



TWO THEATERS BUT ONE WAR: WHY WE SHOULD SUPPORT UKRAINE AND ISRAEL

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Introduction

President Biden has rightly identified Russia's war against Ukraine and Hamas' terror on Israel as two theaters in the same war against global liberalism, democracy, and the rules-based order.¹ Secretary of State Blinken's recent congressional testimony reconfirmed this assessment.² This article argues that despite mounting attacks from the right against aiding Ukraine and the left against supporting Israel (much of which amounts to either concealed or outright anti-Semitism), U.S. policy in support of both is correct and the critics are wrong. Both countries are pro-American democracies under attack from terrorists and genocidaires. They merit staunch, steady, and ongoing U.S. and Western support that must be aligned to a strategy aimed at victory in both wars.

Victory's meaning is clear. In Ukraine it comprises restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and unhampered right to join the European Union (EU) and NATO. In Israel's case it means the irreversible destruction of Hamas as a military-political actor. Only that outcome allows for reconstituting a new governing body in Gaza and a broader peace process that also blocks Iran, its proxies, and Russia.

It is important to deconstruct the arguments of the critics and to expose their unfounded biases.³ Many of them claim to be either idealists and left-wingers in Israel's case or, in Ukraine's case, self-proclaimed adherents of Realism, a doctrine of international relations theory. Nevertheless, the more one scrutinizes their repetitive arguments, the more unrealistic they become.

Faulty Premises

The critics often cite the following misleading or erroneous propositions:

¹ "Remarks by President Biden on the United States' Response to Hamas's Terrorist Attacks Against Israel and Russia's Ongoing Brutal War Against Ukraine," October 20, 2023, available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/10/20/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-united-states-response-to-hamass-terrorist-attacks-against-israel-and-russias-ongoing-brutal-war-against-ukraine/>.

² Jennifer Hanssler, "Blinken and Austin Make the Case That Separating Israel and Ukraine Funding Would Embolden America's Enemies," *CNN*, October 31, 2023, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/31/politics/blinken-austin-ukraine-israel-funding/index.html>.

³ "Russia Tells UN Israel Does Not Have Right Of Self-Defense In War With Hamas," *The Times of Israel*, November 2, 2023, available at https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/russia-tells-un-israel-does-not-have-right-of-self-defense-in-war-with-hamas/.



- Most wars end in negotiations, not battlefield victory.⁴ The Russo-Ukrainian war, therefore, cannot engender a decisive military outcome because neither side can prevail. Similarly, although Israel might prevail operationally over Hamas, it cannot bring about peace or a political solution in Gaza by itself; therefore, its campaign will further poison the Middle East's environment of bitterness and readiness for war.⁵
- Ukraine is secondary to U.S. interests, and that focusing on Ukraine and Russia erodes our ability to focus on the Chinese threat, which must take priority.⁶ In addition, Israel is an apartheid, settler colonialist state scheming to drive Palestinians off their land and conduct ethnic cleansing.
- Because of U.S. domestic economic challenges, the United States should not be spending so much money on Ukraine, which the United States can ill-afford to spend in defense of a country that is riddled with corruption. Instead, the United States should spend that money at home.⁷ This habitual advocacy also pertains to U.S. military aid and cooperation with Israel.

Each of these propositions is decisively refutable by facts, history, and common sense.

Those who believe in the primacy of negotiations argue that Kyiv's insistence on recovering all its lands through military action, particularly Crimea, is misguided. Any attempt to do so, given Crimea's symbolic and political importance to Putin, would likely drive him to nuclear escalation. Therefore, they contend, a Ukrainian victory is unattainable, undesirable, and even dangerous,⁸ and a negotiated settlement should be sought. Likewise, with respect to Israel, a cease-fire followed by negotiations to establish a fuller, more permanent peace process, is necessary. Israel's insistence on destroying Hamas could foster a regional escalatory and destabilizing process throughout the Middle East.⁹ Therefore there must be a pause, cease-fire, etc.¹⁰

Of course, it is untrue that all wars end in negotiation. Neither Afghanistan nor Vietnam, the U.S. Civil War, nor both World Wars ended this way unless one equates surrender with

⁴ "How Wars End: The Role of Negotiation," Fall 2022, available at <https://hls.harvard.edu/courses/how-wars-end-the-role-of-negotiation/>.

⁵ Richard Haass, "Israel's War Must Distinguish Between Hamas and the People Of Gaza," *Financial Times*, October 27, 2023, available at <https://www.ft.com/content/779d082a-efdc-4ae4-86b4-aaebec88f810>.

⁶ Ian Hanchett, "Cotton: We Should Provide As Much Support to Taiwan as We Are to Ukraine, 'China Is a Bigger Threat Than Russia,'" *Briartbart*, January 25, 2022, available at <https://www.breitbart.com/clips/2022/01/25/cotton-we-should-provide-as-much-support-to-taiwan-as-we-are-to-ukraine-china-is-a-bigger-threat-than-russia/>.

