

The EU Is Over-Invested in the Ukrainian War-Project

Ukraine is not a stand-alone foreign policy issue, but rather the pivot around which Europe's economic prospects will rotate.

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The European Union, by any standards, is over-invested in the Ukrainian war-project – and in its romance with Zelensky too. Just earlier this year, the western (and EU) narrative was that the coming post-Winter offensive by Ukraine would 'break' Russia and render a 'coup de grace' to the war. MSM headlines spun a regular tale of Russia on its last legs. Now, however, the Establishment messaging has done a 180°. Russia is not 'on its last legs' ...

Two very Establishment Anglo-American media in the UK (in which U.S. Establishment messages often surface) finally – and bitterly – have admitted: 'Sanctions on Russia [failed](#)'. The Telegraph [laments](#): They "are a joke"; "Russia was [meant to have collapsed by now](#)".

Belatedly too, the realisation also is dawning across Europe that Ukraine's offensives will not prove decisive, as had been expected only weeks earlier.

Foreign Affairs, in an article by Kofman and Lee, [argues](#) that, given an inconclusive Ukrainian offensive, the only way to move forward – without sustaining an historically humiliating loss – is to 'kick the can down the road' and focus on building a pro-war coalition for the future, one that can hope to match Russia's long term military-economic sustainment potential.

"Kofman-Lee slowly build the case for why any sort of dramatic or decisive success should not be expected, and why instead the narrative needs to shift towards building long term sustainment infrastructure for Ukraine to be able to fight what is now likely to be a very long, drawn out conflict", independent commentator Simplicus [notes](#).

Put simply, European leaders have dug themselves into a deep hole. European states, by emptying what remained in their armouries of old weapons for Kiev, had grimly hoped that

the coming Spring/Summer offensive would settle everything, and they would not have to deal with the problem – the Ukraine war – anymore. Wrong again: They are being invited to ‘dig-in deeper’.

Kofman-Lee do not address the question of whether the avoidance of humiliation (NATO and U.S.) is worth a ‘long drawn out conflict’. The U.S. ‘survived’ their Kabul withdrawal.

Yet, European leaders do not appear to see that the next few months in Ukraine are a key inflection point; Should the EU not firmly refuse ‘mission creep’ now, a slew of adverse economic consequences will ensue. Ukraine is not a stand-alone foreign policy issue, but rather the pivot around which Europe’s economic prospects will rotate.

Zelensky’s F-16 blitz through Europe last week is indicative that, whilst some European leaders want Zelensky to end the war, he – conversely – wants (literally) to take the war to Russia (and likely all of Europe).

“So far”, Seymour Hersh has [reported](#), “[a U.S. official says], “Zelensky has rejected advice [to end the war]; and ignored offers of large sums of money to ease his retreat to an estate he owns in Italy. There is no support in the Biden Administration for any settlement that involves Zelensky’s departure, and the leadership in France and England “are too beholden” to Biden to contemplate such a scenario”.

“And Zelensky wants yet more”, the official said. “Zelensky is telling us that if you want to win the war you’ve got to give me more money and more stuff: “I’ve got to pay off the generals”. He’s telling us, the official says, if he is forced out of office, “he’s going to the highest bidder. He’d rather go to Italy than stay and possibly get killed by his own people”.

European leaders are coincidentally being given – by Kofman-Lee – a message echoing that of Zelensky: Europe must address Ukraine’s long-term sustainment needs by re-configuring its industry to produce the weapons necessary to support the war effort – well beyond 2023 (to match Russia’s formidable logistics weapons manufacturing capacity), and to avoid pinning their hopes on any single offensive effort.

The war is now, in this way, being projected as a binary choice: ‘End the war’ versus ‘Win the war’. Europe is tergiversating –standing at the cross-roads; hesitantly starting down one road, only to reverse, and indecisively take a few cautious steps down the other. The EU will both train Ukrainians to fly F-16s; and yet is coy about providing the planes. It smacks of tokenism; but tokenism is often the father to mission-creep.

Having thrown in their lot with the Biden Administration, an unreflective EU leadership eagerly embraced financial war on Russia. It unreflectively embraced too, a NATO war on Russia. Now European leaders may find themselves pressed to embrace a supply-line race to match ‘logistics’ with Russia. That is, Brussels is being urged to re-commit to ‘winning the war’, rather than ‘ending it’ (as a number of states want).

