



The Hague International  
Model United Nations

**Forum:** Security Council

**Issue:** The Situation in Ukraine

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**Position:** Assistant President

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## Introduction

World War 2 shook the whole world and when it was over, it left hundreds of cities in rubble, economies devastated and families without fathers or brothers. But out of this rubble, a new time, a resoluteness for peace, has emerged alongside the mentality "never again", which refers both to the genocide and the devastating war. Since then, Europe has maintained a certain image; Europe, a haven of security, peace, prosperity. Europe, a symbol of democracy thriving. It has shocked Europeans more than anyone how suddenly this illusion of simple peace vanishes to expose long existing tensions and problems that governments are often reluctant to acknowledge before. The Russo-Ukrainian war is not simply between two countries fighting for territory. It is symbolic of the war between two different worlds, two clashing perspectives and political ideologies: Western v.s. Russian power and the values they stand for, namely democracy vs. authoritarianism. To understand the causes and attempt a prediction of the future of the conflict, it is important to understand its history, and the attritional dynamics with regard to political and military international involvement.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Attritional Warfare:

A War of attrition describes the dynamic of a war, in which one party "starves out" the other by depleting its resources over time. The party owning or

willing to sacrifice more resources can persevere longer and will eventually win the war.

### Sovereignty:

Sovereignty is the “[s]upreme authority [of] a state” to govern itself without outside interference<sup>1</sup>. A government, therefore, has full control over its own territory, laws, and people. Beyond this, a state’s sovereignty is also dependent on the recognition of other states as legitimate. With sovereignty comes a responsibility to protect individual human rights. As a result of this responsibility, the sovereignty of a state does not guarantee immunity when a state becomes complicit in mass human rights abuses.

### Global Player:

The term refers to countries with extreme influence and power globally speaking, not only in terms of military but also other hard powers (e.g. economic, natural resources) and soft power (tourism, image, political power).

## Background Information

### Historic Russo-Ukrainian Relations

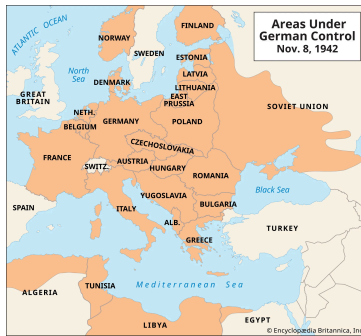
#### Dissolution of Soviet Union: Independence (Ukraine)



#### Post-Soviet states

1. Armenia • 2. Azerbaijan • 3. Belarus •
4. Estonia • 5. Georgia • 6. Kazakhstan •
7. Kyrgyzstan • 8. Latvia • 9. Lithuania •
10. Moldova • 11. Russia • 12. Tajikistan •
13. Turkmenistan • 14. Ukraine •
15. Uzbekistan

In 1991 the Soviet Union dissolved into 15 different countries declaring independence, amongst them, Ukraine. In the past, most political, scientific and cultural elites have left Ukraine territory, voluntarily moving to Moscow for better tertiary education/employment or by involuntary relocation within the Soviet Union, in cities for their expertise or to Siberia to muffle their voices. Others have fallen victim to the holocaust during Germany's occupation (M2). The shared



past carries both brotherhood between the people of the country but also distrust and aversion regarding the USSR's totalitarian and imperialistic ruling of the people living in Ukraine.

### **Budapest Agreement on Security Assurances**

Even before being recognized as an independent country, Ukraine has distanced itself from Nuclear weapons in its pre-independence movement. In the Declaration of

Independence 1991, Ukrainian politicians have pledged “not to accept, produce, or acquire nuclear weapons.” – marking it as a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) despite dissent based on security concerns. By pledging, Ukraine has succeeded in taking a step away from Russia and into the West – one of Ukraine’s main aspirations from independence up until now. Soon after, the Minsk Agreement on Strategic Forces (MASF 1991) was signed, granting Russia control over Ukraine’s Nuclear weapons, the third largest arsenal world wide. The Agreement also incorporated Ukraine’s right to veto the usage of these weapons. Security doubts grew and in 1992, Ukrainian administrations claimed ownership over these weapons, contrary to the MASF. After many more attempts the 1994 Budapest Agreement on Security Assurances finally found an arrangement that handed over all nuclear warheads to Russia with the promise that Russia would, if it came to that, protect Ukraine from military threats with their own forces. The lengthy process of weapon transferral ended in 2001.