⁷ Yasmeen Abutaleb and John Hudson, "Inside the growing Republican fissure on Ukraine aid," *The Washington Post*, October 31, 2022, available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/10/31/republican-split-on-ukraine-aid/>; Stephen Blank, "Western Progressives and Reactionaries for Putin," Center for European Policy Analysis, October 27, 2022, available at <https://cepa.org/article/western-progressives-and-reactionaries-for-putin/>.

⁸ "Why Negotiating An End To the Russia-Ukraine War Should Be a Priority," *NPR*, January 8, 2023, available at <https://www.npr.org/2023/01/08/1147737177/why-negotiating-an-end-to-the-russia-ukraine-war-should-be-a-priority>.

⁹ "Israel's war in Gaza could spread beyond Middle East: Russia's Putin," *Al Jazeera*, October 27, 2023, available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/26/israels-war-in-gaza-could-spread-beyond-middle-east-russias-putin>.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

negotiation. This argument willfully misreads the history of American, not to mention, other wars and therefore cannot serve as an adequate basis for policy advocacy.

Those clamoring for negotiations fail to recognize the true nature of Russia's war, which is a genocidal war, by definition. By the standards of international law, it can only truly end with the decisive defeat of the aggressors, acknowledgement of their crimes, restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity as of 2013 and of its full sovereignty (i.e., the right to join alliances like NATO), and some form of reparation that includes accountability of war criminals. Negotiations merely let Putin and his henchmen off the hook, confirm their possession of Ukrainian territory, and subject millions of unwilling people to unspeakable tortures and war crimes, while the perpetrators avoid accountability and reparation for war crimes. That outcome corrodes any concept of international order and justice and merely invites Moscow to resume its efforts to subvert and destroy Ukraine and/or other states with impunity at a time and place of its choice.¹¹ Furthermore, negotiating before Russia is defeated mocks both Ukrainian determination to win and liberate its territory, and the suffering of its people and their jubilation when liberated as we saw in Kherson.¹²

Partisans of negotiation contend that Putin cannot and will not accept defeat but will rather continue escalating even up to possible nuclear use.¹³ They almost never concede that a negotiated settlement leaves Russia in possession of some or all of the territories it seized by aggression from Ukraine, allowing Putin to claim a victory, and as Secretary Blinken, German President Steinmeyer, Premier Scholz, and Foreign Minister Baerbock have publicly observed, any Russian retention of Ukrainian territory merely resets the stage for another future Russo-Ukrainian war. Equally importantly, these arguments, like those now being utilized against Israel, either implicitly or explicitly deny each country's ability to defend itself and arbitrarily deny that they can or should prevail over invaders and terrorists.

Critics hold that an Israeli effort to destroy Hamas necessarily entails a large-scale attack on innocent civilians amounting to collective punishment, forfeits global support, and thwarts peace due to the bitterness and devastation it unleashes.¹⁴ However, this argument denies Israel its sovereign right and obligation to protect its citizens from foreign attack. It also negates the fact that Hamas' brutal attack represented, in accord with its charter, a form of collective punishment upon Israeli Jews and—like Putin's attack on Ukraine—an intentionally genocidal operation. Accepting this argument would deprive Israel of its

¹¹ Department of State, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken, With German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba At the Munich Security Conference," February 18, 2023, available at <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-with-german-foreign-minister-annalena-baerbock-and-ukrainian-foreign-minister-dmytro-kuleba-at-the-munich-security-conference/>.

¹² Andrew E. Kramer and Marc Santora, "Jubilant Ukrainian soldiers sweeping into Kherson," *The New York Times*, November 11, 2022, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/11/world/ukraine-war-news-russia-updates#ukrainian-soldiers-sweeping-into-kherson-are-greeted-with-jubilant>.

¹³ Samuel Charap and Miranda Priebe, "Avoiding a Long War: U.S. Policy and the Trajectory of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict." RAND, January 2023, available at <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA2510-1.html>.

¹⁴ Richard Haass, "Israel's War Must Distinguish Between Hamas and the People Of Gaza," *Financial Times*, October 27, 2023, available at <https://www.ft.com/content/779d082a-efdc-4ae4-86b4-aaebec88f810>.

deterrence, encourage unending attacks by all of its enemies, and be more permanently destabilizing than anything Israel might do.

Additionally, this argument subordinates Israel's right and obligation of self-defense to fear of the "Arab Street" and its influence upon Arab governments. While many Arab governments fear their populations, who have been aroused by decades of anti-Israeli propaganda, that cannot be a decisive factor in Israeli decision-making. Israel cannot forfeit its rights under these circumstances merely to avoid what is an inconvenience to Arab governments. Finally, virtually every high-ranking official in Arab governments wants Hamas destroyed but is unable or unwilling to say so publicly because, having systematically inflamed Arab public opinion since 1948, they now are hostages of their own propaganda.¹⁵

A corollary argument contends that recent tactical and policy changes in 2022-23 have strengthened the Russian army to the point where the war will probably remain one of attrition where nobody wins. Furthermore, that is the best Ukraine can hope for, especially given the aforementioned undesirability or unlikelihood of a Ukrainian victory.¹⁶ Moreover, to prevent the prospect if not reality of nuclear use while attrition leads nowhere, the Administration must induce Ukraine to negotiate and refrain from escalatory moves that might provoke Russian escalation.¹⁷ Similarly, numerous analysts contend that an Israeli military victory, though tactically and operationally conceivable, entails such costs in manpower and political support without achieving a viable political solution for Gaza that victory might be either unattainable or not worth the costs and risks associated with such a campaign. In the Middle East, many have cited the likelihood that Hezbollah and even possibly Iran will have to escalate as Iran has threatened to do if Israel invades Gaza.¹⁸ Yet none of these scenarios appears likely despite numerous threats from Iran, Hezbollah, and Russian invocations of "red lines."

