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## The United States against Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2022

**Zarys treści:** Artykuł analizuje reakcję Stanów Zjednoczonych na rosyjską agresję przeciwko Ukrainie w 2022 roku. Omówiono w nim amerykańską percepcję wojny w Ukrainie, wsparcie wojskowe udzielane armii ukraińskiej przez USA, gospodarcze i humanitarne aspekty reakcji amerykańskiej na wojnę oraz perspektywę dalszej pomocy USA i postrzegania możliwości zakończenia konfliktu w Ukrainie.

**Outline of content:** The paper analyzes the US response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022. It discusses the American perception of the war in Ukraine, the military support provided to the Ukrainian army by the US, the economic and humanitarian aspects of the American response to the war, the prospect of further US aid, and the perception of the possibility of ending the conflict in Ukraine.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wojna w Ukrainie 2022 r., rosyjska agresja, Stany Zjednoczone, pomoc wojskowa, pomoc gospodarcza i humanitarna, sankcje gospodarcze

**Keywords:** the 2022 war in Ukraine, Russian aggression, the United States, military aid, economic and humanitarian aid, economic sanctions

### Introduction

After the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the support given to separatists in the Donbas, US aid to Ukraine was gradually increasing. President Barack Obama condemned these actions, adding that: “Russia is a regional power that is threatening some of its immediate neighbors not out of strength, but out of weakness”. However, he stated that Russia’s actions did not pose the primary national security threat to the US. He realized the dominant threat was rising



China, not structurally declining Russia.<sup>1</sup> National Security Strategy of February 2015 read: “Russia’s violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity – as well as its belligerent stance toward other neighboring countries – endangers international norms that have largely been taken for granted since the end of the Cold War”.<sup>2</sup> During Obama’s presidency, only commercial exports of lethal weapons were approved, using the Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) formula. The American administration did not want to escalate the conflict and counted on the possibility of solving it in a diplomatic manner through the so-called Minsk agreements. President Obama was also aware of some Western European countries, including Germany and France, reluctance to support Ukraine militarily and, therefore, did not want to split NATO through unilateral decisions.

During the election campaign and at the beginning of the presidency, Donald Trump’s attitude towards Russia was ambivalent. Still, it quickly turned out there was no possibility of rapprochement with Russia. In the National Security Strategy of December 2017, it was written that Russia violates the sovereignty of states in the region. The document stated: “Russia continues to intimidate its neighbors with threatening behavior, such as nuclear posturing and the forward deployment of offensive capabilities”. Moreover, it was recognized that Russia and China: “challenged American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity” and wanted to break the unity of the West.<sup>3</sup> A breakthrough in the approach to Ukraine came on 22 December 2017, when President Trump decided to launch the governmental transfer of Javelin systems to Ukraine within the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) procedure. It was a clear signal from Washington about its readiness to support Ukraine in defense against the Donbas separatists and Russia.<sup>4</sup> Between 2014 and 2021, the United States provided some \$2.7 billion in military aid to Ukraine, mainly through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative and Foreign Military Financing.<sup>5</sup> The US Armed Forces had provided the Ukrainian army with training and equipment, including Javelin anti-tank missiles, sniper rifles, grenade launchers, night-vision

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<sup>1</sup> B. van Apeldoorn, N. de Graaff, *American Grand Strategy and Corporate Elite Networks. The Open Door since the End of the Cold War* (New York, 2016), p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> The White House, ‘National Security Strategy’, Washington DC, Feb. 2015, p. 10, [https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015\\_national\\_security\\_strategy\\_2.pdf](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy_2.pdf) (accessed: 8 Aug. 2022).

<sup>3</sup> The White House, ‘National Security Strategy of the United States of America’, Washington DC, Dec. 2017, pp. 2, 25, 47, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf> (accessed: 8 Aug. 2022).

<sup>4</sup> R. Duda, ‘Czy Zachód wspiera Ukrainę?’, *Komentarze IEŚW*, vol. 10, no. 59 (2018), 1–2.

<sup>5</sup> A.H. Cordesman, ‘NATO and Ukraine: Reshaping NATO to Meet the Russian and Chinese Challenge’, *CSIS* (16 Feb. 2022), p. 2, [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/220216\\_Cordesman\\_NATO\\_Ukraine.pdf?cS8vKRN0doYvg3t\\_y6QMZMSCpadAo90a](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/220216_Cordesman_NATO_Ukraine.pdf?cS8vKRN0doYvg3t_y6QMZMSCpadAo90a) (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

gear, radars, and patrol vessels.<sup>6</sup> Despite this, the defensive nature of the weapons supplied and their relatively small number could not drastically change the fate of the war in Donbas. On the other hand, this action significantly increased the costs of Russia's military involvement.<sup>7</sup>

