-crony-capitalism/summary>.

Assumptions

Since the war is existential both for Ukraine and for the Putin regime, there are strong reasons to believe that it might continue for a long while despite fatigue on both sides and the limited capacity of Western countries to continue to equip and finance Ukraine's war effort at the necessary level.

While Vladimir Putin controls the levers of power, it is difficult to see a recalibration of Moscow's strategic goals in Ukraine. He has committed Russia to expanding its territorial gains in Donbas, 'demilitarizing' Ukraine, changing the country's leadership (denazification) and forcing it to accept neutrality.³ The goal is the full abolition of Ukrainian sovereignty.

Ukraine is not Finland in 1939. On the contrary, it is viewed by wide sections of Russian society as an inalienable part of the country's identity as a European power and, therefore, as synonymous with Russia.⁴ For the Russian elites as well as the public, settling for less than Ukraine's surrender would not amount to victory and could call into question the huge price paid by the country in terms of human and economic losses and the damage to its reputation.

Even if some form of truce is achieved, this does not mean that the war will stop as evidenced by the ill-fated Minsk Agreements (2014 and 2015), which were heavily lobbied by France and Germany as the path to peace. Poor diplomatic drafting meant that the two sides at war were able to interpret the provisions of the agreements differently.⁵ This led to a reduction of hostilities rather than the end of the war that Russia began in response to the February 2014 'Revolution of Dignity'.

However, a peace agreement leading to sharply reduced levels of fighting would create the possibility for Ukraine to lift martial law and hold overdue parliamentary and presidential elections.

Scenarios for the development of the war

After two and a half years of Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine, there are now four main possible resulting scenarios:⁶

1. 'Long war' – An attritional conflict giving each side the possibility to exhaust the other. Ukraine would continue to fight and try to rebuild at the same time, while incurring ever greater human losses on the battlefield and to migration.
2. 'Frozen conflict' – An armistice that would stabilize the front line and allow both sides to regroup and rebuild their depleted forces in preparation for

³ Putin, V. (2023), 'Итоги года с Владимиром Путиным [Results of the Year with Vladimir Putin]', 14 December 2023, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72994>.

⁴ See, for example, Putin, V. (2024), 'Послание Президента Федеральному Собранию [Putin's address to the Federal Assembly]', 29 February 2024, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73585>.

⁵ For an overview of the flaws of the Minsk Agreements, see Allan, D. (2020), *The Minsk Conundrum: Western Policy and Russia's War in Eastern Ukraine*, Research Paper, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/05/minsk-conundrum-western-policy-and-russias-war-eastern-ukraine>.

⁶ The Ukrainian analyst Valerii Pekar lists three scenarios in his article, Pekar, V. (2024), 'Сценарії 2024-2025 [Scenarios 2024-2025]', 2 January 2024, <https://site.ua/valerii.pekar/scenariyi-2024-2025-i7n1nqe>.

further fighting. There would be no agreement on Ukraine's future military status or the size of its armed forces. Ukraine would remain formally committed to the goal of full restoration of its 1991 borders.

3. 'Victory for Ukraine' – A change in Western policy leading to allies providing the arms and military support that would allow Ukraine to force the Russian Army back to at least the demarcation line of 23 February 2022. A Russian retreat, particularly if its hold on Crimea were jeopardized, could have dramatic political consequences in Russia itself, leading perhaps to a period of instability followed by radical reforms and eventual normalization of ties with the West. A prolonged period of Russian introspection would enable Ukraine to carry out deep reforms and accelerate the Europeanization of state institutions, leading to a realistic prospect of joining the EU and improving its overall security situation, perhaps with the possibility of rapid integration into NATO.
4. 'Defeat for Ukraine' – Ukraine's acceptance of Russian terms of surrender (change of government, demilitarization, neutrality) and *de facto* partition, including recognition of territorial losses to Russia, would only be possible in the case of a significant withdrawal of Western support for Ukraine and a military collapse. Theoretically, this could force to power a 'pragmatic' government in Kyiv prepared to accept significant territorial concessions to save Ukraine from further bloodshed and destruction. However, it would create a high risk of de-centralized insurgencies in the territories annexed by Russia and prolonged instability in the rest of the country.

Scenario drivers

The extent to which each scenario might come to fruition will depend on three factors:

1. The capacity and willingness of Ukraine's Western allies to sustain financial and military support for the country and provide long-term security guarantees.
2. Ukraine's ability to maintain popular support for the continuing war while mobilizing and deploying forces in sufficient quantities.
3. In the case of Russia, the continued absence of opposition to the war on the part of elites and society at large.

Despite the obvious asymmetries of army size, economic power and mobilization potential that have made Ukraine the underdog in this war, the country still retains one vital advantage over its adversary. Ukrainians are motivated by what they are fighting for. They have mobilized as a society to defend their independence. By contrast, Russian soldiers are fighting more for money and less for their country.

While the Kremlin views the war as existential for Russia, there is no evidence that this view is widely supported in Russian society even if a majority believes that the ‘special military operation’ is justified.⁷

Although Russia has much larger resources to sustain a long war, Moscow’s cautious approach to mobilization, evidenced by its recruitment of soldiers for the war mainly from the provinces rather than the big cities and its clear reluctance to mobilize further, points to the Kremlin’s realization that there are limits to the willingness of Russians to rally around the flag.

The incursion of Ukrainian forces into Kursk region in August 2024 did not trigger a wave of patriotism and there were no floods of volunteers wanting to expel the invader. It is notable too that among the supporters of the war, there are different camps, including so-called ‘turbo patriots’. Some of the latter have consistently criticized the Russian leadership’s strategy and tactics for prosecuting the war.⁸

Society’s ability to fill in gaps left by government structures can also be a critical factor in driving the reforms needed to raise the quality of Ukraine’s overall resilience and make it sustainable over the long-term.