Many proponents of this view regarding Ukraine have complained that the United States is not communicating with Russia or has closed the channels necessary to a bilateral dialogue, a dangerous move in a situation fraught with escalatory tendencies.¹⁹ Yet this charge, too, is belied by continuing if frigid bilateral contacts.²⁰ Here, too, there is an implicit argument that Israel's refusal to deal with Hamas helps explain the roots of the ongoing crisis. Yet, this ignores the facts that third-party mediation has had some limited success in

¹⁵ Dennis Ross, "I Might Have Once Favored a Cease-Fire With Hamas, But Not Now," *The New York Times*, October 27, 2023, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/27/opinion/hamas-war-gaza-israel.html>.

¹⁶ Christopher Caldwell, "Russia and Ukraine Have Incentives to Negotiate. The U.S. Has Other Plans," *The New York Times*, February 7, 2023, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/07/opinion/russia-ukraine-us-tanks.html>.

¹⁷ "Why Negotiating An End To the Russia-Ukraine War Should Be a Priority," *op. cit.*

¹⁸ Maziar Motamedi, "Iran Warns Israel Of Regional Escalation If Gaza Ground Offensive Launched," *Al Jazeera*, October 15, 2023, available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/15/iran-warns-israel-of-regional-escalation-if-gaza-ground-offensive-launched>.

¹⁹ Samuel Charap and Jeremy Shapiro, "The U.S. and Russia Need To Start Talking Before It's Too Late," *The New York Times*, July 27, 2022, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/27/opinion/ukraine-russia-us-diplomacy.html>.

²⁰ Annabelle Timsit, White House Says 'Lines Of Communication' With Russia Are Still Open," *The Washington Post*, November 8, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/11/08/white-house-us-conversations-russia-ukraine/>.

releasing hostages. Moreover, it cannot explain why Israel should confer legitimacy upon Hamas by negotiating with it when Hamas' charter and policies explicitly contemplate elimination of Jews, and its torture of prisoners was unspeakable.²¹

The groundless argument that Ukraine is only of tangential importance to the United States betrays the shocking ignorance of both history and of U.S. interests that has become a virtual given in America's contemporary shrill polemics. These polemics ignore the real facts in each case. It ignores the fact that the United States participated in two World Wars and led the Cold War to prevent hostile imperialist powers from dominating Europe. The United States remains the only force capable of stopping Russian imperialism in Europe and U.S. vital interests still dictate that the United States and its allies oppose such empire-building. Thus, U.S. vital interests are at stake in Ukraine because that war is actually a war over European security. Those contending that this is not a U.S. priority obscure or ignore the fact that Moscow embarked upon an ongoing global war against the West in 2005, largely because its earlier efforts to subvert Ukraine failed ignominiously.²²

Similarly, the attacks on Israel as an example of settler colonialism, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and even genocide, are equally groundless and derive from the same anti-Semitic logic perpetrated fifty years ago by the UN that Zionism is racism and a fashionable but false decolonization narrative sponsored by left-wing scholars that bears no connection to the facts or this conflict's actual history. This groundless but typical example of Soviet and now Russian propaganda appeals to these audiences because it not only fits into the lunatic reality that pervades all forms of bigotry but also because it offered Arab and Palestinian alike a self-serving exculpatory explanation of their failure to destroy Israel that absolved them and their leaders of any responsibility for the series of debacles into which they still lead their people. Indeed, this is true as well for the present war.

The assertion that the United States should spend American taxpayer dollars on domestic priorities instead of supporting pro-American democracies abroad has no factual basis. The United States has spent roughly 4 percent of the Pentagon's budget on support to Ukraine and has destroyed over 50 percent of Russia's conventional capability. Surrendering Ukraine to Russia by terminating aid would actually invite a much larger, costlier, and longer future European war that would obligate the United States to intervene due to its NATO commitments, resulting in higher economic and human costs. Meanwhile, demonstrating the Russian military's failings devalues Moscow's ability to assist China and its value as an ally while highlighting our alliances' capacity to undermine Russia and/or China peacefully. It also ignores the fact that allowing Russia to undermine European security constrains the U.S.' ability to deal with China. Regrettably, both main political parties appear focused more on arguing over deficits rather than supporting remedies consonant with national interests, and the economics argument is merely another unrealistic and demagogic attack that demonstrates a lack of understanding of U.S. national interests.

²¹ Hamas Covenant 1988, available at https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp.

²² MG I.N. Vorob'ev (RET) and Col. V.A. Kisel'ev (Ret), "Strategies of Destruction and Attrition," Moscow, *Military Thought*, in English, No. 1, 2014, January 1-2014-March 31, 2014.