Washington was also involved in building an international front to condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine. This was demonstrated, among other things, by the efforts to pass the UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262 on the Territorial integrity of Ukraine adopted on 27 March 2014.<sup>8</sup> Regarding mediation between the parties of the conflict, the US gave way to Germany and France, condemning all violations by Russia of the Minsk agreements.<sup>9</sup> To increase the cost of Russian military involvement in Ukraine and force Moscow to change its policy, the United States imposed economic sanctions, along with other Western countries. Initially, they concerned oligarchs close to Putin and high-ranking state officials, and later, they affected selected sectors of the Russian economy. At the same time, the US tightened relations with Ukraine, important steps of which were the signing at the end of 2021 of the Joint Statement on the US-Ukraine Strategic Partnership<sup>10</sup> and the US-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership.<sup>11</sup> These documents declare the tightening of cooperation in the fields of security and defense, democracy and rule of law, economic transformation, energy security and climate, and humanitarian assistance. Since Ukraine's independence in 1991, and especially after Russia's 2014 invasion, Ukraine has been a leading recipient of US foreign aid in Europe and Eurasia. From Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 to FY 2020, the US Department of State and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) provided Ukraine with aid for about \$418 million a year on average, plus a total of more than \$350 million in humanitarian aid.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> J. Masters, 'Why NATO Has Become a Flash Point With Russia in Ukraine', *CFR* (20 Jan. 2022), <https://www.cfr.org/background/why-nato-has-become-flash-point-russia-ukraine> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>7</sup> R. Duda, 'Does the United States support Ukraine?', *Безпека та партнерство. Інформаційно-аналітичний бюлетень*, no. 1 (17) (2019), 7.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, 'Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 March 2014, A/RES/68/262', New York, 27 March 2014, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N13/455/17/PDF/N1345517.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed: 8 Aug. 2022).

<sup>9</sup> H. Alunaza et al., 'Joe Biden Intervention In The Russian Invasion Effort Against Ukraine', *WIMAYA: Interdisciplinary Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2022), 46.

<sup>10</sup> The White House, 'Joint Statement on the U.S.-Ukraine Strategic Partnership', Washington DC, 1 Sep. 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/01/joint-statement-on-the-u-s-ukraine-strategic-partnership/> (accessed: 8 Aug. 2022).

<sup>11</sup> US Department of State, 'U.S.-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership', Washington DC, 10 Nov. 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-ukraine-charter-on-strategic-partnership/> (accessed: 8 Aug. 2022).

<sup>12</sup> Congressional Research Service, 'Ukraine: Background, Conflict with Russia, and US Policy', 5 Oct. 2021, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R45008.pdf> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

After 2014, the United States fulfilled allied obligations towards the countries of NATO's eastern flank. In June 2014, they initiated the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), which has been operating under the name of the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) since 2017. The ERI / EDI budget gradually increased from \$1 billion in FY 2015 to \$6.5 billion in FY 2019. Due to the finalization of major investments, including purchasing and modernizing equipment and prepositioning it in Europe, it was reduced in the following years.<sup>13</sup> The initiative focuses on strengthening US military cooperation with European countries and deterring Russia. Within EDI the US Army rotates to Europe an Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) with support units, altogether around 6,000 troops. The headquarters and main forces of the brigade are located in Poland, and its heavy gear is pre-positioned in Europe. It also allows for maintaining the presence of the US Air Force and Navy in the Baltic and Black Sea areas.<sup>14</sup> The United States also joined NATO initiatives to strengthen the Alliance's eastern flank, within enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Poland and the Baltic states and tailored Forward Presence (tFP) in Bulgaria and Romania. As part of the eFP, the US formed a battalion-size multinational battle group stationed in Poland on a permanent rotational basis.<sup>15</sup> All of the above bilateral and multilateral actions by the United States did not stop Russia from launching a full-scale aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

The article analyzes and evaluates the US response to Russian aggression against Ukraine during the first six months of the war in 2022. I am trying to answer the question of whether the manner of the United States' response and its scale were adequate to effectively support Ukraine in defending against Russian aggression, maintaining state sovereignty, and preventing the conflict from spreading to NATO countries. My hypothesis is that the directions of the actions implemented by the US were justified and diametrically contributed to supporting the defense of Ukraine. However, the increase in military aid to Ukraine was too slow, which prevented its army from launching a full-scale counter-offensive that would have allowed it to liberate all the occupied territories and forced Russia to cease the aggression. The sanctions imposed on Russia have significantly increased the costs of the war, but so far, they have not been able to force the Kremlin to change its policy towards Ukraine. Thanks to the American support for the defense and deterrence of the countries of NATO's eastern flank and Russia's military difficulties on the

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<sup>13</sup> A. Kacprzyk, 'The European Deterrence Initiative: Record and Perspectives', *PISM Bulletin*, no. 118 (4 June 2020), 1, [https://pism.pl/publications/The\\_European\\_Deterrence\\_Initiative\\_Record\\_and\\_Perspectives](https://pism.pl/publications/The_European_Deterrence_Initiative_Record_and_Perspectives) (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>14</sup> J. Ringsmose, S. Rynning, 'Can NATO's new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force deter?', in: *NATO and Collective Defence in the 21st Century. An Assessment of the Warsaw Summit*, ed. K. Friis (New York, 2017), p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> J.A. Larsen, 'NATO's responses to Russian belligerence: an overview', in: *NATO and Collective Defence*, p. 12.