Unlike Russia, Ukraine’s resilience is built on society’s capacity for self-organization that is derived from the strong horizontal links in its social structure. This quality has been a significant force multiplier and has the potential to remain so although Ukraine faces obvious challenges to mobilize and train enough soldiers to keep the army fighting effectively. Society’s ability to fill in gaps left by government structures can also be a critical factor in driving the reforms needed to raise the quality of Ukraine’s overall resilience and make it sustainable over the long-term.⁹

The Ukrainian partisan operations underway in territories occupied by Russia since the start of the full-scale invasion are a reminder that armed resistance to Soviet rule in western parts of the country – incorporated into the USSR at the end of the Second World War – continued into the mid-1950s. Even if Ukraine were to be formally defeated, this could still be a very long war.

⁷ See, for example, according to a National Opinion Research Center (NORC) poll published in January 2024, 63 per cent of respondents in Russia supported the country’s actions in Ukraine as a response to an external threat from the West, NORC (2024), ‘New Survey Finds Most Russians See Ukrainian War as Defense Against West’, 9 January 2024, <https://www.norc.org/research/library/new-survey-finds-most-russians-see-ukrainian-war-as-defense-against-west.html>.

⁸ For example, Igor Girkin (also known by his nom de guerre Strelkov), a former battlefield commander of Russian proxy forces in Donbas after 2014. He was arrested in July 2023 and charged with extremism after his comments criticizing Russia’s war effort.

⁹ Lough, J. and Lutsevych, O. (2024), *Building long-term resilience in Ukraine: The battle with corruption in wartime*, Wilton Park Conference pre-read, Ukraine Forum, <https://www.astrid-online.it/static/upload/2024/2024-03-19-building-long-term-resilience-ukraine.pdf>.

Determinants of peace

For Ukraine, there are five key variables that will determine the nature of any peace arrangement.

1. How much territory it will control;
2. The extent of economic damage;
3. The level of population loss;
4. The level of security it can maintain; and
5. The level of investment it must make in its defence to deter further aggression.

At present, it is too early to say whether Western countries will eventually agree to underwrite Ukraine's security. For now, neither NATO nor the EU has a definition of victory or a long-term view of how to provide for Ukraine's security.

All five variables apply to the possible outcomes of the war.

'Long war'

The 'long war' scenario would require Ukraine to continue fighting with limited resources while trying to rebuild damaged infrastructure and sustain the economy and social welfare system. Lifting martial law would not be possible in these conditions unless the fighting became less intense over a long period, influenced perhaps by internal events in Russia, or Moscow committing forces to another theatre as it did in Syria in 2015, a move that appeared to distract Putin from immediate further intervention in Ukraine. 'Long war' would condemn Ukraine to further destruction of its economic, human and social capital, further limit possibilities for economic growth and slow down the reforms needed for EU accession.

A combination of society's exhaustion, its growing impoverishment and tensions between the civilian and military authorities over resource choices – amid fraying relations with Western partners because of their limited support – could create a dangerous political cocktail. Some Ukrainian commentators fear that this situation could lead to anarchy and civil war as experienced previously in Ukrainian history. However, this dark scenario is unlikely since such a large majority of Ukrainians holds Russia responsible for the war and to date this unity in society has defied Russian efforts to destabilize it from within.

Ukraine's Western allies would succeed in preserving a consensus to continue providing military and economic assistance to Ukraine, but the overall levels of support would gradually decline because of other spending pressures. Proportionally, US support would be reduced while Europe's would increase.

'Frozen conflict'

Faced with the choice between a ceasefire that might give a few years' respite and a continued war of attrition, many Ukrainians might understandably opt for the former if they believed that Western support was waning and no immediate progress on the battlefield was possible.

After all, the Minsk Agreements, even if they did not stop the fighting in Donbas, bought time for Ukraine to introduce key reforms that strengthened state institutions, including the armed forces and security services, and helped create resilience capacity at the regional and local levels. It is widely believed in Ukrainian policy circles that without the decentralization reform that began in 2015, which devoted significant decision-making power to the local level, Ukraine would not have been able to withstand the full-scale Russian invasion.

It is widely believed in Ukrainian policy circles that without the decentralization reform that began in 2015, Ukraine would not have been able to withstand the full-scale Russian invasion.

If Putin genuinely intended to restart negotiations, Volodymyr Zelenskyy's challenge would be to sell a ceasefire domestically. He would need to explain to the country why the price of a pause in hostilities would outweigh the costs of continuing to fight with dwindling supplies of weapons and growing uncertainty about the true intentions of Western allies. The price to be paid would likely be the acceptance of the front line at the time and the need to abandon in the short to medium term any prospect of regaining territory ceded after the start of the full-scale invasion.

Such a move would spark accusations of defeatism in the army, the security services and large sections of society. This would be advantageous to Moscow because it would severely weaken Zelenskyy's legitimacy and divide the public. It would bring out into the open frustration with the decisions that led to heavy military losses, including the defence of Bakhmut and Avdiivka.

Divisions on the issue would extend to Ukraine's allies. Complaints in Kyiv that some Western countries forced Ukraine to the negotiating table would increase tensions within NATO and spark concerns about the capability of the alliance to provide credible defence of the Baltic states and other parts of Central Europe.

The acceptance of a ceasefire deal would have significant implications for the presidential and parliamentary elections that would follow the lifting of martial law, assuming the ceasefire held.

If Zelenskyy were to seek re-election, he would face severe examination of why the country was poorly prepared for the invasion, why Mariupol, for example, was not evacuated and why Russian forces were able to seize large swathes of Kherson region at the outset of the full-scale war. It would not be hard to foresee public anger leading to criminal investigations of those civilian and military leaders responsible for the country's defence, including potentially even Zelenskyy himself.

Perceptions of defeat would demoralize the army, demotivate society and spark accusations of the West's betrayal of Ukraine that Russian propaganda would amplify. Admittedly, Zelenskyy and his generals could argue with justification that Western allies failed to provide the weapons that Ukraine needed when it needed them, and that the Russian Army was able to build battlefield defences that even

well-trained and -equipped Western armies would have struggled to overcome. Such fair explanations would probably count for little in an atmosphere of vicious recrimination that would bring new political players to the fore.