### **Crimea annexion 2014**

As it became evident that Ukraine was orientating itself direction west, Russian President Putin pressured the Ukrainian president at the time, Yanukovich, to dissociate from the EU by rejecting a new trade agreement. Yanukovich agreed to postpone the agreement after Russia threatened Security in Ukraine Sovereign Territory, specifically in the east and Crimea, kicking off a wave of protest amongst the Ukrainians “Putin had not anticipated a strong popular reaction [...]. But to Ukrainians it was understood as a pivotal moment for their country: choosing to remain tied to autocratic Russia or join rule-based Europe.”<sup>2</sup> Outrage drove Yanukovich out of the country to seek refuge in Russia. This series of events prompted Putin to send out military forces to take over the Crimea with no prior warning. While at the time this infringement on sovereignty barely triggered any international response apart from utterances of disapproval by politicians. Today, this lack

of response is seen as a political failure that might have discouraged Putin's attack in 2022 because it would have set a no-go boundary.

Although the annexation was triggered by the protests against postponing the Trade Agreement with the EU, it was hardly the cause. There are many different motivations that are much stronger than public protest that have caused the Kremlin's decision:

**Military** strategic advantage: "control of Crimea gives Moscow continuing access to the naval base at Sevastopol, home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet"<sup>2</sup>.

Trade inhibition of Ukraine, weakening their economic stability and making them an unreliable trade partner internationally causing isolation

**Political:** EU or NATO integration of Ukraine is very unlikely in face of an ongoing territorial conflict, much less a war for fear of instability and economic decline.

Russia's sudden and unopposed invasion and annexation is a demonstration of power, marking Russia as a global player so intimidating that they can violate international law without consequences

These three aspects make control over the peninsula acts as immense political leverage.

## Causes of the war

Due to Russia's governmental structures authoritarian Regime, decision making is undemocratic and intransparent. Amongst other things, this is why it is so hard to pinpoint exactly what caused Russia's initial Invasion of Ukraine to what extent.

### Economic

It is extremely likely that Putin had predicted a more or less direct submission of Ukraine, at least in the east. He would not have anticipated any major costs of the attack and might even have speculated on economic gain due to increased territory and the infrastructure, commerce and arable land with it. Nonetheless, the possibly expected economic gains were not a relevant motivation in the invasion.

### Political

Internal Campaign The Invasion of Ukraine was an attempt to "unite" the country, especially behind its leader (Putin) as wars have a tendency to do because they give the country a shared purpose, a shared crisis to overcome together and a shared enemy. In

political theory, it is widely accepted that such societal dynamics externalize internal unrest, as populations tend to attribute economic or societal issues, especially poverty, to an external scapegoat rather than to their own government or leadership. This shift lowers resistance to autocratic rule, as leaders are often glorified instead of scrutinized due to an increase of patriotism and its older brother nationalism.

The Invasion of Ukraine has raised the eyes of the International Community back onto Russia and – had the Invasion not gone so poorly but instead as swift and decided as Putin probably expected, – it would have shown off military strength and marked Russia as a Global Player. The less a country involves themselves in ongoing issues and with other countries, the less expectancy of action the international community will raise to them and the less influence a country has.

Nato enlargement: Another, hardly calculable factor that is often used to justify Russia's aggression is the expansion of Nato; literally and its area of influence. Moscow sees this as a direct security threat that imposes on Russia's sovereign rights and previous negotiations (sometimes only verbal) with Nato. Russia is reinforcing the 'bufferzone' to Western Europe.

Dividing and destabilizing the European Union as well as depleting resources and demonstrating dependency (gas).

Putin's Personal ego, intransparent, undemocratic decision making There are just as many speculations to what extent the Invasion of Ukraine was even a strategic move at all rather than an 'impulsive', or ego-driven decision by an 'Authoritarian leader who's been in office too long and without checks'.