Ukrainian front, the conflict cannot effectively escalate to NATO countries. The policy of the United States towards the war in Ukraine is primarily in line with the neorealist paradigm.

## Research methodology

In preparing the paper, I used the interviews conducted between April and May 2022 during my research internship at Columbia University in the City of New York. I interviewed researchers and experts in political science, international relations, and security studies from Columbia University and universities and research institutes in Washington DC – the George Washington University, the American University, the Brookings Institution, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). The interviews were individual, non-standardized, unstructured, and in-depth. I conducted them based on problems to be discussed individually for each interlocutor in a form similar to a natural conversation. Face-to-face meetings allowed me to apply elements of the behavioral method and put me in the context of the conversation. Listening to the answers and observing the interlocutors' reactions to individual questions allowed me to react on-going, including deepening the specific threads of conversations.

I also used the method of content analysis, which allowed me to study the content of documents, expert opinions, fact sheets, and statements issued by American institutions – the White House, the United States Department of State (DoS), the United States Department of Defense (DoD), the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), and bodies of international organizations – NATO and the United Nations, and the content of bilateral international agreements. I also analyzed the content of expert opinions of think tanks and research organizations from Washington DC – the CSIS, the Atlantic Council, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP), the Brookings Institution, the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), the Pew Research Center; from New York – the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR); and the RAND Corporation from Santa Monica in California. I supplemented this with selected press and expert publications from newspapers and news publications from Washington DC – Foreign Policy and the Washington Post; and New York – the New Yorker and Forbes. I also used literature published by global publishing houses based in New York – Routledge and Random House, as well as articles from selected international scientific journals.

## The logic of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 from the American perspective

President Putin's propaganda created a narrative alternative to reality, which was to falsify the criminal nature of the aggression against Ukraine, presenting the Russian army as a noble liberator waging a chivalrous campaign against vile Ukrainian criminals. According to it, the Russian army conducts a "special military operation" in Ukraine, the main goal of which is the "de-Nazification" of the country. The Russian media informs that the only targets of the attacks are "military objects", and the Ukrainians themselves bomb and murder civilians and stage fake atrocities. The retreats of Russian troops, including those from Kyiv or Snake Island, are to be "goodwill gestures".<sup>16</sup> This narrative has been completely rejected from the outset in the United States. On 24 February, President Joe Biden said: "The Russian military has begun a brutal assault on the people of Ukraine without provocation, without justification, without necessity".<sup>17</sup> He called the murders committed by Russians in Ukraine "war crimes" and vowed to hold President Vladimir Putin "accountable" for those atrocities.<sup>18</sup>

Another element of the Russian narrative is "reclaiming Russian lands". Putin considers the territory of Ukraine to be historically Russian lands and de facto considers Ukrainians to be Russians. He denies Ukraine's right to exist and does not recognize the identity of Ukrainians. He tries to justify the military actions in Ukraine with the policy of NATO enlargement, which, according to him, enters Russia's spheres of influence and weakens and threatens Russia. President Putin said: "If people want to limit and weaken Russia, why do they have to do it through NATO enlargement? Doesn't your government know that Ukraine is unstable and immature politically, and NATO is a very divisive issue there? Don't you know that Ukraine is not even a real country? Part of it is really East European, and part is really Russian".<sup>19</sup> President Biden stood up for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, respecting its right to decide on internal and external policies. He described the establishment and recognition by Russia of the separatist republics of Donetsk and Lugansk as "a flagrant violation of international

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<sup>16</sup> P. Dickinson, 'Goodwill gestures and de-Nazification: Decoding Putin's Ukraine War lexicon', *Atlantic Council* (30 June 2022), <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/goodwill-gestures-and-de-nazification-decoding-putins-ukraine-war-lexicon/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>17</sup> The White House, 'Remarks by President Biden on Russia's Unprovoked and Unjustified Attack on Ukraine', 24 Feb. 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/24/remarks-by-president-biden-on-russias-unprovoked-and-unjustified-attack-on-ukraine/> (accessed: 8 Aug. 2022).

<sup>18</sup> J. Hudson et al., 'Biden says Bucha killings a "war crime," seeks new Russia sanctions', *Washington Post*, 4 Apr. 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/04/04/bucha-biden-sanctions-russia-ukraine/> (accessed: 12 Aug. 2022).