The 'frozen conflict' scenario would undoubtedly raise serious questions in Ukrainian society about Western allies' commitment to continue supporting Ukraine, and the sincerity of the EU's invitation to Ukraine to join the organization. Perceptions of defeat would also bring a widespread sense of disillusionment with the country's prospects and provoke further emigration. Not only would Zelenskyy's personal ratings suffer greatly as noted above, his Servant of the People Party would cease to exist as a political force.

It would be hard to imagine that Putin would not use a pause in the fighting to try to rebuild the Russian Army, which has suffered such serious losses of equipment and personnel in Ukraine, while also seeking sanctions relief. The issues of sanctions, reparations and war crimes could become contentious in Ukraine, if Western allies were to attempt to soft pedal them to improve relations with Moscow.

Defence spending would need to remain high to prepare the country for the likely resumption of hostilities and could lead to disagreements with Western partners anxious that Ukraine might inadvertently provoke further conflict with Russia.

The Western partners would be split on how to manage relations with Russia. Some would advocate continuation of containment policies, while others would want to de-escalate tensions and try to restart relations.

'Victory for Ukraine'

While Zelenskyy and his team would be crowned as heroes abroad, 'victory' would not guarantee Zelenskyy's re-election if society felt that consolidation of peace required a different type of leader. Zelenskyy is reportedly worried that he could repeat the fate of Winston Churchill as an inspirational wartime leader who saved the country but lost the election that followed.¹⁰

Inflicting defeat on the Russian Army would give Ukrainians a massive confidence boost and encourage the return of refugees and greatly increase the likelihood that Ukraine would receive credible security guarantees from its Western partners. The reopening of Black Sea ports would restore the country's export potential and help encourage investment in reconstruction.

'Victory' on the battlefield would by no means guarantee progress on dismantling *systema*. On the contrary, it might lead to a consolidation of the established model of governance but with a new group of economic players dictating the rules. However, the EU accession process would be a highly effective instrument for countering such efforts and breaking the grip of big business on politics and the government system.

¹⁰ Walker, S. (2023), 'Ukrainian optimism fades at start of another winter of war', *Guardian*, 20 November 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/20/ukrainian-optimism-fades-at-start-of-another-winter-of-war>.

Managing territories that had been occupied for a long period would be a particularly challenging task in terms of persuading refugees to return and removing collaborators from local administrations.

‘Victory’ would restore the confidence of Western countries in their ability to face down threats from authoritarian states to their values and institutions, even if the price had been paid with Ukrainian blood.

‘Defeat for Ukraine’

‘Defeat’ would have devastating consequences for Ukraine’s viability as an independent state and could lead to the country fracturing, driven in part by the movement of economically active people from occupied territories to safety in the west of the country or abroad. Unless Ukraine could reconquer these territories in a relatively short space of time, the displacement of this section of society would risk becoming permanent.

A collapse of the armed forces would contribute to an overall weakening of central authority and increase the risk of the deeply feared outcome of anarchy. ‘Defeat’ would encourage the development of small-scale insurgencies against Russian rule and the use of violence against Ukrainian leaders ready to collaborate with Moscow along the lines already seen in the territories occupied by Russia since 2014. At the same time, there would be a risk of large numbers of Ukrainians swelling the ranks of the Russian Army either because they would be forced to join up by the occupation authorities, or because they would choose to serve voluntarily on account of their dire economic situation. De-population, the breakdown of public services in some cities and the paralysis of the economy would create a highly volatile situation that might draw in some neighbouring countries to protect their borders and prevent the overspill of violence.

The moral authority of the US and its allies would be in tatters as countries in other parts of the world reflected on the meaning of assurances by G7 member states to support a country in distress ‘for as long as it takes’.¹¹ NATO’s cohesion would also be severely tested with Central European member states confronted by a marked deterioration of their security situation and uncertain of US commitment to mutual defence.

Other factors

There are three main factors that will shape the outcome of each scenario described above.

Sociological situation

Ukraine is deeply traumatized by the war. Official data on military deaths and serious injuries remain classified but US intelligence estimated in August 2023 that Ukraine had suffered military losses of 70,000 killed and 100,000–120,000

¹¹ European Council (2023), ‘G7: Joint declaration of support for Ukraine’, press release, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/07/12/g7-joint-declaration-of-support-for-ukraine>.

injured.¹² These deaths were on top of verified cases of 10,000 civilians killed and a further nearly 20,000 injured.¹³ The real figures are likely to be much higher. In Mariupol alone, over 20,000 civilians are believed to have died in the Russian siege.¹⁴ In addition, around 19,000 children are believed to have been deported to Russia and subjected to forcible de-Ukrainianization.

At the same time, by the second anniversary of the full-scale war, over 14 million Ukrainians had been forced to leave their homes,¹⁵ with around half that number abroad, mainly women and children, and a similar level of internally displaced persons. Sociological data show 80 per cent of the population experiencing mental health impacts of the war, including sleeping problems, anxiety and depression. Families torn apart, job losses, inflation, financial worries and other forms of stress are taking their toll on society. According to one leading Ukrainian sociologist, the divorce rate is high and set to increase while many Ukrainians worry about the stability of the state and its ability to continue paying salaries and pensions and provide social services.¹⁶ The World Health Organization and Ukraine's Ministry of Health have estimated that between 10 million and 15 million Ukrainians will require specialist psychological help.¹⁷

Sociological data show 80 per cent of the population experiencing mental health impacts of the war, including sleeping problems, anxiety and depression.

Mental health issues in Ukraine have long carried a stigma and there is no culture of consulting psychologists for support. Ukraine's Ministry of Veteran Affairs lacks experience to help care for the estimated 1.2 million soldiers who have been in combat since 2014.¹⁸ A major effort is underway to change this because of increasing awareness of the problem of post-traumatic stress disorder.¹⁹ Ukrainian Ministry of Health data show that increasing numbers of people are seeking treatment for mental health problems. In 2023, primary care doctors

¹² Cooper, C., Gibbons-Neff, T., Schmitt, E. and Barnes, J. (2023), 'Troop Deaths and Injuries in Ukraine War Near 500,000, U.S. Officials Say', *New York Times*, 18 August 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/18/us/politics/ukraine-russia-war-casualties.html>.