The U.S. support for Ukraine reveals the lessons from Sun Zi, namely, that one favored course of action to defeat an enemy is to deprive him of his allies rather than to confront him head on. Although the Sino-Russian alliance is real and dangerous, China has real doubts about Russia and is restoring a dialogue with the United States. Since Russia behaves so aggressively partly to prove its value as an ally to China, assisting Ukraine strikes at the Russo-Chinese alliance and Beijing's strategy at little cost.

Further Rebuttals

Further analysis of these arguments quickly reveals other defects. For example, the critics' universal precept that neither Israel nor Ukraine can and should win lest that provoke escalation fundamentally misreads these wars' true nature and the facts. Ukrainian forces have decisively defeated the Russian Navy and continue to rebuff Russian attacks. They have also brought the war to Russia by their drone strikes on Russian territory. As a result, Moscow has turned to North Korea and Iran for weapons and Cuba for volunteers, a signal that does not signify optimism or victory but rather anxiety about possible defeat.²³ Indeed, Russian policies, including mass murders, torture, rapes, deportations, particularly of children, and destruction of Ukrainian cultural treasures, have already led the International Court of Justice to indict Putin and other officials for crimes fitting the UN's legal and the classic definition of genocide.²⁴ The evidence of Hamas' torture of prisoners should drive the ICJ to similar conclusions.²⁵

In addition, all these arguments presuppose that the United States has the power, the right, and the duty to compel Ukraine and/or Israel to subordinate themselves to a fundamental misreading of U.S. interests and values, i.e., appeasement, as if those arguments rather than Ukraine or Israel's right to exist were at stake. In Ukraine's case there is also the implicit postulate that Washington can and/or should determine its future bilaterally with Russia lest an already fraught situation escalate out of control. This argument also advocates negotiating with Russia over Ukraine's head and without its presence, thereby validating Moscow's claim that Ukraine is merely an American creation to whom Russia ascribes a diminished sovereignty, i.e., imperialism. That position ignores the 1938 Munich precedent

²³ Robert E. Kelly, "Commentary: If Putin Needs North Korean Weapons, He's In Trouble," *Channel News Asia*, September 8, 2023, available at <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/putin-kim-meeting-russia-north-korea-ukraine-war-weapon-nuclear-trade-3752886>; Ellie Geranmayeh, Nicole Grajewski, "Alone Together: How the War In Ukraine Shapes the Russian-Iranian Relationship," European Council on Foreign Relations, September 6, 2023, available at <https://ecfr.eu/publication/alone-together-how-the-war-in-ukraine-shapes-the-russian-iranian-relationship/>; Eydar Peralta, "Cuba says it dismantled human trafficking ring recruiting for Russia's war in Ukraine," *NPR*, September 5, 2023, available at <https://www.npr.org/2023/09/05/1197617372/cuba-dismantles-human-trafficking-ring-recruiting-for-russias-war-in-ukraine>.

²⁴ Antoinette Radford and Frank Gardner, "Putin Arrest Warrant Issued Over War Crime Allegations," *BBC News*, March 18, 2023, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64992727>; United Nations Office On Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility To Protect, available at <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>.

²⁵ Rob Picheta, Joseph Ataman, and Amir Tal, "First Testimonies Shed Light On the Conditions Endured By Hamas' Israeli Hostages," *CNN*, November 28, 2023, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/27/middleeast/israel-hamas-hostages-testimony-conditions-intl/index.html>.

where Western powers negotiated with Nazi Germany over the heads and in the absence of Czechoslovakia. This argument also tallies with the mendacious Arab critique that if not for America there would be no Israeli state, which is an illegitimate artifact of Western imperialism and subject to American dictation. Finally, this stance also aligns with the abiding but misguided belief that ties with Moscow must supersede relations with post-Soviet states who are still perceived as dependencies of Russia.²⁶

These arguments also ignore the devastating impact that Russian aggression has not only on European security and NATO, but on the very foundations of international order. They also ignore Moscow's undeviating policy since the 1990s to reject the finality of Europe's post-Cold War order and the sovereignty and integrity of every state east of Germany.²⁷ As Jeffrey Feltman, former American diplomat and Under Secretary-General For Political Affairs for the UN, wrote, "Russia dropped a barrel bomb on the fundamental principle of the international system: respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity."²⁸ Moreover, this war underscores the fragility of conventional deterrence in Europe if not elsewhere. Therefore, NATO's largely U.S. nuclear deterrent and the presence of U.S. forces there are major components of deterrence to preserve peace in Europe and elsewhere. So, abdicating the defense of Ukraine and thus Europe returns them and the world to an environment of permanent war.