<sup>19</sup> W.J. Burns, *The Back Channel: A Memoir of American Diplomacy and the Case for Its Renewal* (New York, 2019), p. 327.

law”.<sup>20</sup> US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said: “We don’t know how the rest of this war will unfold, but we do know that a sovereign, independent Ukraine will be around much longer than Vladimir Putin is on the scene”.<sup>21</sup>

National Security Strategy of March 2021 describes Russia as a ‘destabilizing’ state, “determined to enhance its global influence and play a disruptive role on the world stage”.<sup>22</sup> Most American researchers and analysts, however, did not expect that Russia could launch a major military offensive against Ukraine. Even when the intelligence services reported a build-up of strike forces near the borders, and Putin’s war plans, the attack on Kyiv was called into question. This is hardly surprising as the logic of such an invasion was incomprehensible. At the end of 2021 and in early 2022, the US held diplomatic talks with Russia to resolve the growing dispute peacefully. In practice, Russia’s position was to make Eastern Europe its sphere of influence and resembled an ultimatum towards NATO, so Washington could not agree to Moscow’s demands. When Ukraine was invaded, the United States rightly questioned the legitimacy and purposefulness of the aggression. As Julie George noted, a year before the Russian aggression against Ukraine, in principle, no one would have thought that a full-scale invasion and shelling of Kyiv would make any sense. For Putin, however, the national argument prevailed – and many Russians agree with it – that Ukraine as a separate entity doesn’t exist. This is contrary to logic because Ukraine is a sovereign state recognized by Russia. However, this argument has become an important component of Putin’s imperial expansion.<sup>23</sup>

President Putin believed in the power of the Russian army, for which the armed forces of Ukraine were not to be a challenge. James H. Lebovic noted this was because he had created a system in which specialists gave him the information he wanted to hear. As with dictatorial political systems and armies, he values loyalty more than professionalism. The Russian army was primarily designed to keep the regime.<sup>24</sup> Putin also hoped that he would be able to take Ukraine quickly thanks to the mass support of the people of Ukraine and the passivity of the divided NATO. He was definitely wrong on both of these and making political decisions in isolation from reliable expert knowledge was a recipe for a catastrophe. Also, Michael Doyle stated that President Putin made two big mistakes: “He radically underestimated the willingness of Ukrainians to fight. He assumed he would be welcomed in Ukraine, as George W. Bush assumed he would be welcomed in

<sup>20</sup> The White House, ‘Remarks by President Biden on Russia’s Unprovoked and Unjustified Attack’.

<sup>21</sup> R. Wright, ‘Ukraine is now Americas war too’, *New Yorker*, 1 May 2022, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/ukraine-is-now-americas-war-too> (accessed: 12 Aug. 2022).

<sup>22</sup> The White House, ‘National Security Strategic Guidance’, Washington DC, March 2021, pp. 8, 14, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf> (accessed: 8 Aug. 2022).

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Professor Julie George, Columbia University, New York, 23 May 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Professor James H. Lebovic, George Washington University, Washington DC, 11 May 2022.

Iraq and other countries, but both were foolish judgments. And then the other thing that Putin was counting on NATO falling apart under the Russian pressure, including pressure in gas”.<sup>25</sup> As noted by Lebovic, President Putin counted on the so-called ‘Trump effect’, which caused severe divisions within NATO. The cohesion and image of the Alliance were also weakened by the failure in Afghanistan after the decision of the Biden administration to withdraw troops from that country. Putin counted on further cracks in NATO caused by reluctance to help Ukraine by European powers, mainly Germany, due to energy dependence on Russia, and France due to President Emmanuel Macron’s relationship with President Putin.<sup>26</sup> As Kimberly J. Morgan aptly noted, the shared sense of threat from Russia and solidarity in support of Ukraine led to the revitalization of NATO, which in recent years seemed to be in disrepair. As she stated: “Now there’s a kind of renewed commitment to making NATO of a vibrant organization. So it really backfires on Vladimir Putin”.<sup>27</sup> By attacking Ukraine, Russia led to a significant increase in NATO’s unity and cohesion, thus achieving the opposite goal. There is a widespread opinion among American researchers and analysts that President Putin committed a serious strategic mistake by attacking Ukraine, for which Russia will pay a high price.

## US military support for Ukraine

After the outbreak of the war, President Biden decided that the United States would not engage directly in military operations in Ukraine. Behind this decision was a huge risk related to a possible war between nuclear powers. For this reason, he has not decided to introduce a no-fly zone in Ukraine, which could not only provide protection to civilians but also significantly increase the possibility of supplying weapons from the West.<sup>28</sup> During a trip to Kyiv in late April 2022, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said: “We want to see Russia weakened to the degree it can’t do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine”.<sup>29</sup> The primary way to weaken Russia militarily was to strengthen the Ukrainian army, inflicting significant losses on the enemy. The successively increasing supplies of US military equipment and training results from the unwavering support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Professor Michael Doyle, Columbia University, New York, 27 April 2022.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Professor James H. Lebovic.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Professor Kimberly J. Morgan, George Washington University, Washington DC, 10 May 2022.