## **Dynamics of the War**

### **Beginnings and Early warfare (first month)**

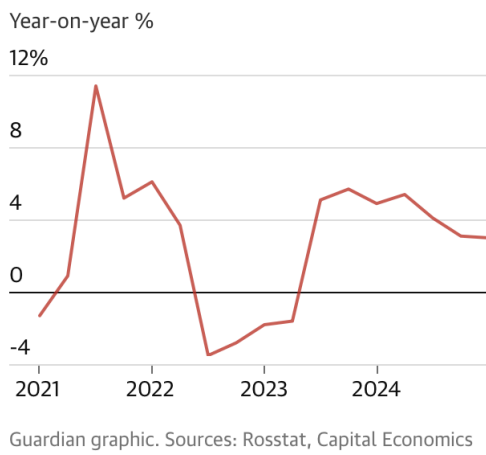
By Moscow's approach of the Invasion – to roll onto the streets with tanks in demonstration – is a reflection of their prediction of the war: Roll into the country, through, to the capital and intimidate the government and people into capitulation because resistance doesn't stand a chance anyway. After all, what could a country like Ukraine do against their giant neighbour Russia? In fact, this is what the whole world seemed to think, even after Kiev had declared, that they would fight back. No country, not even the US, offered direly needed military aid because they feared their technology would simply fall into Russia's hands and that every penny they invested would ultimately go to waste. Zelenskyy's cabinet's decision to fight was and is hard to judge, even in retrospect,

because submission would have spared many many lives, but it would also have meant the end of Ukraine's wish for democracy and freedom. And it would have proven – once again – that a country can cross any boundary including international laws simply because of their superior military power. It would have been a testimony and many other former Soviet countries fear that Putin's Russia would not have ceased territorial expansion after gaining Ukraine, possibly with the goal to recreate the soviet union.

## Later Warfare

### Economic

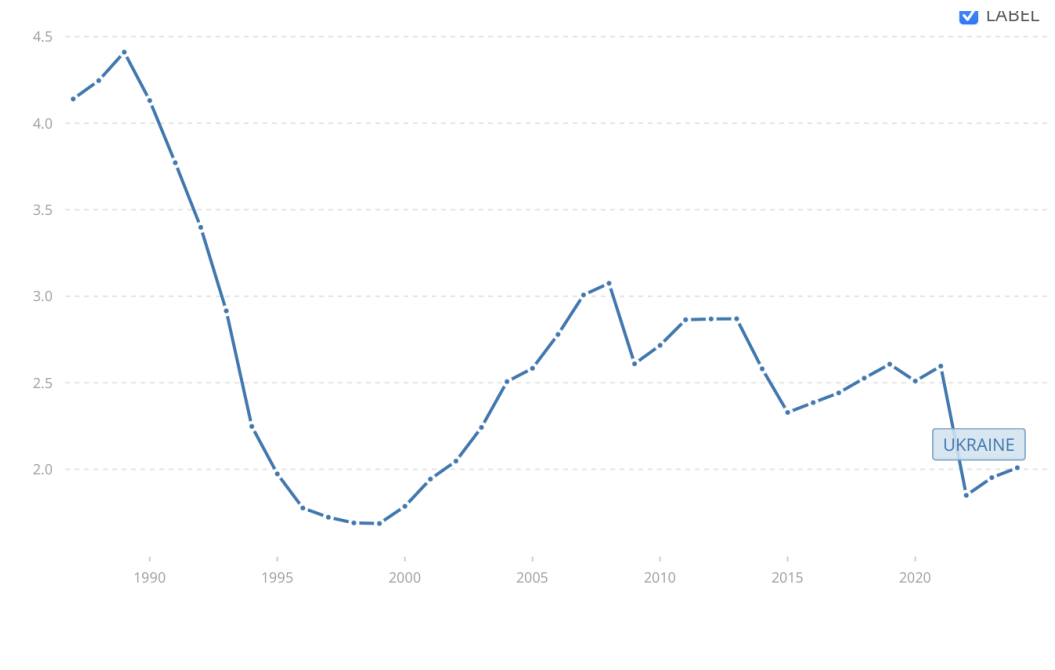
#### Russia GDP



**Russia** “Russia’s gross domestic product (GDP) slumped to -1.3% at the outset of the war but has since recovered to 3.6% in each of the last two years, according to the IMF. Ukraine’s GDP had sunk 36% by the summer of 2022 before finishing the year down 28.3% before rebounding to 5.3% in 2023 and 3% in 2024.”(M3)<sup>3</sup> Between internationally placed sanctions, cut trade alliances and the massive resource and energy consumption, Russia’s GDP dropped massively but made an impressive, unexpected comeback very soon throughout the war. This is also due to

closer ties to China, especially regarding gas. Nonetheless it is in the nature of attritional warfare to drain a country’s economy

#### Ukraine



Ukraine has also suffered economic regression, especially due to disrupted production and blocked agriculture exports in 2022. Because most of the weapons used were given to the Ukrainian Army by western allies, Ukraine did not lose a net value comparable with Russia's losses. Western promises to help rebuild the country once the war is over give Ukraine a perspective to economic prosperity should they uphold their territory or even with only parts of it. Looking at Germany it is obvious that foreign investment after a war is key to rebuilding a country with economic success and political stability.

