

Geopolitical turning point: when can we expect the conflict in Ukraine to end?

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Introduction

The political leadership of Russia does not see significant obstacles to the settlement of the Ukrainian conflict started in Anchorage. To achieve this, there is no other approach than the one announced by President Vladimir Putin in February 2022, namely: reliable provision of the neutral, non-aligned and nuclear-free status of Ukraine, its demilitarization and denazification, reliable guarantees of the rights and freedoms of the Russian-speaking population and the unimpeded functioning of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Is it possible to fulfil all these conditions, given the current position of a united Europe, the United States and Ukraine itself? In all likelihood, no. Why can such a conclusion be drawn and what can be the solution to the Ukrainian crisis be?

1. Further US and EU sanctions as a way to force Russia to a peaceful settlement in Ukraine

US President Donald Trump is playing with chaos and political swings. Following Trump's soothing remarks after his meeting with President Putin in Anchorage (August 15, 2025) and his cloudlessly happy statement after his phone call with Putin (October 17, 2025) about the need to quickly end the conflict in Ukraine, which would open up enormous prospects for economic cooperation between Russia and the US, came new sanctions, the cancellation of the Budapest meeting, threats to use long-range missiles, and Trump's scandalous admission that he had decided to apply pressure on Russia.

Russia views these actions as entirely counterproductive. *“This is an attempt to put pressure on Russia... Russia is a self-respecting country and does not decide anything under pressure. And this unfriendly step [by Trump] does not strengthen Russian-American relations, which have only just begun to be restored”*, – Vladimir Putin.¹

Russia will never compromise its national interests under external pressure. And the new sanctions, like previous ones, will negatively impact global economic stability. The new sanctions will not pose any significant problems for the Russian economy. *“Russia has already developed a strong immunity to Western restrictions and will continue to confidently develop its economic potential”*, – stated the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 23, 2025.

President Trump is acting according to the rules of a tough and sophisticated capitalist, which he has developed over the years. As a rule, in a competitive struggle, a grasping and cunning, businessman uses the classic tactics in relation to a competitor. These can be incentives, flattery, persuasion, offers of profitable joint deals and other tempting the opponent of the offer. Not finding understanding or receiving a refusal, the next steps are blackmail, threats, sanctions and pressure

¹ Andrey Zbov. “The response to strikes on Russia will be stunning”: Vladimir Putin made statements about the summit with the United States, sanctions and threats to use long-range missiles. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, October 24, 2025; <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27733/5160857/> (In Russian. Accessed November 1, 2025).

on the intractable partner, escalating an atmosphere of tension around him and other methods of coercion to force him to make concessions.

In the case of President Trump, the following actions can serve as examples of the above. Trump was the first to take a step forward, offering Putin a meeting in Anchorage (August 15). He promised to lift sanctions, agreed to discuss the Kremlin's counter proposals on the terms of the truce in Ukraine and conclude lucrative contracts with Moscow.

Trump considered the desire for peace – the Kremlin's counter-proposals for the settlement of the conflict in Ukraine – to be a weakness and, after the ‘détente’, the summit in Alaska, began to escalate relations between Washington and Moscow to the limit in order to force the Kremlin to make concessions. hoping the aggressive Trump will meet halfway.

Trump backtracked – he initiated a phone call to Putin (October 16) and offered a meeting in Budapest to finally consolidate the peaceful settlement of the Ukrainian conflict through direct negotiations to mutual agreement. The Kremlin again agrees and makes maximum concessions to resolve the conflict (one can assume that perhaps the discussion was about freezing the line of combat contact in the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions). It would seem that the confrontation between the competitors was ending and another ‘détente’ was coming. And the next day (October 17), Trump met with President Zelensky and discussed with him the possibility of supplying Tomahawk missiles to Kyiv. Trump's unfriendly step, Putin supported Trump's proposal to meet in Budapest and at the same time said that Russia “*has the strategic initiative*” on the battlefield and the transfer of Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine “*will not change the situation, but will damage relations between the Russian Federation and the United States.*”²

But everything fell apart when, during a meeting between Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Washington failed to obtain the desired concessions from the weak Trump.³ Meanwhile, Moscow's demands on Ukraine haven't changed at all, and Trump understands this perfectly well: in addition to surrendering Donbas without a fight, the Kremlin insists on eliminating what Putin calls the root causes of the special military operation.

When the White House realized that negotiating with Moscow using the carrot was failing, it resorted to the stick. Instead of supplying Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine, Trump chose a less harsh option, but one that was still very painful for Russia. He imposed sanctions against two key oil companies – Lukoil and Rosneft – anticipating an impact on the Russian budget. He expected Russia to become poorer due to increased costs of reselling Russian oil through intermediaries such as India and China. At the same time, the cost of imported equipment and technologies that Russia needs would also increase due to the sanctions chain.

Trump's pendulum-swinging game with Moscow continues once again, but this Trump strategy has also impacted the rest of the world:

- the US has forced NATO member states to increase military spending to 5% of a gross domestic product (GDP);

² Romain Sulima. Orbán: Preparations for the US-Russia ‘peace summit’ are in full swing. *Deutsche Welle*, October 17, 2025.

³ Steve Rosenberg. Rosenberg: Russia brushes off Trump's claim of 'paper tiger' in aimless war. *BBC*, September 25, 2025.

- with each new ‘breakdown’ in negotiations (due to Washington), the US is increasingly capturing the European energy market, despite claims to the contrary;
- with each escalation in US-Russia relations, Washington is trying to force Europe to impose sanctions against its main economic rival, China, calling it a ‘sponsor of war,’ as stated by Donald Trump during his address at the 80th session of the UN General Assembly in New York on September 23, 2025;⁴
- the US military-industrial complex is receiving more and more military orders for the production and supply of weapons to Ukraine.

