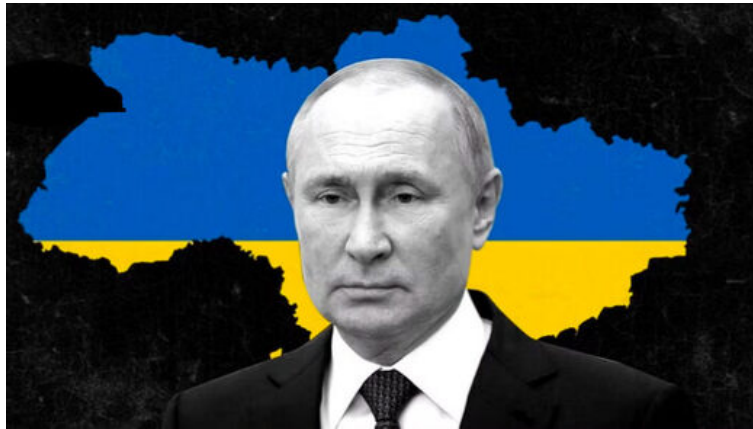


# Endgame is going in Ukraine crisis

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Russian President Vladimir Putin

Basically, great power competition and the fight for hegemonic control between America on the one side and Russia and China on the other, *is being fought on two fronts*.

**The one is Ukraine war** with enlarging NATO engagement, **the other front is financial with America facing a coordinated attack by Russia and China on its dollar hegemony**. The Russians are planning a replacement trade settlement currency, which could unleash a flood of foreign-owned dollars onto the foreign exchange markets. In fact, the second front encases also **the third front, the formation of global alliances**. Ultimately, there is a competition of new world order and fight for global power (world hegemon).

All these topics have been analysed in various articles on this website and will be analysed also in the future but **this article focuses again on military side of this subject**, because there is, as the title indicates, *endgame currently going*. Some fundamental factors are now emerging for further analysis.

## Frontline news

The Biden administration as well as Pentagon know that Ukraine's army is not able to hold the current defense line in its east part. **The big fear is that the Ukrainian army will totally collapse** and run away, when the frontline is breached in Ugledar, Bakhmut, Severusk and Krasny-Liman.

Russia's winter offensive is going in full speed but in another way than western "experts" assumed. No "Big Arrows" so far but **slowly accelerating pressure** along the whole frontline and **when break-points emerge, they will be utilized immediately** throwing more reserves in those places from back-areas. Due to autumn mobilizations and very low KIA-rate, Russia has plenty of trained reserves available.

The reason for this kind of warfare is the fact that **western spy satellites follow the ground situation 24/7** covering the whole theatre of operations. Russia fully knows and understands that and therefore hides their military operations to the latest possible point, *thus holding a surprise moment*. However, 1-2 massive, "Big Arrow" Russian offensives are probable during February-April period.

A new wave of activity is expected for the Russian side during February. The recent changes in the command of the operation appear to have been carefully planned in order to elevate the combat to a new level and several of Moscow's strategic objectives may soon be achieved, radically changing the course of the conflict. **Valery Gerasimov**, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, **was promoted to the position of Commander of the Joint Forces of the Russian Federation in the Special Military Operation Zone**. Gerasimov's arrival to power seems to have been a move towards the final stage of the special military operation.

Obviously, a major offensive (**Big Arrow**) is being prepared for February with the probable aims:

- 1) Reaching the borders of the regions recently reintegrated into the Russian Federation, pacifying the new oblasts.
- 2) capturing Nikolaev, Odessa, as well as the entire Black Sea coast, reaching Transnistria.
- 3) seizing/blocking Kiev, forcing a political capitulation of the Zelensky regime until early March.