Likewise, it should be equally clear that the argument for pauses or cease-fires, ostensibly to spare Palestinians from Israel's legitimate retaliation against Hamas, is at best naïve and misguided and at worse an anti-Semitic double standard. Pauses represent a surrender to Hamas, who will use them to retain their hostages, solidify their hold on Gaza, devise new tactics against Israel's justified retaliation, and prepare, if not execute, new attacks on Israel. They will also incite Iran and its other proxies like Hezbollah to attack Israel and bring Russian forces and weapons further into the Middle East.²⁹ And the refusal of cease-fire advocates to admit Hamas' savagery against Israel reveals the usual double standard associated with anti-Semitism and denial of Israel's right of self-defense. Russia's support for this argument merely reinforces its essential hypocrisy and intrinsic falsity.³⁰

²⁶ Eugene Fishel, *The Moscow Factor: U.S. Policy Toward Sovereign Ukraine and the Kremlin* (Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press for the Harvard Ukrainian Institute, 2022

²⁷ Stephen. Blank, "The Values Gap Between Moscow and the West: The Sovereignty Issue," *Acque et Terre*, no. 6 (2007) pp. 9-14 (Italian), pp. 90-95 (English); S. Blank, "Russia and the Black Sea's Frozen Conflicts in Strategic Perspective," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (Summer 2008), pp. 23-54; James Sherr, *Hard Diplomacy and Soft Coercion: Russia's Influence Abroad*: London: Chatham House, 2013, pp. 61-62; Susan Stewart, "The EU, Russia and Less Common Neighborhood," SWP Comments, Stiftung Wissenschaft Und Politik, January, 2014, pp.2-3.

²⁸ Jeffrey Feltman, "War, Peace and the International System After Ukraine," Brookings Institution, March 28, 2023, available at <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/war-peace-and-the-international-system-after-ukraine/>.

²⁹ Stephen Blank, "Russia's Role In the Gaza War," *The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune*, October 25, 2023, available at <https://jstribune.com/blank-russias-role-in-the-gaza-war/>.

³⁰ "Russia Tells UN Israel Does Not Have Right Of Self-Defense In War With Hamas," *The Times of Israel*, November 2, 2023, available at https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/russia-tells-un-israel-does-not-have-right-of-self-defense-in-war-with-hamas/.

The critics' arguments are at their root unfounded, factually wrong, unrealistic, and often contrary to the U.S.' real interests and values, which actually align with Ukrainian and Israeli interests and values.

Analysts who understand the stakes in Ukraine grasp not just the moral but strategic implications of negotiations now. Sir Lawrence Freedman emphasizes this profound moral-strategic nexus by writing that,

The effect has also been to bring a moral clarity to all strategic calculations. Having now seen what happens when Russia occupies Ukrainian territory, Western governments know that they cannot push President Zelensky to make any territorial concessions simply to bring the war to an end. Of course, the West is in no position to bring regime change to Moscow. Nor can Ukraine. Only the Russians can do that. So, all that can be done is to support Ukraine until Russian troops have left, leaving Putin to face the consequences of his catastrophic folly.³¹

One could substitute the word "Israel" for Ukraine here and the same logic would apply to it. Elsewhere Freedman observes that Western governments dare not let Ukraine fail now.³² Similarly, Nigel Gould-Davies writes that,

The war crimes show that, as long as Russia occupies Ukrainian territory, an end to fighting does not mean an end to violence. On the contrary: a ceasefire would allow Russian forces not only to regroup and rearm, but to brutalize and murder civilians unhindered. As the "Realist School" of international relations does not appear to recognize, not just geopolitical space but human lives are at stake. All Ukrainians now know for certain what awaits them if Russian forces enter their town or village, and will resist accordingly. It follows that partition or negotiated compromise will bring neither peace nor stability.³³

Consequently, Putin is no longer credible as a reliable interlocutor vis-à-vis European governments, Canada, the United States or his neighbors. As Gould-Davies also wrote: "These crimes have strategic consequences that will shape the course of the war. Above all, they make it more likely that any outcome will be defined not by compromise and settlement, but by victory and defeat."³⁴ And these observers' insights apply word for word to Israel's cause

³¹ Lawrence Freedman, "The Russo-Ukraine War: Phase Two," April 6, 2022, available at <https://samf.substack.com/p/the-russo-ukraine-war-phase-two?token=eyJ1c2VyX2lkIjozOTY0OTcxLCJwb3N0X2lkIjo1MTY4MDMyMiwiXyI6InFQWVFLliwiaWF0IjoxNjQ5MjUwOTg3LCJleHAiOjE2NDkyNTQ1ODcsImZcyI6InB1Yi02MzE0MjliLCJzdWIiOiJwb3N0LXJlYWNoaW9uIn0.7MtSwsln8Du8w7qluQmzH6-XWdk-zDmiZkM2WY32PpA&s=r>.

³² Lawrence Freedman, "NATO and Ukraine," April 13, 2022, available at <https://samf.substack.com/p/nato-and-ukraine?s=r>.

³³ Nigel Gould-Davies, "The Strategic Meaning of Russian War Crimes in Ukraine," *The Moscow Times*, April 13, 2022, available at <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/04/13/the-strategic-meaning-of-russian-war-crimes-in-ukraine-a77345>.

³⁴ Ibid.

against Hamas. Hamas is not a credible negotiator for Israel while its crimes exclude the possibility of cease-fires and negotiations.