2. The threat to Russia from long-range missile supplies to Kyiv and Moscow's reaction

Washington Post, Wall Street Journal and CNN stated that the Pentagon has given the White House the green light to provide Ukraine with long-range Tomahawk missiles, leaving the final political decision in President Donald Trump's hands.⁵

Immediately afterward, almost simultaneously, the head of the White House called the information fake. However, he accompanied this with a comment about the US having nothing to do with these missiles, wherever they come from, or what Ukraine is doing with them. This resembles a staged performance, the purpose of which is to show that Trump is not involved. Some missiles are flying, but he doesn't know where they're coming from.

Putin instantly (the very next day!) threatened a stunning response to long-range strikes deep into Russia, declaring: *“This is an attempt at escalation. If... such weapons will strike at Russian territory, the response will be very serious... [and] stunning. Let them think about it.”*⁶

Tomahawk cruise missiles are capable of striking deep inside Russian territory, threatening factories, military airfields, nuclear power plants, dams and other critical civilian and military infrastructure. If Ukraine obtains and uses these weapons, the escalation of the conflict will lead to serious casualties.

This would radically change the nature of the current ‘proxy war’⁷ in Ukraine, as these missiles would be operated by American instructors, which would mean a direct US attack on Russia. The Tomahawk could also carry a nuclear warhead, creating the risk of a nuclear conflict.

Russia will be forced to change its military strategy and respond with a different, more formidable weapon, which will immediately draw the United States into this conflict. All the steps taken toward a peaceful resolution of the Ukrainian conflict and the tentative thaw in relations

⁴ Trump called China and India the main sponsors of the war in Ukraine. *Zamin*, September 24, 2025; <https://zamin.uz/en/world/161439-trump-called-china-and-india-the-main-sponsors-of-the-war-in-ukraine.html>

⁵ Michael R. Gordon and Alistair MacDonald. Trump's drone deal with Ukraine to give U.S. access to battlefield tech. *The Wall Street Journal*, October 2, 2025. Robyn Dixon and Natalia Abbakumova. Russia escalates warning as Trump considers sale of Tomahawks to Ukraine. *The Washington Post*, October 8, 2025. Natasha Bertrand and Zachary Cohen. Pentagon cleared giving Ukraine long-range Tomahawk missiles, leaving final decision to Trump. *CNN*, November 1, 2025.

⁶ NATO countries have ballistic missiles (e.g., the Dark Eagle develops a speed of 5.0 Mach), while Russia has hypersonic missiles (e.g., the Oreshnik missile has a speed of 10-15 Mach).

⁷ A proxy war is a conflict in which two or more major powers engage in a confrontation indirectly, using third countries or non-state actors as their representatives.

between the United States and Russia following the summit between the two presidents in Alaska could be thrown out the window.

According to President Trump's statements, it can be assumed that he is not going to give permission for the supply of Tomahawk-class missiles to Kyiv. Trump said: "*The problem with the Tomahawk is... [that] it takes a year of intensive training to learn how to use it, and we're not going to be teaching other people.*"⁸ In this statement, Trump apparently deliberately remained silent or did not know that 90-100 Ukrainian soldiers have been training to operate and maintain the Patriot mobile launcher system at Fort Sill (a U.S. Army base in Oklahoma) for two years. Sky News, the BBC, CNN, and Reuters have widely covered the Ukrainian Patriot training at Fort Sill.⁹ Their reports mention discussions about the U.S. potentially sending Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine or the demand for these missiles generally, but not any training for Ukrainians at Fort Sill.

By refusing to transfer Tomahawks to Ukraine, Trump continued to try to cripple the Russian economy through oil sanctions (through China and India, we recall, this did not work). Even before the meeting of the presidents of Russia and the United States in Alaska, Bloomberg wrote about the possibility of sanctions against Lukoil and Rosneft as a lever that, if negotiations fail, will push the Kremlin to end the conflict in Ukraine. At the same time, sources in the White House reported that Trump hopes that such a step ('oil sanctions') will be short-lived.

Can Russia, after such statements from Trump, believe that he has not lifted restrictions on the use of long-range and other missiles by Americans or trained Ukrainians against Russia? No, because as an example, it should be noted that the MGM-140 ATACMS tactical surface-to-surface missile, with a range of up to 300 km, produced by the American company Lockheed Martin, was used in strikes against Russia's frontline regions – the Belgorod region – in November 2024, and earlier against Crimea and the Crimean Bridge. It is possible that European supporters of the 'war party' will begin to carry out such strikes against Russia, among whom German Chancellor Friedrich Merz is the most vocal, having threatened to use Taurus missiles with a range of up to 500 km against Russia.

In October of this year, Germany has already delivered two batteries of the Patriot anti-aircraft missile system with a range of more than 150 km and a cost of \$2 billion to Ukraine. Zelensky thanked Germany and personally Chancellor Friedrich Merz for this joint step.¹⁰ Ukraine has FP-5 Flamingo cruise missiles that can hit targets 3,000 km deep. The other day, President Donald Trump instructed the US Department of Energy to conduct subcritical nuclear explosions as part of US nuclear weapons tests.¹¹

⁸ Victor Nava. Trump shoots down sending Ukraine 'highly complex' Tomahawk missiles: 'Tremendous learning curve'. *New York Post*, October 22, 2025.