### Political

**Russia** has lost much but not all support internationally, some semi-allies like China claiming to be neutral, but favoring Russia. The political legitimacy is questioned when a country breaks international law that all countries should be bound to, even if they are not signatories to the roman statute, like Russia. Nonetheless, Russia remains de facto unchecked legally because there is no international police, not even the "bluehelmets", UN Peacekeeper troops, just as the UN is no true world government. Otherwise lacking binding action, the Security Council is in many eyes the only thing that makes the UN relevant. The Security Council however is often criticized as an unjust continuation of colonial power due to the P5's special rights. While these positions were initially given to the most powerful countries with the thought to prevent conflict, the P5s simply do not reflect today's reality of powers anymore, not to mention that they are

inherently unfair. Most important of all, the vetos paralyze the Security Council in veto threats, in this case, Russia's.

**Ukraine** has the advantage of broad international support especially from the west, improving their military position in the war. The only thing the country has “lost” in political image etc.

### Military Strategic Assessment

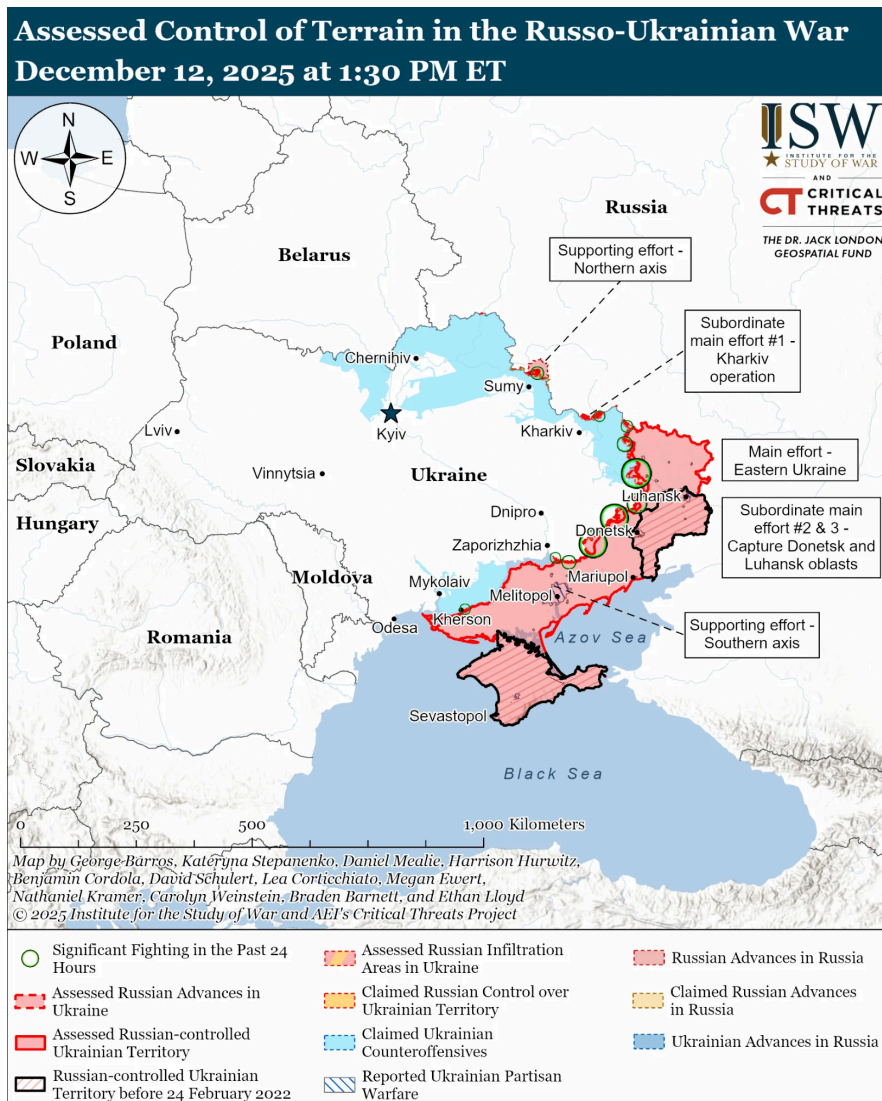
Following the general idea of a war of attrition, there is no clear end in sight. Credible speculations expect a gradual starvation of resources resulting in a ceasefire agreement with some territory in the east, the Donbas and Donietz region remaining under Russian control. There is, however, extreme controversy of the likely events in the future and they are amongst other things dependent on international factors like the Trump administration or the future government of the U.S. For more detailed analyses and predictions, there are resources such as articles and a short book listed in the sources.