<sup>28</sup> R.D. Hooker, ‘A no-fly zone over Ukraine? The case for NATO doing it’, *Atlantic Council*, 18 March 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/a-no-fly-zone-over-ukraine-the-case-for-nato-doing-it/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>29</sup> Wright, ‘Ukraine is now Americas war’.



In March 2022, at the request of the White House, the US Congress approved \$3.5 billion, which in a few weeks was allocated to military aid to Ukraine. On 28 April, the White House appealed to the Congress for \$33 billion for security, economic, and humanitarian aid due to the war. \$20.4 billion was to be allocated to military aid to Ukraine and to increase the region's security.<sup>30</sup> From the beginning of the aggression until mid-July 2022, the US invested \$9.1 billion in security assistance to Ukraine for training and equipment. From 2014, in total, it was \$11.8 billion, so after the aggression in 2022, the support increased by leaps and bounds. Ukraine's neighbors, mainly Poland, played an important role in supplying US arms and military equipment.<sup>31</sup>

The United States has provided the Ukrainian army with a variety of weapons and military equipment, including: over 1,400 Stinger anti-aircraft systems; over 6,500 Javelin anti-armor systems; over 20,000 other anti-armor systems; over 700 Switchblade Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems; 126 155mm Howitzers; 16 M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS); two National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS); 20 Mi-17 helicopters; Counter-battery systems; Hundreds of Armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles; 200 M113 Armored Personnel Carriers; hundreds of Tactical Vehicles and other types of vehicles; over 10,000 grenade launchers and small arms; 75,000 sets of body armor and helmets; protective and medical equipment; approximately 700 Phoenix Ghost Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems; laser-guided rocket systems; Puma Unmanned Aerial Systems; Unmanned Coastal Defense Vessels; 26 counter-artillery radars; four counter-mortar radars; four air surveillance radars; two harpoon coastal defense systems; 18 coastal and riverine patrol boats; M18A1 Claymore anti-personnel munitions; thousands of electronic devices of various types; and huge amounts of artillery rounds, ammunition, and explosives.<sup>32</sup> The vast majority of the above deliveries were made between March and July 2022.

Initially, the Americans provided the Ukrainians with weapons that did not require a significant amount of time to use nor specialized training, such as Stinger or Javelin systems. The Ukrainians, however, demanded more advanced military equipment, including aircraft, tanks, and multiple-launch rocket systems. Steven Pifer argued that, given the predictions that the war in Ukraine could extend into the next months or even years, it was worth withdrawing some Ukrainian soldiers from the front and training them to operate more sophisticated weapon systems in

<sup>30</sup> The White House, 'FACT SHEET: White House Calls on Congress to Provide Additional Support for Ukraine', 28 April 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/04/28/fact-sheet-white-house-calls-on-congress-to-provide-additional-support-for-ukraine/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Professor Sharon L. Wolchik, George Washington University, Washington DC, 18 May 2022.

<sup>32</sup> US Department of State, 'US Security Cooperation with Ukraine', Washington DC, 22 July 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-ukraine/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

which the US and other Western countries could equip the Ukrainian army. In the long run, this would change the face of the war in favor of the Ukrainians.<sup>33</sup> Such an approach was fully justified, because without advanced equipment, including precise long-range missiles, the Ukrainians were not able to reduce Russian dominance on the battlefield, including in the air.

With the brutalization of the military operations of the Russian army, the United States began to send more advanced weapons to Ukraine. Of particular importance was the delivery to Ukraine of 16 HIMARS, which strengthened Ukraine's long-range fire capability, and two NASAMS air-defense systems to protect Ukrainian soldiers and civilians against Russian missile attacks.<sup>34</sup> Even though thanks to these deliveries, the Ukrainians were able to strike several military targets of tactical and propaganda importance, to change the situation on the front significantly, Ukraine needs much more.<sup>35</sup> According to Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov, for a successful counteroffensive, the Ukrainian army needs about 100 HIMARS, along with the tracked M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) version. To destroy deep-seated Russian supply lines, it also needs missile systems that can hit targets at a distance of at least 100–150 km.<sup>36</sup> During the first six months of the war, the Americans decided not to hand over to Ukraine MLRS or Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS), a guided munition that can hit targets more than 290 kilometers away. This happened despite President Volodymyr Zelensky's assurances that the Ukrainian army would not use them against targets located in Russia. Biden's administration, however, preferred "not to poke a Russian bear" too much.<sup>37</sup>

The Americans noticed the huge weaknesses of the Russian army, including incompetent command, the disastrous tactics of the Russian military units, problems in logistics, and the poor operation of Russian military equipment.<sup>38</sup> Lebovic even described it as the "third world army". He explained, however, that not in terms of the amount of stuff they have, but in terms of their ability to use it

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with Ambassador Steven Pifer, Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 29 April 2022.