¹³ UN Office of The High Commissioner for Human Rights (2024), 'Ukraine: Türk deplores horrific human cost as Russia's full-scale invasion enters third year', press release, 22 February 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/ukraine-turk-deplores-horrific-human-cost-russias-full-scale-invasion-enters>.

¹⁴ Associated Press (2022), 'Smashed buildings in Mariupol produce 'endless caravan of death'', Politico, 6 September 2022, <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/06/09/ukraine-death-bodies-mariupol-00038386>.

¹⁵ UN International Organization for Migration (2024), *Ukraine & Neighbouring Countries 2022-2024: 2 years of response*, International Organization for Migration, February 2024, p. 2, https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/documents/2024-02/iom_ukraine_neighbouring_countries_2022-2024_2_years_of_response.pdf.

¹⁶ Research interview with Evgeniya Bliznyuk, CEO, Gradus Research, January 2024.

¹⁷ Cited in Seleznova, V. et al. (2023), 'The battle for mental well-being in Ukraine: mental health crisis and economic aspects of mental health services in wartime', *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, 17, <https://ijmhs.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13033-023-00598-3>.

¹⁸ Morgan, A. (2024), 'Postcard from Kyiv: Nursing the mental scars of Ukraine's veterans', *The World Today*, 9 September 2024, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2024-09/postcard-kyiv-nursing-mental-scars-ukraines-veterans>.

¹⁹ See, for example, Lutsevych, O. (2024), *Ukraine's wartime recovery and the role of civil society: Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs – 2024 update*, June 2024, p. 6, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/2024-06-05-ukraine-wartime-recovery-role-civil-society-lutsevych.pdf.pdf>.

treated 135,000 patients suffering from mental disorders. In the first seven months of 2024, 277,000 people had consulted doctors about their mental health, among them over 42,000 children under 17.²⁰

Caring for military veterans who have suffered serious physical injuries is also a major problem because of limited resources and facilities. Those former soldiers trying to access help from the state and struggling to find it are already an angry and frustrated constituency that cannot easily be reabsorbed into civilian life. If not adequately cared for, this group could become a threat to social stability by acting outside the law to protect their interests. The absorption of some of the *Afghantsy*, the veterans of the USSR's campaign in Afghanistan in the 1980s, into the criminal underworld is a telling example of the potential dangers ahead.

Social polarization has taken place and will inevitably deepen as long as the war continues. Those who left the country have had different experiences from those who have stayed. Those living in the west of the country have experienced war differently from those in the south and east. As is usually the case in war, those who have fought on the front line have a particularly deep and personal experience of war that they cannot easily share with others who have not been through the same. Different personal perceptions of the war and its impact will naturally give rise to problems of communication and the formation of resentment. Fighting-age men who left the country to avoid military service, or simply did not come back after the war started, may find it hard to reintegrate if they return because of the bitterness towards them.

A factor of trauma that is not yet fully understood but demands attention is the issue of the estimated 19,000 deported children noted above. This example of Russia's efforts to extinguish Ukrainian identity could become a focus for mobilizing Ukrainians to continue fighting and to force Russia to pay for the damage it has caused to the Ukrainian nation. The issuing of an arrest warrant for Putin by the International Criminal Court for the war crime of unlawful deportation of children to Russia provides Ukrainians with a strong pretext to keep the issue alive and to insist on the need to bring the Russian president to justice. One opinion poll conducted in 2024 showed that respondents prioritized prosecuting Russian war crimes over reparations in potential negotiations.²¹

Among those Ukrainians who have left and those who have stayed, there are major concerns about children's education. The combined effect on schools of the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war has left many parents worried about whether their children will be adequately prepared for working life. This factor may in turn discourage the reuniting of families in cases where mothers have moved abroad with children. In 2022, two million children were

²⁰ Ministry of Health of Ukraine (2024), 'Близько 300 тисяч українців звернулися зі скаргами на ментальне здоров'я до лікарів первинної ланки за сім місяців 2024 року [About 300 thousand Ukrainians complained to primary care doctors about their mental health in the seven months of 2024]', 16 August 2024, <https://moz.gov.ua/uk/blizko-300-tisyach-ukrayinciv-zvernulisya-zi-skargami-na-mentalne-zdorov-ya-do-likariv-pervinnoyi-lanki-za-sim-misyaciv-2024-roku>.

²¹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Rating Group (2024), 'Social expectations March 7-10, 2024 regarding the end of war: First wave', Rating Group/Carnegie poll, p. 20, https://carnegie-production.assets.s3.amazonaws.com/static/files/Carnegie_survey_Ukraine_war_Ukrainian_public_opinion_March_2024.pdf.

among the refugees to leave Ukraine, many of whom were expected to stay abroad, contributing to the country's brain drain.²² However, the situation facing refugees abroad is sometimes highly unfavourable. One analysis indicates that during the 2022–23 academic year, almost half of Ukrainian school-age refugees abroad did not have access to the education system of their host countries for a variety of administrative and other reasons.²³ The long-term effects of impaired educational experiences on the economy are likely to be considerable.

While Ukrainians have pulled together to fight the war, galvanized by the 25 per cent of society that is active and self-organizing in crisis situations in the absence of a strong state, preserving this unity up to and through the 'frozen conflict' scenario will be a significant challenge. Strengthening and renewing the extraordinary resilience shown since February 2022 is a pre-condition for the country's survival. This depends on implementing a wide range of reforms to address the country's poor governance and achieve sustainable growth by improving the business environment and attracting investment.

Preserving social stability together with faith in the future will be the top priorities over the coming years so that Ukraine halts or even reverses its brain drain and restores as much of its labour force as possible. Inevitably, when the true scale of the human losses becomes known, there will be a backlash in parts of society against the West for failing to show the same level of bravery as Ukrainians in countering a common enemy. This has the potential to complicate 'frozen conflict' politics and by extension the progress on delivering painful reforms required by European allies as part of the EU accession process.