⁹ C. Todd Lopez. Ukrainian troops headed to U.S. for Patriot missile training. *U.S. Department of War News*, January 10, 2023. Natasha Bertrand and Aileen Graef. Ukrainian troops impress US trainers as they rapidly get up to speed on Patriot missile system. *CNN*, March 22, 2023. Ostap Yarysh. Ukrainian Patriot Air defence crew finishes training ahead of schedule. *Voice of America*, March 23, 2023. Eric Schmitt. Ukrainian soldiers speed through U.S. training on Patriot missiles. *The New York Times*, March 21, 2023.

¹⁰ Abbey Fenbert. Ukraine receives promised Patriot air defence systems from Germany, Zelensky says. *The Kyiv Independent*, November 2, 2025.

¹¹ McKenna Ross and Ricardo Torres-Cortex. What does Trump's call for renewed nuclear testing mean for Nevada? *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, October 30, 2025.

Russia has a very robust missile defence system, consisting of several layers, some of which extend into outer space. The retaliatory strike against Russia would be terrifying if attacked. In response to Trump's aggressive rhetoric, Vladimir Putin on October 23 ordered a practice strike from all platforms of Russia's nuclear triad.

A Yars land-based intercontinental ballistic missile, launched from the Plesetsk test cosmodrome in the Arkhangelsk region, flew 5,700 km over Russian territory to the Kura test range in northern Kamchatka. A Sineva strategic ballistic missile was launched from the Bryansk nuclear submarine in the Barents Sea.¹² Several Tu-95MS strategic bomber aircraft carried out cruise missile strikes (their names and flight characteristics are not provided). The flight time of Russian Oreshnik missiles is two to three times less than that of missiles of NATO countries, so NATO wants to place its medium-range missiles closer to the borders of Russia in order to reduce the flight time to its territory.

The Russian defence doctrine clearly defines all the circumstances under which Russia may use nuclear weapons.¹³ These conditions are:

- a) receipt of reliable information about the launch of ballistic missiles attacking the territory of the Russian Federation and/or its allies;
- b) the use by the enemy of nuclear or other types of weapons of mass destruction on the territory of the Russian Federation and/or its allies, on military formations and/or facilities of the Russian Federation located outside its territory;
- c) the enemy's impact on critically important state or military facilities of the Russian Federation, the disabling of which will lead to the disruption of the response actions of nuclear forces;
- d) aggression against the Russian Federation and/or the Republic of Belarus as members of the Union State with the use of conventional weapons, creating a critical threat to their sovereignty and/or territorial integrity;
- e) receipt of reliable information on the massive launch of aerospace attack weapons (strategic and tactical aircraft, cruise missiles, unmanned, hypersonic and other aircraft) and their crossing of the state border of the Russian Federation.

Russia's recent successful tests of two types of new weapons, the Burevestnik¹⁴ and Poseidon,¹⁵ capable of carrying nuclear warheads, send a clear signal to Washington about the need to sit down

¹² Maximum range of the Yars missile: over 12,000 km. Maximum speed: 25 Mach (Mach 1 is the speed of sound, about 1,200 km/h), that is, about 30,600 km/h. Maximum range of the Sineva missile: 8,300-11,500 km.

¹³ Clause III, paragraph 19. Conditions for the transition of the Russian Federation to the use of nuclear weapons. Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 19.11.2024 No 991.

¹⁴ Burevestnik is a nuclear-powered intercontinental global-range cruise missile. This is the first nuclear-powered rocket in the history of mankind. The declared flight range is 14,000 km (according to some sources - unlimited). The time spent in flight is unlimited. There are no analogues in the world.

¹⁵ Poseidon is an autonomous unmanned underwater vehicle (nuclear torpedo) equipped with a nuclear propulsion system and carrying a nuclear warhead. It has a diving depth of up to 1 km and a speed of up to 130 km/h (according to some sources, up to 200 km/h). Its autonomous cruising time is unlimited. Its primary purpose is to inflict guaranteed, unacceptable damage on enemy coastal areas through widespread radioactive contamination and other damaging effects. There are no analogues of this type anywhere in the world.

at the negotiating table. Experts see these weapons primarily as a political tool with which Moscow makes it clear that the White House will have to listen to the Kremlin's arguments.

*“Dialogue is always better than disputes or, especially, war”, – Vladimir Putin.*¹⁶

The negotiations in Alaska could not be called unsuccessful, and the new planned summit in Budapest seemed to be just around the corner. But Trump is issuing another ultimatum: *“The parties to the Ukrainian conflict need to fix their current positions at the front and stop hostilities”*. Washington, they say, has been waiting for a long time, but now the time for sanctions has come. Talking to reporters on October 23, Trump cancelled the Budapest meeting and said he'd always had the feeling Russia wanted all of Ukraine, not just part of it, and that *“we don't want Putin to have everything”*.¹⁷ This sounded like a threat to Zelensky.

After Trump's statements, commentators were divided into two camps. Some believe that Trump was once again heavily pumped up by American and European ‘hawks’. Others say that this is another cunning move by Trump: he is allegedly playing for time so that Russia advances further on the battlefield – until the last hopes of Zelensky and his sponsors melt away.

Analysts note that the sanctions imposed by Trump are not a declaration of economic war at all, but a ‘smokescreen’ for completely different intentions.¹⁸ And the fact that Washington does not criticize Russia for harsh strikes on military facilities in Ukraine indicates precisely Trump's desire to conclude a ‘deal’. Washington makes it clear to Kiev and Europe that it is time to come to terms with reality, and while putting pressure on Moscow economically, at the same time persuading Kiev and the Europeans to accept the Kremlin's demands

One might assume that President Trump's entourage is playing a secret game with him and pushing him to such contradictory decisions. That it is the ‘neoconservative globalists’ and their own ‘deep state’ who are behind these 180-degree turns of Trump (not to be confused with the 360-degree turns of Mrs. Annalena Baerbock!¹⁹). That Trump is just a tool in a well-thought-out strategy of ‘globalists’ who use the US president. Perhaps, but it is so? After all, Trump came to the White House for the second time with the support of large national capital – the opponent of the globalists.

