



And must have whiskey
Oh, you know why

« Palestine Open Thread 2023-307 | Main | Palestine Open Thread 2023-308 »

December 18, 2023

The Total Defeat Of Ukraine Is Coming Into Sight

Gideon Rachman, often read columnist at the *Financial Times*, states the obvious:

[Ukraine and its backers need a credible path to victory](#)
([archived](#)) - *Financial Times*

Ukraine goes into the new year short of ammunition, money and diplomatic support. Underlying these critical shortages, there is another important deficiency. The country and its western backers no longer have a convincing theory of victory. Unless they can come up with one, western support for Ukraine will continue to waver.

...

The fear now must be that while 2023 was the year of the Ukrainian counteroffensive, 2024 will be the year that Russia goes back on the attack. The worst-case scenarios are that, if western aid is cut off, Ukraine could be in serious trouble by the summer.

...

Without a credible theory of victory, the pressure on Ukraine to negotiate with Russia will mount. The Ukrainians might make a deal — even if it involved making territorial concessions — if they had any confidence that Russia would stick to it. But Ukrainian officials can point to a litany of agreements that Putin has made and then broken. They believe that any cessation in the fighting would simply be used as an opportunity for Russia to rearm.

Rachman fails to list any of the agreements Russia is claimed to have broken. Does he mean the Minsk agreements which the Ukraine rejected to fulfill? Or is it the [Russian–Ukrainian Friendship Treaty](#) which Ukraine in 2019 refused to renew?

Unlike the U.S. and its proxies Russia usually sticks to its treaties and promises.

But aside from that false claim Rachman is mostly right. There is currently no 'theory of victory' for Ukraine. The question now is how much it will lose.

Nonetheless he still hopes for some kind of ceasefire:

One alternative to a formal agreement between Russia and Ukraine might be a de facto freezing of the conflict. In this scenario, Ukraine would move into a mainly defensive posture and hold off further Russian advances. The fighting would never stop completely – but it would dwindle.

But Rachman does not explain why Russia would agree to that. Its current president Vladimir Putin certainly does not do so:

There will be peace when we achieve our goals, which you have mentioned. Now let's return to these goals – they have not changed. I would like to remind you how we formulated them: denazification, demilitarisation, and a neutral status for Ukraine.

Russia has made some progress but those aims have not yet been achieved. It will continue the war until the Ukraine agrees to some kind of negotiations and territorial losses. If it does not do so anytime soon Russia will fight until the Ukraine is completely defeated.

The Ukrainian outlet *Strana* has analyzed how that might happen (in Russian, machine translation):

Only a few events can bring Ukraine to the brink of complete defeat:

1. Capture of Kiev.
2. Cutting off Ukraine from the sea - the capture of the entire Black Sea coast of the country and the withdrawal of Russian troops to the borders of Romania and Moldova. This will be a catastrophic blow to Ukraine both economically and militarily-strategically.
3. The capture of Dnipro and Zaporizhia – the largest rear, industrial and logistics hubs of the Ukrainian army, which will mean a critical threat to the entire Southern Front of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, as well as most of the eastern one. ...
4. A strike from Belarus through the Zhytomyr and Vinnytsia regions with the aim of reaching Transdnistria from the north and maintaining control over this line.

...
[T]he apocalyptic scenarios described above for Ukraine can only be realized if at least one of the following events occurs (we leave out the options for using nuclear weapons or entering the war on the side of the Russian Federation or large third countries, as they can lead to a world war, where there will be completely different scenarios):

1. A catastrophic drop in discipline and morale in the Ukrainian army, when entire units begin to surrender or leave their positions without orders, exposing large sections of the front.
2. Internal destabilization in Ukraine, acute conflict within the military-political leadership, loss of control by the authorities over the processes in the country, the collapse of the army management.
3. Falling to a critically low level of both military and financial aid from the West.
4. A sharp (much faster than similar actions of Ukraine) increase in Russia's army size, quality and quantity of weapons used, which will radically change the balance of forces at the front.

At the moment, none of these situations are observed.

However, Russia is obviously actively working to make these points a reality.

I disagree with the *Strana* writer that none of the Ukrainian failings he describes have yet been observed.

These things occur gradually, not in one sudden moment.

Judging from protest videos Ukrainian units put out, the morale at the front is getting steadily worse. In the last weekly summary the Russian Defense Ministry [announced](#) that 82 Ukrainian soldiers were captured or had voluntarily given themselves up. That is a new high. *AP* writes on the "[gloomy mood](#)" of Ukrainian soldiers:

Discontent among Ukrainian soldiers — once extremely rare and expressed only in private — is now more common and out in the open.