<sup>34</sup> US Department of Defense, 'Opening Remarks by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III at the Fourth Ukraine Defense Contact Group (As Delivered)', 20 July 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech/Article/3098918/opening-remarks-by-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-at-the-fourth-ukrain/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>35</sup> R.D. Hooker, 'Ukraine can win', *Atlantic Council*, 20 July 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraine-can-win/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>36</sup> D. Peleschuk, 'Ukraine's defense minister: With the right weapons, "Russia can definitely be defeated"', *Atlantic Council*, 19 July 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/ukraines-defense-minister-with-the-right-weapons-russia-can-definitely-be-defeated/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>37</sup> J. Detsch, 'Biden Is Still Worried About Poking the Russian Bear', *Foreign Policy*, 8 June 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/06/08/us-russia-war-ukraine-military-defense/> (accessed: 12 Aug. 2022).

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Ambassador Steven Pifer.

effectively.<sup>39</sup> With the diligent defense of the Ukrainians and the growing hope that they could win this war, the US and other Western countries have increased their military support.<sup>40</sup> To improve this, Washington authorized 14 NATO Allies and partners to transfer military equipment of American origin to Ukraine.<sup>41</sup> However, the shipment of modern weapon systems, which inflict heavy losses on the Russian army and its logistics facilities, has increased the risk of an escalation of the conflict. As Stephen Biddle noted: “Right now, apparently Putin believes that he can still pull a rabbit out of a hat on the ground in Ukraine, maybe by letting the war stalemate for five or six years and then waiting for the politics in Ukraine to change, and for divisions in Ukrainian politics to emerge. That would allow him to divide and conquer. This is more or less what he did in Chechnya”. However, if the Russian army loses at the front, the Kremlin may resort to further measures, increasing the level of escalation, and in extreme situations, also use weapons of mass destruction. The purpose of such actions would be not so much to destroy specific military targets in Ukraine as to intimidate the West and force it to withdraw from supporting Ukraine.<sup>42</sup> Charles L. Glaser believes that Putin would use nuclear weapons even if Russia were not attacked if the war in Ukraine was leading to an outcome that Putin considers undesirable and unacceptable.<sup>43</sup> Pifer believes that calling the nuclear alert by Putin was only a bluff, the more so as the Pentagon did not record a clear change in the operation of Russia’s nuclear forces. Even though Russia could intimidate Ukraine and Western countries by using nuclear weapons, it could lose the last remaining support in the international arena, even from China,<sup>44</sup> and expose itself to a very decisive response from the US and NATO.

With increasing military support to Ukraine, a discussion has begun in the United States on how much it can increase the supply of military equipment without jeopardizing the readiness of its own military. Moreover, the necessity to replenish the warehouses has been discussed, which is necessary considering that the main strategic threat to the US is China, whose hardware resources are dynamically growing.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, with the decline of emotions, cold political calculation began to play an increasingly important role. As noted by Cynthia Roberts, the American authorities focus on increasing spending on armaments

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Professor James H. Lebovic.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Pierre Morcos, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC, 11 May 2022.

<sup>41</sup> US Department of State, ‘US Security’.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Professor Stephen Biddle, Columbia University, New York, 5 May 2022.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Professor Charles L. Glaser, George Washington University, Washington DC, 25 April 2022.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Ambassador Steven Pifer.

<sup>45</sup> D. Johnson, ‘What Better Way to Use the Arsenal of Democracy?’, *RAND Corporation*, 28 June 2022, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2022/06/what-better-way-to-use-the-arsenal-of-democracy.html> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

and supporting Ukraine, which is happening at the expense of the expenditure on social purposes, infrastructure, and investments. Ultimately, it could end badly for the Democratic Party during the elections.<sup>46</sup> This, however, will depend on several factors, both internal and international, including developments in Ukraine.