In addition, annexing four Ukrainian provinces and claiming that this procedure is “irreversible” since they are forever part of Russia, and therefore a precondition for negotiations underscores’ Putin’s refusal of negotiation since no Ukrainian political figure can accept this precondition or aggression.³⁵ Indeed, the Norwegian analyst, Hans Peter Midtun writes that,

Every hint of the need for talks and negotiations from the West is a subtle sign of a lack of confidence in a Ukrainian win or a lack of will to support a military success. Every indication of lack of will reinforces the Russian conviction that the US and Europe lack the strength, resilience and resolve to defeat Russia.³⁶

These anti-Ukraine and anti-Israel arguments alone should disqualify the idea of negotiation anytime soon.

Beyond these points the clamor for a negotiated end to fighting continually overlooks other fundamental and basic facts relevant to these wars, specifically:

- First, by invading Ukraine, Russia’s actions confirmed its disregard for its neighbors’ sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Second, advocates of negotiations simply omit the fact that in invading Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 Russia deliberately and “with malice aforethought” broke eight international treaties and agreements that openly and fully acknowledged Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.³⁷ Already by 2018, according to Ukrainian authorities, apart from these treaties Moscow had unilaterally broken almost 500 separate agreements with Ukraine.³⁸ When added to this the number of arms control agreements Russia has violated, e.g., its suspension of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, violation of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, exiting the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the New START treaty,³⁹ all

³⁵ Jeffrey D. McCausland, “Putin Chooses Between a Series of Bad Options,” *Parameters*, LII, No. 4, Winter 2022-23, pp. 20-21, available at <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol52/iss4/9/>.

³⁶ Hans Peter Midtun, “[ukraineworld_international] Situational Awareness - 20 November – E-mail communication, November 20, 2022.

³⁷ These are the Helsinki Treaty, the Tashkent Treaty of 1992 among former Soviet Republics recognizing their internal Soviet boundaries as international ones and their territorial integrity, the Budapest accords with the U.S., UK, Ukraine in 1994, the Russo-Ukrainian treaty of 1997, the Russo-Ukrainian treaty of 2010, the NATO-Russian Founding Act of 1997, and the UN Charter, and the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty.

³⁸ “Russia violates almost 500 agreements, treaties by annexation of Crimea,” UNIAN, June 4, 2018, available at <https://www.unian.info/politics/10072253-russia-violates-almost-500-agreements-treaties-by-annexation-of-crimea.html>.

³⁹ Humeyra Pamuk, “U.S. Says Russia Violating New START Nuclear Arms Control Treaty,” *Reuters*, January 31, 2023, available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/russia-not-complying-with-inspection-obligation-under-nuclear-arms-treaty-us-2023-01-31/>.

agreements with Russia, including arms control accords, are now utterly devalued.⁴⁰ Therefore on what basis do advocates of negotiations with Russia believe that Russia will adhere to any agreement's terms?

- Third, Russia's crimes against international law and Ukraine oblige us to reject the idea that Ukraine either cannot, or worse, should not win because its victory runs directly counter to Western interests.
- Fourth, negotiations allow Putin to spin the war as some sort of victory and preserve Putinism in power while repressing indigenous Russian protest movements, an outcome incompatible with U.S. interests and values. Putin's anti-Western conviction stands behind him and the government's determination to fight to the bitter end in the misplaced and deluded belief that Russia's willingness to suffer, i.e., willingness to impose further suffering on Russia and Ukraine, will allow it ultimately to prevail.⁴¹ Hamas too, shares much of this mentality.⁴² Consequently, moving to negotiations now will reinforce their deep-rooted belief in their superiority due to their willingness to suffer. On that basis the United States could then expect stronger and growing strategic-ideological bonds among these hostile powers.
- Fifth, that denouement also ensures that the Kremlin's multi-domain war against the West that has continued since 2005 and the first, abortive, Russian effort to subvert Ukrainian independence, will receive a reprieve and new lease on life.⁴³ Russia already claims that this is a war against the West, not just Ukraine. Therefore, this war justifies the global deployment of all the instruments of power to resist the West and assert Russia's God-given global great power status.
- Sixth, calls for negotiations completely ignore Russia's already stated terms for negotiation in December, 2021 that would undermine Ukrainian independence and integrity, repudiate NATO's ability to defend its members, and preserve Russia's unlimited freedom of action in its sphere of interest even as it wages a multi-domain war against the West.⁴⁴ Those ridiculous terms were non-starters then and

⁴⁰ "Russia Mulls Banning US Nuclear Arms Inspections—Source," *RIA Novosti*, March 9, 2014, available at <http://www.en.ria.ru/military>; Mark B. Schneider, "Confirmation of Russian Violation and Circumvention of the INF Treaty," *Information Series*, No. 360 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, February 2014).

⁴¹ McCausland, op. cit., p. 26

⁴² "How Hamas frames the civilian casualties of war in Gaza," *CNN*, November 6, 2023, available at <https://www.cnn.com/videos/world/2023/11/06/the-lead-protectors-call-for-ceasefire.cnn>.

⁴³ M.A. Gareyev, *Srazheniya na Voenno-Istoricheskom Fronte*, Moscow: ISAN Press, 2010, p. 729 cited in MG I.N. Vorob'ev (RET) and Col. V.A. Kisel'ev (Ret), "Strategies of Destruction and Attrition," Moscow, *Military Thought*, in English, No. 1, 2014, January 1-2014-March 31, 2014.