**The territory of Belarus will become the main springboard for the upcoming strike.** In parallel to Belarus, Zaporozhye and Lugansk are also key zones for the Russian strategy. It is expected that massive attacks will come from these regions during the offensive, destroying enemy units in a short period of time which will allow a rapid Russian advance on the battlefield, reaching the zones listed in the above-mentioned objectives. For the offensive to be successful, Russian forces will *focus on blocking all enemy's supply lines*. The main route of arrival of supplies to Ukraine is the border with Poland, where there is the transit of NATO's ammunition and military equipment.

Some days ago, Washington announced preparing **a new package of military aid worth \$2.2 billion that is expected to include longer-range rockets for the first time**. Soon thereafter, in a televised interview, **Sergei Lavrov** said an important principle of policy:

"We're now seeking to push back Ukrainian army artillery to a distance that will not pose a threat to our territories. The greater the range of the weapons supplied to the Kiev regime, the more we will have to push them back from territories which are part of our country."

## Latest statistics of losses

A Turkish newspaper, [Hurseda Haber](#), published [January 25, 2023, an article of military losses](#) by parties in Ukraine war with **the data, allegedly produced by the Israeli Secret Service Mossad**. Here is this highly interesting statistical comparison:

Item of loss	Ukraine	Russia
Aircraft	302	23
Helicopters	212	56
UAV	2750	200
Tanks and armoured vehicles	6320	889
Artillery systems	7360	427
Air defense systems	497	12
killed soldiers (KIA)	157,000	18,480
injured soldiers (WIA)	234,000	44,500
captive soldiers (POW)	17,230	323

In addition, killed NATO servicemen: 234 trainers (US and UK), 2458 NATO soldiers (German, Polish, Lithuanian etc.), 5360 mercenaries from various countries.

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Russian Ministry of Defense (RMOD) statistics since February 24, 2022 up to December 31, 2022. **Ukrainian losses:** 355 aircraft, 199 helicopters, 2779 UAV, 7350 tanks and armoured vehicles, 4713 artillery & MLRS systems (as well as 7859 units of special military equipment).

**When comparing all the statistical figures above, one can say that ...**

- the data seems to verify quite well my previously published estimates of the losses, both regarding Ukraine and Russia (approx. 10-15% of Ukrainian losses), published in several of my articles on this website
- as well as confirm the right size range of Russian Defense Ministry's statistics (see above); differences in tanks & IFVs / artillery systems / special mil. equipment may due to different definition criteria of particular items

Late January 2023, the well-informed **American Col.(ret.) Doug Macgregor** put the numbers of dead on the Ukrainian side ([video](#)) at **122,000 killed plus 35,000 missed in action (presumed dead)**. The number of dead Russians (including Wagner forces and Donbas militia) is at **16,000 to 25,000 with 20 to 40,000 additionally wounded**. *The numbers are in good consistency with those figures of Mossad.*

When studying today's daily AFU troop losses and considering Ukraine's recent presidential order, according to which *even underage children at 16-17 aged can be called for armed service*, **the overall military situation of Ukraine appears to be catastrophic**. Anyway, the situation is **totally opposite to the picture the western MSM is propagating** "Ukraine is winning ... Ukraine is winning". No doubt, ***Ukraine has already lost the war and by the same token, the NATO as well.***

<b>Statistics of January 2023, made by the Author</b>	
<b>AFU hardware, destroyed by Russian strikes</b>	
Sources of data: RMOD, MilitaryLand, SouthFront, VT, others	
<b>Hardware</b>	<b>Number of destroyed AFU units</b>
<b>UAV</b>	202
<b>Air defense systems</b> from which	4
S-300	3
Buk-M1	1
<b>Counter-artillery radars,</b> from which	50
AN/TPQ 50 et al.	50
<b>Tanks and IFVs</b>	342
<b>MLRS</b> from which	39
HIMARS	5
Grad	22
Uragan	5
Others	7
<b>Field Artillery</b> from which	194
M109 Paladin	5
M-777	32
2S1Gvozdika	21
Msta-B	11
D-20, D-30	78
Caesar	4
Panzerhaubitze-2000	3
Krab	10
2S3 Akatsiya	24
Others	6