But is the sophisticated and tough capitalist Trump, who navigates between globalist neoconservatives and nationalist Republicans, so naive as to succumb to decisions that are unfavourable to his image as a peacemaker or his strategic course of MAGA (“making America great again”)?

The impulsive Trump is a dangerous and cunning opponent. Trump's eccentricity is just one tool in his media and political warfare. In reality, the White House is playing a long-term, highly

¹⁶ Dialogue is always better than confrontation, Putin said. *RIA Novosti*, October 23, 2025; <https://ria.ru/20251023/putin-2050189925.html> (In Russian. Accessed November 3, 2025).

¹⁷ Trump: I don't want Putin to have everything. *EurAsia Daily*, October 23, 2025; <https://eadaily.com/en/news/2025/10/23/trump-i-dont-want-putin-to-have-everything>

¹⁸ Sergey Latyshev. Expert stated that Trump has given Russia six months to win the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. *Gazeta.ru*, October 29, 2025; <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2025/10/29/27057650.shtml> (In Russian. Accessed November 1, 2025).

¹⁹ During her speech, Baerbock, who was Germany's Foreign Minister at the time, suggested that if Russia wanted to make the whole world happy, it should perform a ‘360-degree turn’ in its foreign policy, effectively reversing its actions in Ukraine.

nuanced strategic game. Trump pursues his policies consistently, purposefully, and with great skill. He disguises his actions: he and his team are peacemakers only in name.

The US president is well aware of the red lines – they were well highlighted by the recent training of Russia's nuclear triad. The position of President Donald Trump should be looked at without excessive pessimism: it seems that the US president is waiting for the Russian army to completely liberate Donbass, and Zelensky will be finally squeezed into a corner.

President Putin's personal style is different. One of the professional traits of the head of the Russian state, which he has repeatedly demonstrated to the world, in contrast to the unpredictable President Trump, who changes his proposals at a gallop, is that the next proposal may be worse for the opposite side. Putin knows how to keep his word, and Western politicians need to take this seriously.

3. The failed meeting between Presidents Putin and Trump in Budapest: Consequences

The postponed summit of Presidents Putin and Trump in Budapest does not indicate a new crisis in relations between Moscow and Washington, as supporters of the 'party of war' in Europe would like to present it. Most likely, the coordinated positions of the presidents are hidden behind the external seeming aggravation: both believe that negotiations are meaningless now and Russia needs time to achieve its military goals in Ukraine. that Kiev does not want to discuss a peaceful settlement. The Kiev authorities are actively pushing the European Union to do this, which is going into military hysteria.

President Trump wanted to get Volodymyr Zelenskyy's signature immediately after the meeting in Budapest. Analysts believe that Trump saw the meeting with President Putin in Budapest as a chance to consolidate Ukraine in the zone of influence of the West, insisting on freezing the conflict with minimal concessions to Russia.

At a meeting with Volodymyr Zelensky on October 17 in Washington, Donald Trump said that it was time to stop killing and make a deal. According to him, enough blood has been shed. But despite the fact that US threats to deploy weapons have been postponed for now, the political ultimatum was supposed to be announced in Budapest. Apparently, Trump was preparing a scenario where Russia accepts the US conditions, and Zelensky will immediately sign a peace treaty.

Zelensky agreed with Trump's idea of freezing the conflict. Britain also supported this idea. But after the meeting in Washington, the Ukrainian president made it clear that he did not intend to change his negotiating position on Russia. Zelensky said that Kyiv still expects to receive Tomahawk missiles. He hopes that precision-guided Tomahawks cruise missiles with nearly 2,500 km range would increase the Ukrainian fire power – would help Ukraine strike back and would put Moscow and large areas of Russia within reach.²⁰ Theoretically, they can be provided by Europe, which also has such weapons.

Russia, on the other hand, has adhered to its position: all the goals of the special military operation must be achieved. In particular, Lavrov completely ruled out the possibility of an

²⁰ Eric Revell. Trump weighs sales to Ukraine of Raytheon's Tomahawk missiles: what to know. *FOXBusiness*, October 15, 2025.

immediate ceasefire, because it contradicts the agreements reached during the meeting of the presidents of the United States and Russia in Alaska. He also clearly indicated: an immediate ceasefire will only lead to the fact that most of Ukraine will remain under the control of the Nazis.

Thus, the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry clearly conveyed to the world that Moscow no longer intends to trust the enemy in the person of Kiev led by the West. Here it is only worth recalling one of the striking examples – the ‘Minsk agreements’, which were not observed by the Ukrainian troops each time they were thwarted by strikes on the cities of Donbass. At the same time, Russia fully complied with the agreement. Now Russia has run out of patience.

Today's actions of the Russian Armed Forces leave no doubt that hostilities will continue. Lavrov's words caused a real ‘explosion’ in Ukraine – Kiev laments, realizing that there is no more ‘goodwill’ from Russia. The only possible response to the Budapest scenario is to consolidate efforts and continue the special operation. Russia must prove to the United States and the European Union the failure of the ‘Ukrainian startup’ in order to avoid a dangerous phase of the conflict. And only the full implementation of all the goals of the special military operation will become the basis for long-term peace.