Economy

The war has had a grievous impact on the economy that is likely to take decades to overcome. The Kyiv School of Economics recorded in October 2023 that the direct reported damage to Ukraine's infrastructure since February 2023 had reached \$151 billion at replacement cost. This included over 167,000 housing units at a cost of nearly \$60 billion. Airports, civil airfields, bridges and over 25,000 km of roads have sustained damage at a total cost of \$36 billion. Damage to industry was calculated at \$11.4 billion. The analysis noted the extensive damage to educational facilities with over 3,500 buildings destroyed or damaged at a cost of \$10 billion. The healthcare sector also suffered badly with damage or destruction recorded in 384 hospitals and other facilities worth nearly \$3 billion.²⁴

Analysing the period from February 2022 to December 2023, the World Bank together with the government of Ukraine, the EU and the UN estimated that the war had caused direct damage to housing and infrastructure of up to \$152 billion.²⁵

²² World Bank (2023), *Ukraine: Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, February 2022-December 2023*, p. 25, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099021324115085807/p1801741bea12c012189ca16d95d8c2556a>.

²³ International Rescue Committee (IRC) (2024), 'Ukraine: Families mark two years of full-scale war, a decade of conflict and displacement', 21 February 2024, <https://www.rescue.org/uk/article/ukraine-families-mark-two-years-full-scale-war-decade-conflict-and-displacement>.

²⁴ Kyiv School of Economics (2023), 'The total amount of damage caused to the infrastructure of Ukraine due to the war reaches \$151.2 billion – estimate as of September 1, 2023', <https://kse.ua/about-the-school/news/the-total-amount-of-damage-caused-to-the-infrastructure-of-ukraine-due-to-the-war-reaches-151-2-billion-estimate-as-of-september-1-2023>.

²⁵ World Bank (2023), *Ukraine: Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, February 2022-December 2023*, p. 14.

Furthermore, 10 per cent of the country's housing stock had been damaged or destroyed, leaving millions homeless.²⁶ The analysis estimated that Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery would cost over \$486 billion over a 10-year period,²⁷ and pointed to the broader problem of impoverishment created by war with the elderly population and children disproportionately affected.²⁸ Meanwhile, 9 per cent of households reported in November 2023 that they had run out of food in a 30-day period.²⁹ As the World Bank's 2023 report noted, the war caused GDP to slump by over 29 per cent in 2022, forcing over 13.5 million people to leave their homes and pushing 7.1 million people into poverty, reversing 15 years of gains in poverty reduction.³⁰ The damage, loss and needs of the different regions of Ukraine varied considerably in the bank's analysis, with six 'frontline regions' accounting for the lion's share of the three categories.³¹

The war has caused GDP to slump by over 29 per cent in 2022, forcing over 13.5 million people to leave their homes and pushing 7.1 million people into poverty, reversing 15 years of gains in poverty reduction.

Russia has heavily targeted Ukraine's energy sector with missiles and drones. The World Bank analysis estimated in December 2023 that the sector has suffered damage of \$10.6 billion since February 2022, not including \$2.1 billion of damage to district heating systems.³² In June 2024, Zelenskyy said that Russia had destroyed 80 per cent of Ukraine's thermal energy generation and one-third of its hydropower capacity.³³ While the country has benefited from warmer than usual winters since the start of the full-scale war and the remarkable ability of its engineers to keep heat and power supplied to most of the population, air defence systems supplied by Western allies have provided only limited protection. As the CEO of Ukraine's largest electricity supplier warned in March 2024, Ukraine risked losing the energy war if Western partners did not replenish supplies of air defence missiles.³⁴ The strain of diverting around half the state budget to defence (30 per cent of GDP) and supporting the rest of government spending with a combination of war bonds and foreign assistance is going to leave the country

²⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁸ According to a UNICEF analysis, the percentage of children living in poverty almost doubled from 43 per cent in 2021 to 82 per cent during the first year of the war, UNICEF (2023), 'War in Ukraine pushes generation of children to the brink, warns UNICEF', 21 February 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/eca/press-releases/war-ukraine-pushes-generation-children-brink-warns-unicef#:~:text=A%20recent%20UNICEF%20survey%20saw,cent%20to%2082%20per%20cent>.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

³⁰ World Bank (2023), *Ukraine: Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, February 2022-December 2023*, p. 21.

³¹ Ibid., p. 23.

³² Ibid., p. 126.

³³ Walker, S. (2024), 'Ukraine prepares for winter power cuts after Russian attacks on energy sector', *Guardian*, 28 August 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/28/ukraine-prepares-for-winter-power-cuts-after-russian-attacks-on-energy-sector>.

³⁴ Tani, S. (2024), 'Ukraine risks losing 'energy war' with Russia, sector boss warns', *Financial Times*, 3 March 2024, <https://www.ft.com/content/c562f39e-45d6-4032-9244-52053910d671>.

heavily indebted and a legacy of warped social investment. In addition, the ‘frozen conflict’ scenario would require Ukraine to commit high levels of economic and human resources to defence in preparation for the likely next stage of the war.

Demographic trends are highly discouraging for the economic outlook. Even before the war, Ukraine had a rapidly ageing society in common with many European countries. According to 2023 data, the population in the unoccupied areas of Ukraine had fallen to around 33 million. In 1991, the population in Ukraine’s Soviet borders was 51 million. A stable security situation leading to sustainable reconstruction and long-term economic growth would halt dramatic further decline by encouraging significant numbers of refugees (estimated to be 70 per cent women) to return. Yet even in the most optimistic case, assuming restoration of the 1991 borders and rapid economic recovery, the population is on track to decline to 31 million by 2035.³⁵

As noted above, recovery and reconstruction will be a long-term process that will be heavily influenced by the quality of the security environment, including Ukraine’s ability to export through the Black Sea. The opening of a new export channel along the western coast of the Black Sea was the most important achievement of Ukraine’s 2023 counteroffensive and immediately contributed to improved economic performance by restoring desperately needed export capacity for the agricultural and metallurgical sectors.³⁶ While the UN-brokered grain initiative allowed some exports to leave the country through the Black Sea, the export of iron and manganese ores fell by nearly 46 per cent in 2022³⁷ and could not be compensated by alternative routes, including by the Danube. Even if it has currently withdrawn the Black Sea Fleet to safer waters, Russia is still limiting the volume of Black Sea exports because some ports, including Mykolaiv, remain blockaded.