These latter EU States now are becoming desperate for a way out of the hole they dug into. What if the U.S. [were to cut](#) Ukraine’s funding? What if Team Biden pivots rapidly to China? Politico is running a [headline](#): The End of Ukraine Aid is rapidly Approaching. Reupping it Won’t be Easy. The EU could be stuck with financing a ‘forever conflict’ and the nightmare of a further refugee flood – draining EU resources and exacerbating the immigration crisis already roiling EU electorates.

Member States seem still to be wishfully thinking again, half-believing the tales of divisions in Moscow; [believing](#) the Prigozhin '[mind-omelettes](#)'; believing the Russian slow-cooking of Bakhmut to be a sign of force exhaustion, rather than a part to the patient Russian incremental degradation of Ukrainian capabilities that has been under way, across the spectrum.

These war-sceptic States, doing their token share of 'pro-Ukrainism' to avoid being castigated by the Brussels nomenclature, gamble on the improbable notion that Russia will accede to some negotiated settlement – and more than that, to a deal that is favourable to Ukraine. Why would they believe that?

"Europe's problem," Seymour Hersh's source says, in terms of getting a quick settlement to the war, "is that the White House wants Zelensky to survive"; and 'yes', Zelensky has his cadre of Brussels' fanciers, too.

The Foreign Affairs pair predict that an armaments race would be – again – well, 'slam dunk':

"Russia does not seem well positioned for a forever war. Russia's ability to repair and restore equipment from storage appears so constrained that the country is increasingly reliant on Soviet gear from the 1950s and 1960s to fill out mobilized regiments. As Ukraine acquires better Western equipment, the Russian military has increasingly come to resemble an early Cold War-period museum".

Really? Do these U.S. journalists ever cross-check or fact-check? It seems not. More tanks were produced in Russia in the first quarter of 2023 than in the whole of 2022. [Extrapolating](#), Russia had previously manufactured upwards of 150-250 tanks per year, with Medvedev promising to upscale this to 1600+. Though this number includes refurbished and upgraded tanks (which actually make up the bulk), it is still indicative of vast industrial outputs.

The EU does not discuss these crucial decisions affecting Europe's role in the war in public. All sensitive matters are debated behind closed-doors in the EU. The problem with this [democracy deficit](#) is that the sequelae to these Russia-related issues touch almost every aspect of European economic and social life. Many questions are posed; little or no discussion follows.

Where and what are Europe's 'red lines'? Do EU leaders really 'believe' in providing Zelensky with the F-16s he seeks? Or are they betting on Washington's own 'red lines' – letting them off the hook? Asked on Monday whether the U.S. had changed its position on supplying F16s to Ukraine, the White House National Security Council spokesperson, John Kirby, said: "No". This F-16 issue is no game-changer; however it can become the thin edge to 'forever war'. It could also be the thin edge to WW3.

Will the EU end support for the Ukraine project militarily (in line with U.S. earlier warnings to Zelensky), as the Ukrainian offensive peters out – absent any gains?

What will be the EU response, if invited by the U.S. to enter a munitions supply-line race against Russia? Just to be clear: restructuring the European infrastructure to a war-orientated economy carries huge consequences (and costs).

Existing competitive infrastructure would have to be re-purposed away from manufactures

for export, to weapons. Is there the skilled manpower today to staff this? Building new weapons supply-lines is a slow complicated technical process. And this would be in addition to Europe swapping efficient energy infrastructure for new Green structures that are less efficient, less reliable, and more expensive.

Is there a way out from the 'hole' the EU has dug for itself?

Yes – it is called 'honesty'. If the EU wants a quick end to the war, it should understand that there are two options available: Ukrainian capitulation and an agreement on Moscow's terms; or the continuation of full-spectrum attrition of Ukraine's capacity to wage war, until its forces are overtaken by entropy.

Honesty would require the EU to ditch the delusional stance that Moscow will negotiate a settlement on Zelensky's terms. There will be no solution by following that latter path.

And honesty would require the EU to admit that joining the financial war on Russia was [a mistake](#). One that should be corrected.

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