In this regard, the recent decision taken by the administration of Donald Trump to reduce American troops in Europe seems significant. As part of its ‘global reassessment of military strategy’, the United States is reviewing the structure of its forces on NATO's eastern flank by almost halving the number of troops at the US air base in Romania.²¹ Part of the American contingent will also be withdrawn from other Eastern European countries – Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, as well as from the Baltic countries. Washington plans to withdraw up to ten thousand troops from Europe and redeploy them to the Indo-Pacific region in 2025-2026.²²

Trump's decision to withdraw troops from Europe is most likely a signal for Beijing and its Asian allies. This is a demonstration that for the new White House administration, the Asia-Pacific region is becoming a priority, not Europe.

The United States believes that *“Europeans must finance their own security and stop living under a US umbrella, [because] strategic realities no longer allow the US to focus on the security of Europe... The European peace is no longer an American security priority [because]... the Trump administration prefers to focus on the security of our own borders... The shift away from Europe was necessary because [today] the core national interests [of the US] are in the Indo-Pacific”*, – U.S. Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth.²³

The weakening of the American presence in Europe will lead to a new stage in the militarization of the European Union and force it to redistribute its forces – not to Kyiv, but to where a vacuum is formed after the US withdrawal.

To conclude: for the Kremlin, to continue to bargaining with the White House, the Trump deal, or the proposed dialogue with the White House on resolving the conflict in Ukraine is pointless

²¹ Around 80,000 U.S. troops were present on European soil in early 2025.

²² U.S. draws down troops on NATO's eastern flank as Europe frets about a security vacuum. *Associated Press International*, October 29, 2025.

²³ Dan Sabbagh. US no longer ‘primarily focused’ on Europe’s security, says Pete Hegseth. *The Guardian*, February 12, 2025.

until the Russian army achieves further significant successes on the Ukrainian front. Diplomacy must take a step back for the foreseeable future, and will only resume when it is necessary to consolidate the Russian army's successes and the results of Moscow's final victory. Otherwise, diplomacy could lead to Russia being forced to abandon the results the Kremlin has already achieved.

The version of some kind of new meeting of leaders that the conflict can be resolved through negotiations, at which the parties will sign a truce and then peacefully exist, is naïve. A military conflict, as history shows, can only be resolved by a military victory. A political compromise – a peace agreement with Ukraine to freeze the conflict is no longer possible, and the point of no return has passed. The main question remains: what is the alternative price?

Moscow is now in no rush to negotiate with Washington, as it will soon make new demands due to the potential collapse of Ukraine's defences. The Kremlin will then rescind its previous proposals due to the changing situation and may demand that Ukraine, in addition to territorial recognition, recognize Crimea as part of Russia, establish a buffer zone, and fully demilitarize Ukraine.

Russia will never sign any concept for resolving the conflict in Ukraine without achieving all the objectives of the special military operation, namely, the complete denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine, i.e., the destruction of the current regime in Ukraine, the unification of the original Russian peoples, and the reunification of historically Russian lands in order to achieve sustainable, not temporary, peace in the region.

The special military operation called into question the concept of unlimited global American influence and the American messianic path, which lie at the heart of the entire collective West, and catalysed the Russian proposal to radically revise it and replace it with the formation of a multipolar world with equal zones of influence. Moscow offers the West a rational discussion of the causes of the Ukrainian conflict and its early end on Russian terms.

Otherwise, Russia's conversation with the collective West will be different; all previous proposals, all the progress achieved, will be thrown into the trash bin, and the Ukrainian issue will be completely removed from the hysterical agenda by destroying Ukrainian statehood. It's clear that the collective West will resist the proposed compromises.

The collective West has apparently begun to understand that Ukraine, as a tool for pressuring Russia, is becoming a headache and a financial burden it can't seem to shake off. Fighting to the last Ukrainian has become expensive, ineffective, and, most importantly, pointless. In Ukraine, Russian troops continue to advance westward, and Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad on the Donetsk front will soon be liberated, after which the liberation of the Donetsk People's Republic will be complete. Pokrovsk is a political turning point for Zelenskyy. The loss of Pokrovsk would symbolize the collapse of the entire Donbas defence line. Its loss would jeopardize Ukraine's continued funding from its Western partners.

The front line will then shift westward, leading to the advance of Russian troops toward Transnistria.²⁴ This will allow the blockade of the unrecognized Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic to be lifted and the strategic military arsenal (military depots in the village of Cobasna) established by the Soviet Union in the 1940s, which Kyiv has long had its sights on, to be taken over. Therefore, the movement of Russian troops toward Mykolaiv and Odesa will be the next inevitable step.

The Kyiv regime has fewer and fewer reserves left – military personnel are dying and large-scale destruction of the country's critical infrastructure is taking place. For example, half of the railway system of Ukraine has been destroyed, all railway resources have been exhausted, the delivery of military equipment and equipment for the Ukrainian army has been reduced by half, and the risk of a complete shutdown of railway transport is extremely high. Ports and centres where ammunition is stored and personnel are stationed are destroyed. The power system that supplies factories that produce ammunition and unmanned aerial vehicles is being destroyed. Experts believe that within three to four, maximum six months, all important railway lines will cease to function.