Please, note that just in January 2023, Russia has destroyed more than 300 AFU tanks and armoured vehicles, nearly three times more than what the West has promised to deliver to Ukraine over next half of year and all those western tanks are old models with old technology

## **NATO tank deliveries - Leopard hunting begins**

Promises of tank deliveries by models and countries: **Leopard 2 totalling about 50** (Germany, Poland, others), **Abrams M1 up to 31** (the US) and **Challenger 2 up to 14** (the UK); **totalling approx. 100 tanks**. *None of those models, now in delivery plan, are in production or are*

*produced in last 15-20 years.*

Germany has issued a permit to export **Leopard 1 main battle tanks** to Ukraine, on February 3. Berlin had approved German arms-maker Rheinmetall's plans to sell 88 of the older Leopards to Kyiv, *once these are repaired, for a total cost of more than €100 million.* The Leopard 1, which first entered service in the 1960s, is the forerunner of the more advanced Leopard 2. The tank is armed with a 105 mm Royal Ordnance L7A3 L/52 rifled gun.

The big problem is and will be, **how to obtain the required 105 mm ammunition for the Leopard 1 tanks.** The tank features moderate armor, only effective against low caliber autocannons and heavy machine guns. This makes it vulnerable to most, if not all second and third generation anti-tank weapons.

These decisions regarding western tank deliveries to Ukraine disclose that all possible old scrapping equipment has been dug up now.

## Modern tank warfare

Technological innovations have made main battle tanks (MBT) more survivable but *anti-tank weapons has become even more effective* outstripping MBT's protective capabilities. If a modern military force attempted to launch a large-scale tank-dominated attack against a well-equipped peer-level opponent armed with modern anti-tank missiles, the result would be a decisive defeat for the attacking party.

But the modern tank performs best as part of a combined arms team, supported by anti-tank infantry, artillery and close air support. As part of such a team, especially one that is well-trained in the art of close combat, the tank remains an essential weapon of war. However, **if operated in isolation, a tank is simply an expensive mobile coffin.**

Regarding the tank warfare, one needs to examine three basic issues: training, logistical sustainability and operational employment.

Broadly speaking, it takes a half year to train a basic American M1 Abrams crewmember. That training just gives the soldier the very basic skills set to be functional. Actual operational expertise is only achieved through months, if not years, of additional training.

The crew size of a Russian tank is three, reflecting the reality that Russian tanks make use of an automatic loading mechanism. Western tanks have four crew members because the loading of the main tank gun is done manually. Adapting to these dynamics takes time and requires extensive training, which is expensive.

NATO is currently providing Ukraine with three types of Western main battle tank: the British Challenger 2, the German Leopard 2, and the American M1A2. **There is no unified training course**, each tank requires its own unique training prospectus that is not directly transferable to another system. The reality is whatever training programs that are developed, *will be insufficient to the task*, resulting in poorly trained crews taking extremely complicated weapons systems into *the most dangerous environment in the world for a tank.*

Tanks are among the most technically challenging weapons systems on a modern battlefield and therefore require properly maintenance. For the M1 Abrams, for every hour a tank is in the field, there are three hours of maintenance time required. This problem only becomes magnified in combat. Normally an armor unit is equipped with highly specialized maintenance crews that can repair most of the minor issues that can sideline a tank. Given the training requirements to produce this level of high-quality mechanic, *it is unlikely Ukraine will be provided with this kind of maintenance support.*

This means that the tanks that are being provided to Ukraine will need to be returned to NATO nations for any significant repairs of equipment that is damaged through simple usage or actual combat. In short, it is highly likely that a Western main battle tank in Ukrainian hands will break down at some point during its operational use by Ukraine, meaning that the total number of tanks available to Ukraine will be far less than the number of tanks provided.