⁴⁴ "The Foreign Ministry Called the Conditions For a Dialogue With the West To Reduce Tensions," October 30, 2022, available at <https://ria.ru/20221030/dialog-1827881114.html>; Françoise Thom, "What Does the Russian Ultimatum to the West Mean?," December 30, 2021, available at <https://en.desk-russie.eu/2021/12/30/what-does-the-russian-ultimatum.html>; Oleg Ladogin, "Putin's Message: Peace At the Expense Of Russia and On the Ruins Of Russia Is Over," December 22, 2021, available at <https://russtrat.ru/analytics/22-dekabrya-2021-0010-7741>; Statement by the Russian Foreign Ministry On the Dialogue With the United States and Other Western Countries Regarding the Development of

unacceptable as a basis for negotiation before the war. Now that Russia is losing the war, or is at least stalemated, it is inconceivable that those terms can furnish a basis for a new negotiation.

- Seventh, those urging negotiations who fear that a Ukrainian victory that restores its territorial integrity and full sovereignty is either impossible or risks escalation implicitly contradict themselves. The evidence of declining Russian military capability, even as Moscow has readjusted its tactics, is multiplying. Numerous accounts of plummeting morale and mounting casualties within the armed forces cannot be hidden.⁴⁵ Neither is it possible to simply disregard the intensifying crisis within Russian defense industry that has forced Putin to urge it to do more to bring more missiles to the front and Russia's resort to Iran and North Korea for arms.⁴⁶ Moreover, as former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson observed, every time people said that new weapons for Ukraine would trigger escalation, they were wrong.⁴⁷
- Eighth, for obvious and convergent moral and strategic reasons the Russian army cannot be allowed to climb back into the ring. As many have noted, doing so puts not only Ukraine but all of European security at risk. Indeed, it should be clear from this war that the continuation in power of Putinism (i.e., not only Putin but his system) puts international security at risk. Here we must grasp that a Russian victory in Ukraine places not only Europe but the entire post-Soviet order at risk including Belarus, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Thus, the precondition for European, Eurasian, and international security is foreclosure of Russia's imperial option. That entails winning an unmistakable and decisive victory in Ukraine and then fully integrating it into European political, economic, and security structures like the EU and NATO.
- Ninth, beyond these strategic, political, and moral considerations, advocates for negotiations largely misread this war and its accompanying crisis. This appears in their implicit argument that neither Ukraine nor the West, primarily Washington, can deter Russia, while Moscow can escalate with at least some measure of impunity. This argument leaves the field open to Moscow and its unrelenting threats of nuclear escalation even if they are increasingly unbelievable and unlikely due to Chinese and

Security Guarantees," December 10, 2021, available at https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1789855/.

⁴⁵ Karolina Hird, Riley Bailey, Grace Mappes, Madison Williams, Yekaterina Klepanchuk, and Frederick W. Kagan, "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 16," November 16, 2022, available at <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-16>.

⁴⁶ "Meeting With Members Of the Government Coordination Council On the Needs Of the Russian Armed Forces," October 25, 2022, available at <http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69676>; Lara Jakes and Marc Santora, "How Was Russia Able to Launch Its Biggest Aerial Attack on Ukraine?," *The New York Times*, November 18, 2022, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/18/us/politics/ukraine-russia-missiles.html>.

⁴⁷ Tatiana Vorozhko, "Every Time We Said That New Weapons For Kyiv could Lead To Escalation, We Were Wrong – Boris Johnson In Washington," *Voice of America*, January 31, 2023, available at <https://ukrainian.voanews.com>.

global opposition as well as Western capabilities.⁴⁸ This view also ignores the remonstrations made by Western governments to Moscow concerning the consequences of nuclear use.⁴⁹ It also surrenders escalation control by conventional means to Moscow while repudiating the whole idea of Western escalation or escalation control within a purely conventional context.

The arguments for negotiations now also contend that Western, and especially U.S. nuclear weapons, will not be used or factor into Russian decision-making. This, too, is inherently false. Moscow has shunned escalation to the nuclear level precisely due to its awareness of Western capabilities and Western diplomatic contacts with it.⁵⁰ Thus, this argument for negotiation based on the outsized fear of deliberate Russian nuclear escalation clearly flies in the face of well-established facts.

These facts alone render such arguments dubious if not invalid. Nevertheless, their continuing prevalence betrays a fear of U.S. power that leaves the initiative regarding escalation in Putin's hands and is apparently based more on an indiscriminate fear of nuclear weapons than sound strategic analysis or thinking.

This argument also confirms to Putin that Russia's nuclear threats continue to inhibit Western responses to Russia's aggression and are therefore useful to him.⁵¹ While the credibility of Russian nuclear threats remains a matter for rigorous assessment given the contradictory statements emanating from Moscow and cannot be taken lightly, the question here is whether these calls for negotiation rather than victory truly serve either the American/Western or Ukrainian interest.⁵² Given recent official Russian statements dismissing the use of nuclear weapons and foreign resistance to such escalation, the argument based on the West's fear of escalation has evidently lost much of its credibility because it is based on dubious assumptions.⁵³ Yet it continues.