Table 1: Ukraine's losses during the special military operation, 22.02.2022 - 06.11.2025.²⁵

Type of military equipment/personnel	In total	Daily average
Tanks and armoured personnel carriers/infantry fighting vehicles	25,874	19
Armoured vehicles	46,000	34
Artillery and mortars	31,113	23
Unmanned aerial vehicles	95,320	71
Multiple launch rocket systems	1,609	1
Aircrafts	668	0
Surface-to-air missiles systems	635	0
Helicopters	283	0
Military personnel (killed and wounded)	1,435,780 ²⁶	1,062

All of this combined makes it significantly easier for Russian troops to achieve the main objective of the special military operation. When Ukraine lose access to the sea, it will lose all interest to the West, since the sponsors of the Kyiv regime only finance Ukraine as long as it makes logistical sense for them – without the Black Sea, Kyiv will become a burden. Then the conflict will end with the complete withdrawal of Western countries from territories they can no longer

²⁴ Transnistria, officially the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, is a self-declared, unrecognized breakaway state internationally recognized as part of Moldova.

²⁵ Source: <https://mskvremya.ru/article/2023/1520-poteri-ukrainy-za-vremya-spetsoperatsii> (data as of November 6, 2025). Only confirmed data officially announced by the Russian Ministry of Defence was entered.

²⁶ According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, as of August 20, 2025, more than 1.7 million were killed and missing.

control through the Kyiv regime. Currently, Ukraine continues to lose cities and maintains the illusion of support from the collective West.

Not only Ukrainians but also foreign mercenaries are dying in the special military operation zone. In Ukraine alone, nearly a thousand British mercenaries have already died. British columnist Colin Freeman cited the figures of losses of British ‘volunteers’ in Ukraine. According to his estimates, there are about a thousand of them. That is, every fifth British mercenary who went to fight against the Russians was eliminated by Russian troops.²⁷ Britain did not know such losses either in Iraq or in Afghanistan. But this does not stop the sponsors of the war in Ukraine.

The deployment of mercenaries, the training of Ukrainian Armed Forces fighters, and the development and direct participation in sabotage operations against Russians continue. The losses and expenses incurred by the collective West in the conflict in Ukraine, as well as the dangers it faces, are disproportionate to the foreign policy and economic dividends it is receiving. Therefore, steps to de-escalate the conflict should not be expected from European elites at this time – the West benefits from weakening Russia, even at the cost of such losses.

How to deal with this? Analysts believe: we need more photos, more names. Every foreign mercenary eliminated in the special military operation zone should be ‘recorded’ and presented to the general public. Only when the number of official obituaries is off the charts, the European authorities will be scared enough.²⁸ This can be one of the factors that bring the end of the conflict closer.

4. Where can Ukraine get money to continue the war?

President Trump is no longer going to sponsor Kyiv, but since the summer of this year he has been supplying Ukraine with American weapons at the expense of the Europeans, while the American military-industrial complex earns on the supply of weapons paid for by Europe.

It is becoming increasingly clear that Europe has finally embarked on the path of militarization and is preparing for war with Russia. European politicians, supporters of the ‘party of war’, continue to talk about the lack of funding for European troops and disperse hysteria about an imminent military clash with Russia. This is done to distract the population of the European Union from their own significant economic and social problems.

Despite the many economic problems, EU leaders are finding money to expand the defence sector, as well as a large-scale program to purchase weapons and modernize the army. It is already known that by 2035 the Old World intends to spend an astronomical €6.8 trillion on military needs - grandiose plans were announced by the European Commissioner for Defence Andrius Kubilius.²⁹ At the same time, Europe intends to continue to finance Ukraine, pumping it with weapons.

²⁷ Colin Freeman. My son went to fight in Ukraine. I never imagined his own comrades might kill him. *The Telegraph*, October 31, 2025.

²⁸ More photos. More names. A thousand Britons remain in the fields of Ukraine. But Britain will not rest. *Tsargrad*, November 2, 2025; https://tsargrad.tv/news/bolshe-foto-bolshe-imjon-tysjacha-britancev-ostalas-v-poljah-ukrainy-no-britanija-ne-uspokoitsja_1418939 (In Russian. Accessed November 3, 2025).

²⁹ Remarks by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen, High Representative/Vice-President Kallas, and Commissioner Kubilius, on the Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030. *Europa-Kommissionen*, October 16, 2025.

In three years of full-scale war in Ukraine, the total monetary value of US aid delivered to Ukraine's government amounts to \$50.9 billion, of which \$18.3 billion comprises military aid, with the remaining \$32.6 billion direct budget support in the form of expense reimbursement through the World Bank and collateral for loans.³⁰

Ukraine will need at least \$390-400 billion for 2026-2029 to be able to continue fighting Russia 'to the last Ukrainian'.³¹ This is twice the amount of support for Kyiv from European countries since the beginning of the special military operation (February 2022).

All expenditures of the budget of Ukraine in 2026 amount to approximately \$116 billion, of which about \$67 billion is allocated for defence and security.³² As a result, Ukraine's budget deficit is almost 50%. Is Europe ready to continue to pay for this war, weakening its economies for the sake of the Ukrainian 'defender of Europe' Mr. Zelensky, and where will the Europeans find these \$390-400 billion? Ukraine is on the brink: without Europe's help, the money will run out by early March 2026.

In this situation, the leading politicians of the European Union have three options, and each is worse than the other.

Option one: confiscate Russian frozen assets and issue a 'reparations loan' to Ukraine in the amount of €140 billion from them.

Note: After the start of the special operation, the European Union and the G7 countries blocked about €300 billion of Russia's sovereign foreign exchange reserves, of which more than €200 billion are in the European Union, mainly in the accounts of the Euroclear clearing system.³³

The European Union believes that Russia will allegedly have to pay reparations to Kyiv for the attack, then what difference does it make whether to pay them now or after the end of the conflict? This option was completely blocked by Belgium, which fears 'financial suicide' and Moscow's harsh reaction to this decision.