**Ukraine's commander in chief of the Armed Forces, General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, told *The Economist* last month that he needed 300 tanks, 500 infantry fighting vehicles, and 500 artillery pieces, if he were going to have any chance of defeating Russia. Following the January 20 meeting of the Ramstein Contact Group, and subsequent follow-on discussions about the provision of tanks, NATO and its allied partners have agreed to provide less than 50% of the number of tanks requested, less than 50% of the number of IFVs requested and less than 20% of the artillery requested.**

Moreover, the timetable for delivery of this equipment is scheduled over a period for many months and in some cases extends into the next year. The decision to provide Ukraine with Western main battle tanks is, **literally, a suicide pact**, something those who claim they are looking out for the best interests of Ukraine should consider before it is too late.

## Western optics, media hype

Western MSM debated in "hothead" mood about the deliveries of tanks to Ukraine, suddenly dozens of "tank experts" came to public and demanded vociferously "express delivery of Leopards".

When considering the matter in light of the analytical background, stated above, **it appears once again how "mass hysteria" or "herd stupidity" is rapidly contagious disease.** In addition, it easily causes an anti-action, which is already happened on the frontlines. Leopard hunting begins.

Russia's state tech corporation Rostec has already warned that existing Russian anti-tank missiles and shells are more than capable of destroying Western-made tanks, specifically the German Leopard 2. Pro-Russian military Telegram channels are already sharing posters pointing out the weak points of Challenger 2, Abrams and Leopard 2 tanks.

Last week, Russian company Fores offered five million rubles (\$72,000) in cash to the first soldiers, who destroy or capture a Western-made tank in Ukraine. The Urals-based company, also pledged to pay 500,000 rubles (\$7,200) for all subsequent attacks.

On February 3, the **Sudoplatov Battalion**, manned by volunteers in the Zaporozhye Region, has announced a reward of 12 million rubles (\$170,000) for each working Challenger 2, M1A2 Abrams or Leopard 2 main battle tank that gets captured within the Russian special military operation in Ukraine. The Battalion is one of several pro-Russian volunteer formations, which were formed after the start of the special military operation last year.

## Report of RAND Corporation

[RAND Report: Avoiding a Long War](#); U.S. Policy and the Trajectory of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict; January 2023.

The RAND Corporation, a highly influential American security think tank funded directly by the Pentagon, has published a landmark report stating that **prolonging the proxy war is actively harming the US and its allies** and warning Washington that it should avoid "a protracted conflict" in Ukraine. The war, Report says, represents

"the most significant interstate conflict in decades, and its evolution will have major consequences" for Washington, which includes US "interests" being actively harmed. **"The costs and risks of a long war in Ukraine are significant and outweigh the possible benefits of such a trajectory for the United States."**

The US ending its financial, humanitarian and particularly military support promptly would cause Ukraine to completely collapse and *RAND cites several reasons, why doing so would be sensible*, not least because a Ukrainian victory is regarded as both "improbable" and "unlikely," due to Russian "resolve," and its military mobilization having "rectified the manpower deficit that enabled Ukraine's success in the Kharkiv counteroffensive."

It is so funny that the top Pentagon thinkers just say publicly these facts, while the entire US mainstream media, which also represents the US government, is out there saying the precise opposite. They are still literally saying that Russia is losing and Ukraine winning as their colleagues in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. The US media is just not even mentioning this RAND report at all.

What makes the RAND Report on Ukraine so significant, is not the quality of the analysis but the fact that **the US's most prestigious national security think-tank has taken an opposite position on the war than the Washington political elite and their globalist allies. This is a very big deal.**

Keep in mind, **wars end when a critical split emerges** between ruling elites that eventually leads to a change in policy. RAND report represents just such a split. It indicates that powerful elites have broken, one part thinks the current policy is hurting the United States. **This shift is going to gain momentum until it triggers a more-assertive demand for negotiations.** Thus, the RAND report is the first step towards ending the war.