De-mining is set to be a major challenge. Landmines and explosive remnants of war affect an estimated 29 per cent of Ukraine’s territory, contaminating 10 per cent of agricultural land by April 2023 and preventing the sowing of 5 million hectares of land.³⁸ The south and east of the country are disproportionately affected.

Those regions and communities in the west of the country less impacted by the war are likely to recover more quickly, not least because investors concerned about future security risks will regard them as safer and be more inclined to invest there. This, in turn, will have broader economic, social and, ultimately, political consequences if the population shift from the east to the west of the country becomes permanent and perhaps even expands.

³⁵ Libanova, E. (2023), ‘Ukraine’s Demography in the Second Year of the Full-Fledged War’, Focus Ukraine blog post, 27 June 2023, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/ukraines-demography-second-year-full-fledged-war>.

³⁶ By late January 2024, Ukraine’s grain exports from its Black Sea ports were at their highest level since the start of the full-scale invasion. See, for example, Trompiz, G. and Polityuk, P. (2024), ‘Ukraine’s Black Sea grain export success tested by Red Sea crisis’, Reuters, 25 January 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/ukraines-black-sea-grain-export-success-tested-by-red-sea-crisis-2024-01-24>.

³⁷ Kolisnichenko, V. (2023), ‘Колісніченко В, Морські порти України за підсумками 2022 року обробили 59 млн т вантажів [The sea ports of Ukraine processed 59 million tons of cargo in 2022]’, GMK Center, <https://gmk.center/ua/news/morski-porti-ukraini-za-pidsumkami-2022-roku-obrobili-59-mln-t-vantazhiv>.

³⁸ ACAPS Analysis Hub Ukraine (2024), ‘Ukraine: Humanitarian implications of mine contamination’, Thematic Report, 24 January 2024, https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240124_ACAPS_thematic_report_Ukraine_Analysis_Hub_Humanitarian_implications_of_mine_contamination_.pdf.

Politics and governance

The key challenge facing Ukraine will be to restore the election process suspended under martial law. The constitution requires parliamentary and presidential elections to be held within six months of the lifting of martial law. For some of the president's team, this will be an unpleasant prospect because they will risk losing the considerable power and prestige they accrued during the war. Suspicions will abound that those individuals will seek to preserve their influence. Protecting themselves against criminal investigation of their activities while in office is likely to be a high priority. While there is no certainty that Zelenskyy will wish to campaign for a fresh term, there is already widespread speculation in the Ukrainian elites that key members of his administration are preparing to become Ukraine's leading business owners when the war ends.³⁹ They are well positioned to redistribute assets nationalized as part of the war effort and to continue to attack the positions of the leading financial-industrial groups that owned or indirectly influenced large swathes of the economy up until the start of the 'big' war in 2022.⁴⁰

Although some of these elites have lost influence because of the war, it is by no means certain that they will allow others to encroach on their interests and leave the scene quickly or easily. Nor is it a foregone conclusion that rent-seeking practices will disappear despite the need for economic re-regulation of industries to create greater competition as part of the process of adapting to EU membership criteria. Much will depend on the political environment that emerges and the extent to which it is conducive to limiting the influence of informal patronal networks that have defined Ukrainian politics since 1991. The close monitoring of reconstruction funds by international partners and Ukrainian civil society is likely to be an important factor in limiting the usual schemes for embezzling public money.

Despite martial law that has effectively eliminated the separation of powers between the executive and legislature and made traditional media the mouthpiece of government in its reporting of the war, political life in Ukraine has continued. The issue of mobilization, for example, has been a subject of lively debate in society and there was considerable discussion of the growing influence of General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, the commander of the armed forces, before Zelenskyy replaced him with General Oleksandr Syrskyi in February 2024. Some commentators have drawn attention to the fact that measures adopted in response to emergencies in Western democracies have not always been phased out when the emergency has passed and that instead of moving to liberal democracy, Ukraine might shift to conservative autocracy.⁴¹ However, there are strong grounds to argue against this possibility given the value attached by Ukrainian society to basic democratic freedoms and European norms, as well as its enduring support for the country's Euro-Atlantic integration.

³⁹ Research interviews, under the condition of anonymity, in Kyiv, May 2024.

⁴⁰ In early 2021, these groups owned 12 per cent of the total assets of the Ukrainian economy and 36 of the largest 100 private enterprises, see Prokhorov, B., Goriunov, D., Samoiliuk, M. and Nozdrin, V. (2023), *Oligarchic Ukrainian Capital*, policy paper, Centre for Economic Strategy, p. 11, <https://ces.org.ua/en/oligarchic-ukrainian-capital-the-research-ces>.

⁴¹ Madlovics, B. and Magyar, B. (eds) (2023), *Ukraine's Patronal Democracy and the Russian Invasion: The Russia-Ukraine War (Volume One)*, Central European University Press, p. 42.

There is a broad consensus among observers of Ukrainian politics that the war is going to create a different political environment as new players take to the stage from the volunteer movement and the armed forces. It is too early to identify specific names of individuals who may define the political era that follows the lifting of martial law, but as noted above, it would be premature to dismiss Zelenskyy as a player should Ukraine succeed in stabilizing the situation on the battlefield and recover even a modest amount of its territory. For political purposes, this would count as ‘victory’. According to one respected poll, in June 2024, his personal rating was 54 per cent, down from 71 per cent in December 2023.⁴² Although no other politician in the poll could match this level of support, it was notable that the charismatic governor of Mykolaiv region, Vitalii Kim, enjoyed 46 per cent support, while the TV presenter and fundraiser Serhiy Prytula and the mayor of Kyiv, Vitalii Klitschko, were both on 41 per cent. A later poll indicated that 63 per cent of respondents expressed confidence in the presidency, making it the most trusted central institution.⁴³ However, if Zelenskyy were forced to accept a disadvantageous truce or peace deal, it is not hard to see how his support might evaporate, and political rivals would try to exploit the situation.