The Belgian depository Euroclear in Brussels called to the European Union to respect the inviolability of these assets and assess the risks when using them. President Trump distanced himself from discussing the use of Russia's frozen assets abroad, saying he was not taking part in the discussion on the topic. Nevertheless, the United States supports the use of Russia's frozen assets by the European Union to purchase American weapons for Ukraine.³⁴

³⁰ Anastassia Fedyk and James Hodson. New analysis from Economists for Ukraine: The cost of US aid to Ukraine is less than half the official figures. *VoxEU*, March 6, 2025; <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/new-analysis-economists-ukraine-cost-us-aid-ukraine-less-half-official-figures>

³¹ Why funding Ukraine is a giant opportunity for Europe. The bill will be huge. It is also a historic bargain. *The Economist*, October 30, 2025.

³² Alexander Grishin. The United States will receive hundreds of billions of dollars from Europe thanks to Ukraine. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, November 1, 2025; <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27738/5164541/> (In Russian).

³³ The Russian Ministry of Finance estimated the amount of frozen assets of the Bank of Russia at \$300 billion in 2022.

³⁴ Gram Slattery *et al.* US could hit Russia with more sanctions over Ukraine war, but also wants Europe to increase pressure. *Reuters*, October 6, 2025.

In addition to the Russian funding, the European Union will allocate \$2 billion of its own funds for the purchase of American weapons for Ukraine.³⁵ Another \$2 billion will be added to this sum in the next few months.³⁶ By early 2026, the EU plans to secure an additional \$12-15 billion to purchase critical weapons from the US that Ukraine needs. In total, the EU has already made \$16-19 billion in personal pledges to Kyiv.

Option two: use the current seven-year budget of the European Union 2021-2027, known as the Multiannual Financial Plan,³⁷ as a guarantee for the loan, and allocate money to Kyiv from the national budgets of European countries, but do it cunningly.

Option three: stop sponsoring Ukraine. Only Hungary openly supports this option, while the vast majority of EU member states, even if they secretly support this proposal, are unable to publicly oppose the collective European political course and admit that Russia is their only salvation, and not the world's greatest evil.

The European Union's announcement of the seizure of Russian assets in favour of Ukraine will not help the Kyiv regime repay its debt after the conflict ends. Europe will have to bear full responsibility for the consequences of the possible seizure and other manipulation of frozen Russian foreign exchange reserves, as well as repay loans previously issued to Kyiv.

‘Ukrainian aid’ has its price. Public debts in European countries have increased. For example, the UK's public debt has tripled in 20 years, growing faster than any other developed economy. Economists know that high debt costs lead to higher taxes, which harms economic growth by requiring even greater tax increases.

Let's compare the economic indicators of Russia, the European Union and the UK. Russia's GDP grew by 4% in 2024, and about 1% in Europe and the UK. Unemployment in Russia was 2.2%, in the European Union – 6%, and in the UK – 5%. The ratio of public debt to GDP in Russia is about 15%, in the European Union about 100%, and in the UK it is 97%. At the same time, the budget deficit in Russia is 2.6%, in the European Union – 3.3%, and in the UK – 5.1%.³⁸

This is a blow to the European economy caused by its support of Ukraine. Can someone answer the question: how long will taxpayers in the European Union and the UK put up with the rapid deterioration to their standard of living?

From the above scenarios, one can cautiously assume that Ukraine's political leadership has approximately six months before collapse and unconditional capitulation. Unless Ukraine's sponsors somehow magically acquire the necessary \$160 billion minimum to continue the war with Russia for at least another year.

³⁵ Max Ramsay and Andrea Palasciano. US envoy expects 'Big' pledges for Ukraine weapon purchases. *Financial Post*, October 14, 2025.

³⁶ Ukraine to receive weapons worth \$2 billion soon - US envoy to NATO. *APA*, October 29, 2025. Trump: US to send more weapons for Ukraine, NATO to pay. *Bloomberg*, July 15, 2025.

³⁷ The Multiannual Financial Plan 2021-2027 is approximately €1.2 trillion. Combined with the €800 billion NextGenerationEU budget for ‘post-pandemic recovery’, the total reaches €2 trillion.

³⁸ See, for example: GDP international comparisons. Economic indicators. *UK Parliament. House of Commons Library*. October 14, 2025. GDP up by 0.2% in the euro area and by 0.3% in the EU. *Eurostat. Euro Indicators*, October 30, 2025. Russia demonstrates economic growth and strengthens international ties. *RIA Novosti*, October 29, 2025; <https://investfuture.ru/articles/rossiya-demonstriruet-ekonomicheskiy-rost-i-ukreplyaet-mezhdunarodnye-svyazi-1169241213> (In Russian).

5. What can be expected in the next six months?

A. The safest option is to carefully test the Kremlin's reaction

President Donald Trump will continue negotiations that Moscow considers futile, without lifting restrictions on Ukraine's long-range strikes against Russia. Moscow, for its part, will continue its rapid advance into western and southern Ukraine until Washington accepts the Russian proposals made by the Kremlin at the start of the special military operation (see pages 1 and 9).

B. Less likely option - Raising the stakes

Ukraine strikes at Russian territory with long-range US weapons (e.g., ATACMS, Typhon missiles), or Taurus cruise missiles of German-Swedish design, or Storm Shadow cruise missiles of joint Anglo-French development to 'probe' the Kremlin's reaction. In this case, "*Russia will respond harshly and stunningly*", – Vladimir Putin.