Biden administration has told repeatedly that the US will support Ukraine "for as long as it takes." The United States should not undermine its own interests to pursue the unachievable dream of expelling Russia from Ukraine. The US plan to reshape Europe and the global balance of power by degrading Russia *is turning out to fail badly and backfiring worse*. Rational members of the foreign policy establishment should evaluate Ukraine's prospects for success and weigh them against the growing likelihood that the conflict could unexpectedly spiral out-of-control.

**The RAND report seems to represent the views of the Pentagon and the US Military establishment**, who believe the United States is *racing headlong towards a direct conflagration with Russia*. In other words, the report may be the first ideological broadsides against the neocons, who run the State Department and the White House. It appears now this split between "War Department" and "State Department" will become more visible in the days ahead.

**RAND report is just the first in a long line of falling dominoes.** As Ukraine's battlefield losses mount, the flaws in Washington's strategy will become more apparent and will be more sharply criticized. **American people will question the wisdom of economic sanctions that hurt US closest allies while helping Russia.** Why the United States is following a policy that has precipitated a strong move away from the dollar and US debt? Why the US deliberately sabotaged a peace deal in March 2022, when the probability of a Ukrainian victory is near zero. The Rand report seems to anticipate all these questions as well as the "shift in mood" they will generate. This is why the authors are pushing for negotiations and a swift end to the conflict.

## Peace talks ... or not



There have been some peace talks between the US and Russia in last couple of months. William Burns, the CIA's director was to meet his opposite Russian intelligence chief Naryshkin in Ankara in November 2022. This back-channel meeting was to explore compromises before America finds itself to sacrifice the Ukrainian population in a proxy war.

On January 30 Secretary of State Anthony Blinken was in Egypt and met with its Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry. A day later Shourky flew to Russia and met its Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Egyptian media reported that Shoukry carried a letter from Blinken. **Lavrov described the proposal as "incomplete."** Lavrov also praised Egypt's "balanced" approach to the war in Ukraine. Lavrov further said Russia would continue to engage with Egypt on the Ukraine issue. **In sum: Russia has accepted Shourkry's role as a middleman in the negotiations but wants a better offer from Washington.**

The Swiss paper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ)* published, on February 2, news which **claimed that CIA boss William Burns had offered 20% of Ukraine to Russia in exchange for peace in Ukraine.** The NZZ says that **Kiev as well as Moscow had rejected the US plan.** The Kremlin spokesman Dimitry Peskov, the White House and the CIA rejected the claim. **That everyone is denying that this happened means that the NZZ claims are likely true.**

On January 6, Naftali Bennett, ex-prime minister of Israel, put some new light in public peace discussions, saying that he was negotiating with Zelensky and Putin in spring 2022 and was near to peace deal but then the US intervened and stopped the process. This seems to be the same endeavor, which ex-prime minister of then UK Boris Johnson stunted too in his visit to Kiev in April 2022. This evidence is just the latest addition to a mountain of evidence that western powers obstructed peace from breaking out in the early days of the war in Ukraine.

Militarily, **the consensus of western expert opinion** within the US and allied countries has changed from Russia's losing the war in 2022 (Russian forces pulled back from Kharkiv and Kherson), to the Ukrainian forces losing the war, while NATO runs out of weapons and ammunition to send there and yet Russia unrelentingly continues to supply new weaponry and ammunition and slowly to take new ground in Ukraine. **This war of attrition is going very badly now against the West** (the US and its foreign allies, especially the ones in Europe: EU and NATO).

Economically, expert opinion in the west is increasingly saying their sanctions that were meant to strangle Russia's economy have been by now *a massive failure*, which has probably been doing more damage to America's European allies than to Russia. If this turns out to be true also in the mid-term (highly likely), then the entire belief-system that has been standing behind the West's anti-Russia sanctions *is going to collapse*.