Ends	Risk	Means	Ways
<b>Russia</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fracture the Ukrainian State</li> <li>• Maintain sufficient territorial acquisition to support a range of acceptable political-military outcomes</li> <li>• Maintain strategic material overmatch</li> <li>• Exhaust Ukraine's ability to continue resistance</li> <li>• Normalize the conflict's abnormalities</li> <li>• Undercut and erode Ukraine's ability to conduct operations to reclaim annexed territory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States and/or NATO intervene with land forces</li> <li>• Political upheaval due to domestic unrest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse base of international partners</li> <li>• Proxy forces</li> <li>• Large land army</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make Ukraine fight a war of attrition</li> <li>• Destroy Ukrainian land forces (i.e., strategy of exhaustion)</li> <li>• Force a stalemate along the contact line</li> </ul>
<b>Ukraine</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain sovereignty and the idea of Ukraine</li> <li>• Liberate its territory where Russia is in control</li> <li>• Maintain international support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of U.S. and international support</li> <li>• Exhausting its limited resources</li> <li>• Crimea might be a nuclear-response red line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land force capable of only limited offensives</li> <li>• Shrinking manpower base</li> <li>• Internationally supplied long-range fires, drones and intelligence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positional warfare (to preserve combat power)</li> <li>• Harass Russian forces with limited objective attacks, long-range fires and drone strikes</li> </ul>
<b>Advantage</b>			
<b>Russia</b> Russia has to win by not losing; Ukraine has to win by evicting Russian forces from its territory.	<b>Russia</b> Ukraine's resource problem creates massive strategic risk.	<b>Russia</b> Ukraine's limited manpower and dependence on the international community make it extremely vulnerable.	<b>Russia</b> Russia's greater resource base allows it to conduct a strategy of exhaustion against Ukraine and its limited means.

## Major Parties Involved :

### Russia

Russia is often labeled as the aggressor in the Russo-Ukrainian War, especially by European actors. Russia in its turn accuses Nato as the aggressor and although there is reasonable backing from political scientists <sup>4</sup> that NATO did play a role in the war, it is undeniable that Russia has violated international law (e.g. Geneva Convention) by invading a sovereign territory, without declaration of war and without a reasonable explanation. Putin has in several instances claimed that they are not fighting a war but are rather trying to protect the Russians in Ukraine from undemocratic leadership which he accuses Zelenskyy of because he has skipped elections during war time. In the past, Putin has also without any evidence or reason called Zelenskyy and his administration Nazis and has claimed that his Invasion of Ukrainian territory served as denazification and stated that the international community should be grateful to Russia for its efforts/services to dismantle this oppressionist, fascist regime.



## Ukraine

While there is reasonable discussion in whether Russia or nato or a different party is to be blamed as the perpetrator, there is no reasonable doubt that Ukraine is the victim of this war. The war can be seen, at least in part, as as a type of proxy war, in which Ukraine isn't only fighting for its own sovereignty but also for the western values and rules based order, accountability for global players, international integrity, and the EU's bufferzone to Russia

## European Union (EU)

The EU has large interest in Ukraine's Victory seeing as they are fighting for western values such as democracy, freedom of speech etc, for closer ties with the EU, for the rules based order, and against Russian influence/ for russian uninvolved/independence After the U.S., under The Trump Administration, has stepped away from its promise to continue supporting Ukraine, the EU has held a summit to coordinate and try to mitigate this lack in support if it came to it. The EU has minimized trade and imposed sanctions in an attempt to deplete Russia's economic perseverance in the war of attrition, reducing damage suffered in Ukraine and increasing the chance of victory.