⁴⁸ Pavel K. Baev, "Putin's Nuclear Blackmail Hits US Resolve and Chinese Wall," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, November 21, 2022, available at <https://jamestown.org/program/putins-nuclear-blackmail-hits-us-resolve-and-chinese-wall/>.

⁴⁹ Chloe Folmar, "US Has Privately Warned Russia Of Consequences Of Using a Nuclear Weapon," *The Hill*, September 23, 2022, available at <https://thehill.com/policy/international/3657842-us-has-privately-warned-russia-of-consequences-of-using-a-nuclear-weapon/>.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Stephen Blank, "Russian Nuclear Strategy In the Ukraine War: An Interim Report," *Information Series*, No. 525 (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, June 15, 2022), available at <https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/IS-525.pdf>.

⁵² Helene Cooper, Julian E. Barnes, and Eric Schmitt, "Russian Military Leaders Discussed Use of Nuclear Weapons, U.S. Officials Say," *The New York Times*, November 2, 2022, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/02/us/politics/russia-ukraine-nuclear-weapons.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>.

"Vladimir Putin Meets With Members of the Valdai Discussion Club. Transcript of the Plenary Session Of the 19th Annual Meeting," October 27, 2022, available at <https://valdaiclub.com/events/posts/articles/vladimir-putin-meets-witmembers-of-the-valdai-club/>.

⁵³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Statement of the Russian Federation on the Prevention of Nuclear War," November 2, 2022, available at https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1836575/.

Finally, the domestic argument that we should sacrifice Ukraine to the priority Chinese threat (an argument with long antecedents among some conservative Republicans⁵⁴), overlooks the fact that a clear defeat of Russia might engender domestic upheaval in Russia, inhibit Chinese threats against Taiwan, and have comparable repercussions in Iran and North Korea. Similarly, an Israeli victory enhances deterrence throughout the Middle East against Iran and its proxies. Indeed, Russia's profound miscalculations and lackluster conduct of the war have arguably already inhibited China's aggressive plans while also galvanizing America's allies in both Asia and Europe.⁵⁵ Thus, support for Ukraine must be seen as an investment in peace, not some unmerited extravagance.⁵⁶

Conclusions

The arguments for pressuring Ukraine and Israel to desist and/or negotiate due to Western impatience or fear of escalation are unfounded and often based on distortion of the facts. Indeed, this advocacy of negotiations is fundamentally unrealistic. This does not mean the United States can simply dismiss calls for negotiations or label Russian nuclear threats as literally incredible. But it does mean that the current arguments for negotiation stem from unwarranted assumptions and ignorance of reality. While negotiations backed by the West may at some point become desirable in either or both these wars, this is not that time. Putin, Hamas, and other Arab leaders, including the Palestinian Authority are not interested in negotiating.⁵⁷ Instead, given the nature of these wars and the affinities and linkages between Hamas and Russia, in these wars there really is no substitute for victory.

Instead, the United States must plan for and show strong support for a Ukrainian victory – i.e., restoration of its sovereignty and full territorial integrity, economic reconstruction, and integration into the EU and NATO. Only that posture can ensure not only Ukraine's but also European security far into the future. Such opportunities to take giant steps to enhance international security as are now possible rarely occur. Indeed, Russia's criminal aggression against Ukraine and military failures offer the West a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape European and international security. Moreover, it is increasingly urgent to take advantage of the challenge posed by Russia's aggression sooner rather than later. As knowledgeable observers know, only the decisive defeat of Russia can bring peace to Ukraine and Europe and offer Russia the chance to reclaim its European vocation.

⁵⁴ Nigel Hamilton, *The Mantle Of Command: FDR At War, 1941-42*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.

⁵⁵ "Ukraine War Forcing China To Rethink 'How and When' It May Invade Taiwan, CIA Chief Says," *The Guardian*, July 21, 2022, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/21/ukraine-war-forcing-china-to-rethink-how-and-when-it-may-invade-taiwan-cia-chief-says>.

⁵⁶ Anthony Cordesman, *The Lasting Strategic Impact Of the War In Ukraine*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2023, available at https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-07/230705_Cordesman_StrategicImpact_WarUkraine.pdf?VersionId=DbYdDMdHvBcZ5wfVhMkBQXWA39GRRMYJ.

⁵⁷ John J. Sullivan, "Opinion: A Diplomatic Charade: An Eye-Opening Account Of US Negotiations With Russia," CNN, February 20, 2023, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2023/02/20/opinions/us-ambassador-russia-invasion-negotiate-sullivan-ctrp/index.html>.

Likewise, Israeli victory alone opens the way to a broader peace process in the Middle East and deterrence of Iran and its proxies while negotiations are a mirage that only perpetuate and justify further aggressions and terrorism.⁵⁸ Therefore, it is imperative to seize the day and not be fooled by the mirage of negotiations that would only compromise U.S. interests. This is the only true “Realist” approach with any chance of success. A genuine realism should be made of sterner stuff.

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⁵⁸ Mary Glantz, “Ukraine: A Real Peace Will Require Change from Russia,” United States Institute of Peace, January 26, 2023, available at <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/01/ukraine-real-peace-will-require-change-russia>.