As Pierre Morcos noted, the US is leading in the military assistance to Ukraine and, at the same time, is contributing quite heavily to the reinforcement of NATO's posture on the eastern flank.<sup>47</sup> US actions to increase the security of allies in the region began a few weeks before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It was a manifestation of the transition from passive to active deterrence.<sup>48</sup> From February to the end of June 2022, the US deployed or extended over 20,000 additional forces to Europe in response to the Ukraine crisis, increasing the number to more than 100,000 service members across Europe. These were both air, land, maritime, cyber, and space capabilities.<sup>49</sup> At the NATO summit in Madrid on 29–30 June 2022, the US announced plans to send additional forces to the region.<sup>50</sup> Among other things, they supported the decision to increase battalion battle groups to brigade-size units, including the American group stationed in Poland.<sup>51</sup> The US also decided to locate additional commands in Europe, including a permanent headquarters for V Corps in Poland. To maintain forces in Europe under EDI, DoD allocated \$3.8 billion in FY 2022 and requested \$4.2 billion for FY 2023.<sup>52</sup>

## Other areas of American support for Ukraine

Russian aggression against Ukraine caused the exodus of the population on a massive scale. By the end of July 2022, over 9.93 million people had left Ukraine, of which 1.25 million refugees were registered for temporary protection. In the same period, 4 million returned to Ukraine.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, several million people were internally

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<sup>46</sup> Interview with Professor Cynthia Roberts, Columbia University, New York, 13 May 2022.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Pierre Morcos.

<sup>48</sup> B. Hodges, 'Defending US Allies and Interests Against Russian Aggression in Eastern Europe', *CEPA*, 17 Feb. 2022, <https://cepa.org/defending-us-allies-and-interests-against-russian-aggression-in-eastern-europe/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>49</sup> US Department of Defense, 'FACT SHEET: US Defense Contributions to Europe', 29 June 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3078056/fact-sheet-us-defense-contributions-to-europe/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>50</sup> T. Graham, 'NATO Countries Signal Resolve at Summit: What Does It Mean for Russia?', *CFR*, 30 June 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/nato-countries-signal-resolve-summit-what-does-it-mean-russia> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>51</sup> NATO, 'Madrid Summit Declaration Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Madrid 29 June 2022', Madrid, 29 June 2022, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_196951.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm) (accessed: 8 Aug. 2022).

<sup>52</sup> US Department of Defense, 'FACT SHEET: US Defense'.

<sup>53</sup> UNHCR, 'Ukraine Refugee Situation', 27 July 2022, [https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#\\_ga=2.29159420.1164648425.1654871881-2130049685.1651174834](https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#_ga=2.29159420.1164648425.1654871881-2130049685.1651174834) (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

displaced. The United States has opened the border for up to 100,000 Ukrainians and others fleeing Russia's aggression through the full range of legal pathways, including the US Refugee Admissions Program. American programs are especially open to people whose family members already live in the US.<sup>54</sup> The speed and scale of displacement have been unprecedented compared to recent crises,<sup>55</sup> and most of the Ukrainians fled to neighboring countries. For this reason, there is a great need to provide humanitarian aid to the Ukrainian civilians remaining in the region.

The United States has provided Ukraine with relatively large humanitarian aid. On 24 March 2022, the US authorities announced they would provide more than \$1 billion in new funding for humanitarian assistance. To assess needs and ensure cooperation with international organizations and NGOs and to coordinate the delivery of aid to Ukraine, the US deployed a 25-person humanitarian response team in the region. US volunteers working in various humanitarian organizations also came to the area. American-backed humanitarian organizations provide, among others, food and necessities, shelter, and medical and psychological assistance.<sup>56</sup> From the \$33 billion granted by the US Congress in April / May, \$3 billion was to go to additional humanitarian aid for Ukrainians.<sup>57</sup>

The United States also committed funds and took steps to stabilize Ukraine's economy. From the donated \$33 billion, \$8.5 billion was allocated to economic assistance to Ukraine and to provide basic citizen services. Additional funds were also donated to increase food production and raw material extraction.<sup>58</sup> It is necessary to take urgent steps to prevent Ukrainian economic collapse, including political (or conflict) risk insurance (PRI) to mitigate and manage investment risks. Regardless of whether it is undertaken by the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) or another international organization, the US will significantly influence the formulation of the principles of supporting the Ukrainian economy. The same will be true of the post-war economic recovery, which may require something along the lines of a Ukrainian Marshall Plan.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> The White House, 'FACT SHEET: The Biden Administration Announces New Humanitarian, Development, and Democracy Assistance to Ukraine and the Surrounding Region', 24 March 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/24/fact-sheet-the-biden-administration-announces-new-humanitarian-development-and-democracy-assistance-to-ukraine-and-the-surrounding-region/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>55</sup> L. Burke et al., 'Ukrainian Refugees Forced Displacement Response Goes Fully Digital', CSIS, 23 June 2022, p. 1, [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/220623\\_Burke\\_Displacement\\_Response.pdf?vsQvHqCVnEPU9UY9dZ4GGM1qEx2GLkzL](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/220623_Burke_Displacement_Response.pdf?vsQvHqCVnEPU9UY9dZ4GGM1qEx2GLkzL) (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>56</sup> The White House, 'FACT SHEET: The Biden Administration'.