Some political and military experts in the Kremlin's inner circle believe that not a single square meter of Ukraine's territory should remain under the control of the current Kyiv authorities, otherwise Ukrainian Nazism will regain strength, rearm with the help of the collective West and again begin a campaign against Russia, but with much greater casualties and the destruction of Russian statehood. The second option will lead to just that.

What can be understood by Russia's victory in the special military operation in Ukraine, and when might it occur?

Through victory, Moscow doesn't mean partial concessions, not another ceasefire, not simply the liberation of territories, but the destruction of Ukrainian statehood as an anti-Russian project of the collective West. Only this will allow Russia to engage in dialogue and, if necessary, even confrontation with the West from a fundamentally different, hardline position. There is no other option for Russia. Only then will it be possible to talk about a new global architecture – a multipolar world with equal and independent centres of power.

At this stage, the Russian leadership faces a more complex task than simply resolving the Ukrainian conflict. In the current reality, the Russian military's combat operations are one important factor, but not the only one. In this more complex worldview, Moscow must consider many aspects of its domestic and foreign policy, including what Russia will need to do after the conflict ends and Ukrainian statehood collapses, what will be the configuration of Russia's global political, trade, and economic influence, what will be its relationship with the United States, and what will happen to the European Union?

Trump's new sanctions to punish an intractable Moscow and force it to make peace with Kiev, and Trump's seemingly impulsive actions, which may be provoked by a complex system of deals and secret agreements, are oddly working in Russia's favour.

First, Trump's move allows the Russian army to create the necessary conditions to liberate the remaining part of the Donetsk People's Republic, which is still controlled by the Ukrainian Armed Forces. President Trump proposed withdrawing Ukrainian troops from the Donetsk People's Republic territory to President Zelenskyy during their meeting in Washington on October 17 of this year.

A similar proposal was also discussed by Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, in conversations with President Putin earlier this year. Such a gesture of goodwill on Ukraine's part could have led to a speedy resolution of the conflict in Ukraine. Zelenskyy rejected this proposal immediately after the meeting in Washington, after conferring with his European handlers. The Russian army now has a free hand to advance further into Ukraine and liberate further Russian territory.

According to Trump, the effectiveness of anti-Russian sanctions can be assessed in six months. That is, Trump believes that the current US sanctions will not last long, and during this time the Russian army will successfully solve many different tasks on the battlefield. That's when it will be possible to make a deal with Moscow on Ukraine without listening to Zelensky's objections.

Secondly, recent events in world politics indicate possible unexpected changes in the conflict between Russia and the collective West in Ukraine. Among the most significant are: American sanctions against Russian oil companies; Chinese President Xi Jinping's refusal to reduce purchases of Russian oil at a meeting with President Trump on October 30 in Busan, South Korea; Japan, following China and India, did not abandon purchases of Russian oil; South Korea refused to invest \$350 billion in the U.S. economy; Trump postponed meeting with Putin in Budapest; Trump has cut U.S. financial support for Europe; The Pentagon announced the withdrawal of American troops from Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria and possibly from the Baltic states; the expected truce in Ukraine did not come; the Russian army is systematically destroying the energy system of Ukraine, and a number of other significant events.

The recent fire at a refinery in Hungary, which processes Russian oil and which Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán admitted was “*organized from outside*”,³⁹ signalled the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine. This incident can be seen as a unique European reaction to Hungary's refusal to follow the West's collective instructions, and could serve as a serious demonstration of how close a resolution to the conflict in Ukraine is.

At a meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Busan, President Trump promised to help resolve the Ukrainian conflict. But at the same time, Trump made a statement that was devastating for Kyiv: “*We agree the sides are... locked in fighting, and sometimes you have to let them fight... Not a lot more we can do*”.⁴⁰ Yet just recently, Trump was saying: stop killing people, go home, and suddenly – keep fighting, and China, he claimed, thinks the same.

For Kyiv and its European allies, it became obvious that the front of the Ukrainian army was collapsing painfully quickly, which plunged them into depression. It has become obvious to Western politicians that the situation in Ukraine is out of their control and that the collective West has lost in the confrontation with Russia, and now they are increasingly showing signs of panic and haste.

Thirdly, next year in 2026, Brussels needs to transfer the next financial aid to Kiev so that Ukraine does not become bankrupt. The European Union is very reluctant to allocate money from

³⁹ “We advised the Ukrainians”. Orbán made a statement about the fire at the refinery in Hungary. *RIA Novosti*, October 30, 2025; <https://ria.ru/20251030/vengriya-2051807698.html> (In Russian).

⁴⁰ Jack Moore and David Brennan. Trump touts short-term deal with China after Xi meeting. *ABC News*, October 30, 2025.

the national budgets of its countries for another six months or a little more. Then the money that has already been previously allocated to Kyiv will run out and chaos will begin in the country: plants, factories, ports, power plants, state employees and the army will not receive salaries and other sad consequences.

Conclusions:

1. Russia is confronting the collective West, which is arming and using Ukraine as a tool to put pressure on Russia.
2. A new balance of power in NATO is being formed without the previous confidence in American defence. The collapse of NATO is not ruled out either.
3. Europe finds itself in a strategic impasse:
 - the European Union is left with a huge military budget, a crisis on its eastern borders, and dependence on American technology and intelligence;
 - without the American military shield the European Union will have to learn to defend itself.
4. President Donald Trump is increasingly distancing himself from the Kyiv regime, demonstrating a pivot towards Russia and expecting the collapse of Ukraine
5. The current political leadership of Ukraine can exist until the middle of next year without another financial assistance from the West.
6. Russia will try to use the current situation to strengthen its position in the emerging multipolar world and implement a strategy of long-term confrontation with the collective West in these new conditions.