The conflict between the political and military leadership in Ukraine is again heating up. Yesterday the military [announced](#) that it had found spying devices in General Zaluzny's and his aide's offices. No one thinks that Russia has put them there. Today Zaluzny [criticized](#) the dismissal, by Zelenski, of officials in the recruitment and mobilization offices which has let to disarray:

Quote: "It is still a little early to evaluate recruiting, and as for mobilisation issues, it is not necessary to strengthen it but to bring it back to those limits, to those frameworks that worked before."

A new draft law [includes the mobilization of all women](#) between 25 and 60. Should it become law many women will simply flee from Ukraine to avoid being shipped to the frontline. That in itself would create many more labor and social problems as well as morale issues.

Aid to Ukraine has already fallen off a cliff. New aid from the U.S. or Europe is seriously in doubt. If either fails to agree to new billions the other will too. Additional problems come from the western border were [Polish truckers](#), now [joined by farmers](#), continue to block the border crossings with Ukraine. Shortages in ammunition have already led Ukraine to [scaling down its current operations](#).

Russia has steadily increased the size of its army and the production of new arms. It puts out way more than the West can deliver to Ukraine.

All these trends continue towards their final effect just like Earnest Hemingway's way [into bankruptcy](#): "Gradually, then suddenly."

All of this does not mean that Russia will definitely win the war. Long wars are hard to predict. There are risks everywhere. The U.S. may yet come up with some nastiness that could divert Russia from the war.

Should Russia win and take over most of Ukraine it could [negate Ukraine's debt](#), making the West pay double for its adventure.

That would be a just punishment for the failing neoconservative attempts to dismantle Russia.

Posted by b on December 18, 2023 at 16:57 UTC | [Permalink](#)

Comments

[next page »](#)

How about this, in western Ukraine, in one of the cities, one of the deputies threw grenades at a meeting of his colleagues, this country is simply abnormal. This videos

<https://t.me/ragulinho/9183>

Posted by: Psycho | Dec 18 2023 17:06 utc | [1](#)

That's not how the story ends. Russia has defeated the ukie army several times over. There will be no Russian take over of rump ukraine. eventually the elensky regime will find it impossible to push more forced conscripts to their slaughter, then chaos will begin in civil society, most likely civil war as blame is thrown at each other. Very likely poland will occupy at least some of the western regions to "stabilize" the situation. Ukraine then ceases to be a problem or even a nation, which lets be honest, it never has been anyway.

Posted by: nook | Dec 18 2023 17:09 utc | [2](#)

Courtesy of Yalensis over at AwfulAvalanche.wordpress.com, "Batrin is a member of the 26-person town council, serving, ironically, as a member on the Committee for Lawfulness and Public Order."

Sometimes, pounding a shoe on the table is just not enough.

Posted by: Butte Bill | Dec 18 2023 17:13 utc | [3](#)

And thus, Mario Draghi — likely to succeed unelected EU Commission President von der Lyin' (who intern is likely to succeed NATO public relations puppet Stoltenberg) — will inherit the Lvov region as new EU member doing business as the Ukraine. In the process of doing so, he will be crying: *Europe is being attacked by Russia!*

But nobody will care any more, save for the 15 % of people who vote for the Greens. The vast majority will have much bigger problems, as EU deindustrialization accelerates now thanks to an effective blockade of the Suez Canal, triggering the next supply chain crisis for whatever EU businesses survived to this point.

Posted by: Nervous German | Dec 18 2023 17:14 utc | [4](#)

The fact that they are still hanging on is a moral victory. They gave Russia a bloody nose and showed the world how inefficient and corrupt Russian military forces are. But this is not likely to translate into a military victory. They are outnumbered and now attrition is beginning to show.

Posted by: Noam A. Larkey | Dec 18 2023 17:15 utc | [5](#)

Imagine if spying devices were found in Gerasimov's office. The ecstasy in the Westernaganda would surpass that during the Prigoputsch this summer.

The massacre of the Ukranazi military in Krynki, I believe, is not just because of what Simplicius76 says is the sunken cost fallacy, or because Ukranazistan needs to show that it is winning. Those are factors, of course, but as well as those Elensky is doing his best to get elite Ukrainian military units loyal to Zaluzhny- in this case the marines - killed off, so that they can't coup him.