## United States (U.S.)

The U.S. is Ukraine's main military ally, proving symbolically what mighty support Ukraine had amongst the International Community. To date, the U.S. has spent a total net worth of \$175 billion<sup>5</sup> to \$187<sup>6</sup> billion in assistance to Ukraine. They have provided advanced military aid, crucial intelligence, provided training and increased its presence on NATO's eastern flank.

## North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Nato is often seen as the "true aggressor" or cause of the war, despite the fact that a timely admission of Ukraine was highly unlikely, despite Zelenkyy's Victory plan. Many Nato member states are also heavily involved with the war in their support of Ukraine.

## United Nations (UN)

The UN engages humanitarian aid and addresses resolutions about this topic, although the Security Council is in a frozen veto lock between the P5s. Most notably, the General Assembly passed the 02.03.2022 "Aggression Against Ukraine" resolution with an overwhelming majority, condemning the Russian aggressions and invasion of Ukraine and calling for Russian retreat. <sup>7</sup>

## Timeline of Events

24.08.1991	Ukraine Independence
30.12.1991	Minsk Agreement on Strategic Forces signed
05.12.1994	Budapest Memorandum signed
05.09.2014 and 12.02.2015	Minsk Agreements (Minsk I & Minsk II) → ceasefire Negotiations, failed
20.02.2014	Annexation of Crimea
2014-2022	Tensions amount to armed conflicts in east of Ukraine
February 2022 - Today	Invasion of Ukraine, followed by a war
September 2022	Annexation of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia

## Previous and Possible Solutions

### Possible Solutions

The most effective way to end the war is probably increased economic and military pressure promptly followed by peace negotiations. Although it is unlikely that the two parties see eye to eye to sign a real Peace Treaty it is feasible that a permanent ceasefire agreement can be reached, providing humanitarian relief and sparing lives. Without desperation on either part, Ukraine will not agree to Russia keeping the area they are controlling right now and Russia will not give up its control voluntarily, so the frozen frontlines might just turn into borders.

### Previous peace treaties and ceasefire agreements

## Historic Agreements and Negotiations Nuclear weapons:

After the Soviet Union fell apart leaving the third largest nuke arsenal in the hands of a new country, the transferral of all nuclear weapons from Ukraine to Russia was signed upon in the 1991 Minsk Agreement on Strategic Forces. Ukraine maintained the right to veto the usage of these weapons. Before actually handing off the weapons, Ukraine initiated another series of negotiations which produced the Budapest Agreement, entailing a Security assurance for Ukraine of Russia. Triggered by Russia's aggressions in the Donbass and Donetsk region in 2014, a council board of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, Vladimir Putin, French President François Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel convened. The negotiations are known as the Normandy Format and were aimed at a resolution of or at least a ceasefire in the conflict region. There were never any talks about Crimea, which Russia had ruled out prior to the negotiations, nearly immediately after annexing the peninsula.

## First Talks

Since before the war, the same year of his election in 2019 Zelenskyy had advocated for a personal meeting between president Putin and himself, an idea that he upheld in the first few weeks of the war. He retracted this notion, signing a decree against a personal meeting soon after when Putin announced the annexation of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Cherson.

## Zelenskyy's 10 point Plan

On October 11, 2022, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy presented his 10-point peace plan to the Group of Seven (G7) countries, outlining the conditions under which Ukraine is willing to find peace:

1. Radiation and Nuclear Safety
2. Food Security
3. Intact Infrastructure (energy):
4. A release of all prisoners and deportees
5. Russian forces must withdraw, including from Crimea.
6. cease hostilities
7. Reparations and accountability for warcrimes

8. Immediate Environmental Protection
9. post-war security (Budapest Memorandum failed).
10. Both parties should sign an official document confirming the end of the war.

### Ukrainian Victory Plan

This “Victory Plan” is a plea for help and hope to Nato, designed to convince Nato to admit Ukraine with the argument that this move would demonstrate the type of backing and signal internationally united front against Russia, making them capitulate and leave Ukrainian Territory without continuing the fight. Unsurprisingly it failed to win support amongst Nato allies.

### End Notes

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