According to one respected poll, in June 2024, Zelenskyy’s personal rating was 54 per cent, down from 71 per cent in December 2023.

It should be remembered that Zelenskyy shot to power in 2019 thanks to popular disillusionment with Petro Poroshenko’s presidency that not only stabilized the situation in Donbas after 2015 but also implemented a set of significant reforms in different areas – including banking, decentralization and energy – and largely acquiesced in the creation of civil society-driven initiatives to establish new anti-corruption bodies and raise transparency requirements for public officials. Despite also achieving modest levels of economic growth, Poroshenko was trounced by Zelenskyy, a political novice, in the second round of the presidential election.

The desire of the Ukrainian electorate to see new faces is likely to remain. It should not be forgotten that Zelenskyy’s presidency was facing severe difficulties by the middle of 2021 as voters became convinced that he could not match his pre-election rhetoric to bring peace and eradicate systemic corruption. At that time, one poll indicated only 21 per cent of voters would support him if elections were held then, while Poroshenko enjoyed the backing of over 10 per cent of voters.⁴⁴

⁴² Razumkov Centre (2024), ‘Assessment of the situation in the country, trust in social institutes, politicians, officials and public figures, attitude to elections, belief in victory (June 2024)’, Razumkov Centre poll, <https://razumkov.org.ua/en/sociology/press-releases/assessment-of-the-situation-in-the-country-trust-in-social-institutes-politicians-officials-and-public-figures-attitude-to-elections-belief-in-victory-june-2024>.

⁴³ Myronovych, S., Machlouzarides, M., Sereda, P. and Dagli-Hustings, I. (2024), *Sharp Wave 3 Big Picture Report: Resilience during the Full-Scale War*, July 2024, p. 38, https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-07/doc_pfrukr24_wave_3_report_v4.pdf.

⁴⁴ Interfax-Ukraine (2021), ‘KIIS poll: Every fifth Ukrainian ready to vote for Zelensky in presidential elections’, *Kyiv Post*, 8 June 2021, <https://www.kyivpost.com/post/7839>.

If Ukrainian politics was highly volatile before the war, the situation that follows when hostilities cease will be far more unpredictable. Ukrainian analysts broadly agree that new players from the military or those who have served in the army during the war, as well as representatives from the volunteer movement, are going to command respect in society and will be well positioned to make political careers. Individuals to watch include General Zaluzhnyi, a very popular figure in society who, as noted above, was removed from his position in February 2024 and sent to the UK as ambassador after a rift with Zelenskyy, as well as Dmytro Razumkov (chairman of parliament 2019–21) who appeared to have a promising political career ahead of him before falling out with the Servant of the People Party.⁴⁵

Tensions between the central authorities in Kyiv and the regions, visible since the start of the war, will inevitably continue to be a factor of political life as regional leaders fight for resources and freedom of action. No longer constrained by martial law, some regions may act aggressively to assert their interests making the governance of the country particularly challenging. Klitschko, who had disagreements with Zelenskyy before the war and has increasingly spoken out against the president's wartime leadership, including warning of authoritarianism,⁴⁶ is likely to be a player on the national political stage.

Recent polling suggests that reducing corruption levels in public life has become an even higher priority for Ukrainian society. Significantly, 63 per cent of Ukrainians say that the second-highest issue for them behind the war is corruption. They rank frustration with corruption ahead of dissatisfaction with low salaries and pensions. This view is consistent across all regions of the country.⁴⁷ It is partially explained by the fact that so many citizens and companies have been donating their own money to the war effort. Another poll indicates that a future leader's commitment to fight corruption will be more important for Ukrainians than their understanding of how to rebuild the economy and is second only to the ability to unite and heal society.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Wilson, A. (2023), 'Reformation Nation: Wartime Politics in Ukraine', European Council on Foreign Relations Policy Brief, December 2023 (ECFR/518), p. 4, <https://ecfr.eu/publication/reformation-nation-wartime-politics-in-ukraine>.

⁴⁶ Kyiv Independent (2023), 'Klitschko says Ukraine is turning authoritarian as conflict with Zelensky persists', 3 December 2023, <https://kyivindependent.com/klitschko-says-ukraine-is-turning-authoritarian-as-conflict-with-president-persists>.

⁴⁷ Kyiv Institute of Sociology (2023), 'Public perception of the main problems (except war) and who should make efforts to fight corruption: results of a telephone survey conducted 30 September – 11 October 2023', kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1322.

⁴⁸ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Rating Group (2024), 'Social expectations March 7-10, 2024 regarding the end of war: First wave', p. 57.

Conclusion

Once the war stops or ends, Ukraine must ensure that it does not lose the peace. The danger is that a combination of war fatigue and a process of political renewal in challenging economic conditions will lead to a slowdown of reform efforts and a gradual reduction of focus and support on the part of key Western allies committed to Ukraine's rapid integration with Europe and adaptation to EU standards. Deviation from this ambitious path of modernization would have serious consequences for Ukraine's relations with its Western partners and their support. By extension, it would risk creating a very serious long-term security problem in the heart of Europe.

Regardless of the outcome of the war, Ukraine's allies need to prepare themselves for the fact that much of Ukrainian society is traumatized by Russia's invasion. Whether it is families who have lost sons and daughters, young people who have lost limbs, or children who have lost parents, politics will carry anger, grievance and a desire to bring about radical change to make life better. The longer the war continues, the deeper the trauma and the greater its consequences.

British history has some important lessons. The landslide victory of the Labour Party in Britain in 1945, which led to the creation of the welfare state and nationalization of one-fifth of the economy, is a reminder of how war can trigger rapid and far-reaching social and political change. The Second World War had taken a huge toll on the economy leaving it nearly bankrupt and heavily dependent on the US for financial support. There was also a critical shortage of housing and key personnel as well as widespread social problems related to the war, manifested by high levels of divorce and crime, including domestic violence and drug use.⁴⁹ Some of these challenges will inevitably confront Ukraine.