In addition, **being deeply disappointed with all agreements with the West, Russia's distrust on any deal with the west is huge. Thus, it is highly likely that the war will go to the bitter end, to the unconditional surrender of Ukraine.**

## **EU - Ukraine summit in conjunction with EU - NATO declaration**

European public attention was on Ukraine as the EU's top officials visit Kyiv for a historic summit, February 2-3, the first to be held in an active war zone. Kyiv wants to join the bloc within two years but Ukraine got cold shoulder on rapid EU entry.

EU leaders last June granted Ukraine formal candidate status in record time but that move was much easier than rapidly moving Ukraine through the grueling negotiations required to align a candidate country with the EU's byzantine systems, rules and regulations. That process typically takes years and years and often stalls for long periods of time.

EU countries have split over how quickly the bloc should try to move Ukraine through that accession process. There were clear tensions between Poland and the Baltic states on one hand and other EU countries on the language to EU accession. Tensions between European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen were playing into the debate as well.

Still, there is a strong will in Brussels to show solidarity with Ukraine on other issues. **The mere fact that the EU is holding a summit in a country at war is itself significant.** Also on the summit's agenda was **Zelensky's 10-point peace plan**, the reconstruction challenge facing Ukraine and food security issues, with the EU's new €25 million humanitarian aid package.

By this summit, once again, the EU publicly and officially engaged closely and tightly with the destiny of Ukraine. Similar engagement was made with the NATO by **"Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation, 10 January 2023"**.

From this on, **the destinies of the EU, the NATO and Ukraine have been combined and tied so closely that one part collapsing will make a domino effect to the rest.**

## Final look over the situation

As to the NATO, it is a good reason to **take a look at the real and practical track record: military operations in Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, which all ended in total defeat, debacle and turmoil.**

Afghanistan and Ukraine are almost the same size in terms of land mass and the US/NATO failed to defeat a bunch of Afghani goat herders, who had no air power or artillery. The US and NATO poured billions of dollars into Afghanistan and failed to vanquish the Taliban, who easily took control of Kabul in August 2021, causing NATO troops to escape in total disarray.

In Ukraine, NATO is continuing its disarmament mission, more and more heavy weapons and other military material are poured in the black hole of Ukraine; Russia destroys them and NATO's warehouse alert limits *show red*. **Military material is simply finished in Europe** and there is no military-industrial capacity to produce required quantities in next few years.

War fighting is a messy, complicated, resource intensive activity. "War is dirty business" as a British General said in Falkland operation. **The conflict in Ukraine is exposing NATO as an impotent anachronism.** If/when Russia wins militarily in Ukraine, the "raison d'etre" for NATO *will be in question, in fact it disappears*. Why any country is interested in applying the membership in such impotent alliance with such a failure track record?

If the reader can set aside emotion and consider the current situation unfolding in Ukraine, the evidence shows that Kiev's army (AFU) *is moving backwards* on all frontlines. Without support from the United States and NATO, **Ukraine does not have the manpower, munitions, tanks, artillery, air craft, financial resources and industrial capability to stop Russia.** Even with more Western support flowing in, Ukraine will still lack the manpower to block the Russian advance.

Western analysts and MSM are downplaying the Russian offense in the Donbass along the Ukrainian defensive line that stretches from Bakhmut to Severusk in the north and to Ugledar in the south *as some sort of sideshow with no strategic importance*. That is nonsense. As said above, **Russian winter offensive is underway on multiple fronts and Ukraine is paying a heavy toll.**

Carl von Clausewitz in his book *On War* introduced **the concept of 'The Culminating Point'**.



In military strategy, this is the point at which an opposing military force is no longer able to perform its operations. The military situation in Ukraine is just closing to the culminating point. My realist assessment is: the irreversible culminating point *will be reached by Russia in March, by the latest.*

**See Also:**

- [Colin Powell's anthrax vial taught the US a valuable lesson - that it can get away with any lie it wants](#)
- **Best of the Web:** [Here's what's wrong with the Hersh report on the Nord Stream attacks](#)
- [Ukrainian and US officials out US role in Kiev's artillery warfare](#)