There is widespread fear in Ukrainian society about the stability of the country's institutions when the war pauses or ends. Although Ukraine has an impressive history of non-violent political protest in recent times, levels of public anger and pain will be particularly high. Similarly, resentment at the failure of Western countries to support Ukraine more effectively in its hour of need is likely to come to the surface quickly and may drive opposition to the type of reforms required for EU accession that are already underway.

The EU will need to treat Ukraine with a combination of patience, generosity and toughness, but, above all, with sensitivity. To maintain elite and popular support for the reforms required, the country will need to believe that membership is achievable and that the further sacrifices required will be quickly rewarded. It is not hard to see how constituencies whose interests are threatened by reform will raise the question of why Ukraine fought a war for independence only, in their view, to end up with external governance from Brussels.

If US neo-isolationist trends accelerate and undermine the credibility of NATO, Ukrainians' belief in the value of their country joining the Western community of nations will suffer and they may feel disproportionality reliant on those

⁴⁹ For a picture of the realities of life in Britain in the years immediately after the end of the Second World War, see Rippon, A. and Rippon, N. (2023), *Life in Post-War Britain*, Pen & Sword History.

European countries that have shown the greatest commitment to defending them and are in no hurry to rebuild relations with Moscow.

A key stabilizing factor will be civil society and its ability to continue to plug the gaps of the state whether in the delivery of services or the development of reforms. No other post-Soviet country has Ukraine's level of social organization. However, it is important to recognize that civil society itself has also been diminished and damaged by the war. It will bear divisions visible elsewhere among Ukrainians, between those who stayed in the country and those who did not. There will also be strained relations among those who have experienced different levels of fighting intensity during the war.

Restarting the economy and attracting investment from home and abroad will also be essential for ensuring social stability. Welfare expenditure will be high because of the cost of caring for those victims of the war who are no longer able to work. The development of the defence industry during the war and the proven ability of Ukrainian engineers to innovate at speed suggest that the defence sector could become an important area of growth for the economy.

The capacity constraints already clearly visible in government and business are likely to be the biggest challenge facing Ukraine's recovery. Creating an environment to which refugees feel safe to return and where investors have confidence to put their money are the pre-conditions for tackling this problem.

To address their collective trauma and seek ways to overcome it, Ukrainians will need to feel that their sacrifices were not in vain. For this reason, improving the country's governance at all levels will be a key priority, including reform of the judicial system so that the population feel able to assert their rights and are no longer at the mercy of the arbitrary behaviour of Ukrainian state agencies.

Understanding the psychological impact of the war on the Ukrainian population and offering ways to alleviate this trauma should be a priority task for Ukraine's international partners. The horrors experienced by the citizens of Mariupol, Bucha, Irpin, Kharkiv, Kherson and other cities and towns exposed to high levels of Russian violence are just a small indication of the suffering experienced by Ukrainians. The Prosecutor's Office estimates that close to 90 per cent of Ukrainian prisoners of war have been subjected to torture, rape, threats of sexual violence and other forms of cruelty.⁵⁰

Public fury with Russians who supported the war and a collective desire for justice will be a dominant feature of Ukrainian politics in the years to come. This anger will complicate any effort to find a settlement to the war short of Russia's defeat and its political and military leadership facing trial for their crimes.

To embrace the opportunities of the future, Ukrainians must feel that recovery is possible, that exhaustion will pass and that trauma will gradually subside.

⁵⁰ Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine (2023), 'Андрій Костін: росія вибудувала розвинену систему тортур та жорстокого поводження з українцями – як військовополоненими, так і цивільними [Andriy Kostin: Russia has built a developed system of torture and ill-treatment of Ukrainians - both prisoners of war and civilians]', press statement, 7 September 2023, <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/andrii-kostin-rosiya-vibuduvala-rozvinenu-sistemu-tortur-ta-zorstokogo-povodzennya-z-ukrayinciyami-yak-viiskovopoloneni-tak-i-civilnimi>.

About the author

John Lough is an associate fellow of the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House (since 2009) and the Head of International at the New Eurasian Strategies Centre, a London-based think-tank. He studied German and Russian at Cambridge University and began his career as an analyst at the Soviet Studies (later Conflict Studies) Research Centre, focusing on Soviet/Russian security policy. He spent six years with NATO and was the first alliance representative to be based in Moscow (1995–98). He gained direct experience of the Russian oil and gas industry at TNK-BP as a manager in the company's international affairs team (2003–08). From 2008 to 2024, he worked in consultancy alongside his role with Chatham House. He has written extensively on governance and anti-corruption issues in Ukraine and is the author of *Germany's Russia Problem*, published by Manchester University Press (2021).

An earlier version of this paper was funded by the Secretary of State's Office for Net Assessment and Challenge (SONAC) within the UK Ministry of Defence.

This briefing paper was supported in part through a grant from the Open Society Foundations.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the copyright holder. Please direct all enquiries to the publishers.

Chatham House does not express opinions of its own. The opinions expressed in this publication are the responsibility of the author(s).

Copyright © The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2024

Cover image: A woman holds a child in her arms at the Ukrainian war memorial on Maidan Nezalezhnosti on the 33rd anniversary of the independence of Ukraine, 24 August 2024, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Photo credit: Copyright © Global Images Ukraine/Contributor/Getty Images

ISBN 978 1 78413 626 0

DOI 10.55317/9781784136260

Cite this paper: Lough, J. (2024), *Four scenarios for the end of the war in ukraine: Assessing the political and economic challenges ahead*, Briefing Paper, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, <https://doi.org/10.55317/9781784136260>.

This publication is printed on FSC-certified paper.
[designbysoapbox.com](https://www.designbysoapbox.com)

Independent thinking since 1920

Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, is a world-leading policy institute based in London. Our mission is to help governments and societies build a sustainably secure, prosperous and just world.



**The Royal Institute of International Affairs
Chatham House**

10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE

T +44 (0)20 7957 5700

contact@chathamhouse.org | chathamhouse.org

Charity Registration Number: 208223