<sup>57</sup> The White House, 'FACT SHEET: White House'.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> B.C. Toms, 'The West must take urgent steps to prevent Ukrainian economic collapse', *Atlantic Council*, 18 July 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/the-west-must-take-urgent-steps-to-prevent-ukrainian-economic-collapse/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

The United States also undertook diplomatic efforts to build a united front against Russia. It contributed, among other things, to the adoption by the UN General Assembly on 1 March 2022 of a resolution condemning aggression against Ukraine. The resolution demands that Russia “immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders”.<sup>60</sup> The resolution is primarily symbolic, as 141 countries have supported it, because it is not legally binding. For practical reasons, the US political activities within NATO were more important. When it comes to maintaining cohesion in NATO in the face of the war in Ukraine, the attitude of Turkey was of particular importance. For this reason, the Biden administration sought the creation of the New US-Turkey Strategic Mechanism.<sup>61</sup> Washington also sought help for Ukraine from NATO partners, including American allies in the Asia-Pacific region.

## US sanctions against Russia

The primary purpose of imposing sanctions on Russia was presented by President Biden, who said: “These international sanctions are sapping Russian strength, its ability to replenish its military, and its ability to project power”.<sup>62</sup> The United States, along with the G7, the European Union, and the United Kingdom, imposed several sanctions on selected individuals and economic entities from Russia related to the war against Ukraine. Washington imposed complete blocking or other sanctions against major Russian financial institutions, cutting them off from the US financial system and freezing their assets. These sanctions were aimed at causing the following effects in Russia: capital flight, weakening of the currency, rising inflation, higher borrowing costs, and reduced access to global financial markets. The US also imposed financing restrictions for crucial Russian state-owned enterprises, including Gazprom. Sanctions have also been imposed on several dozen defense-related firms. Washington has banned the export of modern technology to Russia, including semiconductors, telecommunications, lasers, avionics, and maritime technology.<sup>63</sup> The export ban of semiconductors based on US parts,

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<sup>60</sup> United Nations, ‘Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 March 2022, A/RES/ES-11/1’, New York, 2 March 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3965290> (accessed: 8 Aug. 2022).

<sup>61</sup> A. Coşkun, ‘Making the New U.S.-Turkey Strategic Mechanism Meaningful’, *Carnegie Endowment*, 12 May 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/05/12/making-new-u.s.-turkey-strategic-mechanism-meaningful-pub-87117> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>62</sup> The White House, ‘Remarks by President Biden on the United Efforts of the Free World to Support the People of Ukraine’, 26 March 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/03/26/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-united-efforts-of-the-free-world-to-support-the-people-of-ukraine/> (accessed: 8 Aug. 2022).

<sup>63</sup> US Department of State, ‘United with Ukraine. Sanctions’, <https://www.state.gov/united-with-ukraine/#sanctions> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

technology, or licensing to Russia is particularly important. This affects Russia's production capacity of automobiles, fighter aircraft, tanks, electronic warfare systems, missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, and other sophisticated manufactured products, mainly used by the army.<sup>64</sup> The United States also warned countries that did not join the sanctions, including China, that the supply of goods to Russia for military purposes would be met with a strong response in the form of sanctions against these countries.

Washington banned the import of Russian energy products and imposed restrictions on other exports from Russia.<sup>65</sup> Export controls on oil and natural gas extraction equipment were also introduced to limit the production capacity of the Russian mining industry. These activities aimed to cut off the Russian war machine from the main source of financing, i.e. energy resources. The US has also terminated the waiver of sanctions on Nord Stream 2, which is to prevent the finalization of a political project aimed at reducing the energy security of Ukraine and other countries in the region.

The leading architects of aggression against Ukraine were subject to sanctions – President Vladimir Putin, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov, Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Valery Gerasimov, and Kremlin Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov.<sup>66</sup> The US has also sanctioned hundreds of other Russian oligarchs and government officials and their family members. The sanctions included visa restriction as well as seizing their property, including yachts, luxury apartments, and mansions.<sup>67</sup> The sanctions imposed on the Russian elite are intended to make it difficult for them to use the property accumulated, often illegally, under the criminal Russian regime. It is also intended to encourage them to pressure the Putin regime to verify international policy, even though the chances are not high.

Along with the sanctions, several hundred American companies from various industries either suspended all investments or withdrew entirely from the Russian market. Among them are the world's leading enterprises, including: in gastronomy – McDonald's, Starbucks, Coca Cola, Pepsi; in finance – American Express, Visa, Mastercard, PayPal; in ICT – Microsoft, Apple, Intel, Dell; in automotive – General Motors, Ford; in aviation – Boeing, and many others. The products and services offered by these companies are part of the everyday life of people all over the world, including Russians. The withdrawal of these companies is primarily intended to pressure the Russians to verify their stance on the war in Ukraine.

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<sup>64</sup> B. O'Toole, D. Fried, 'Sanctioning Russia is a long game. Here's how to win', *Atlantic Council*, 24 June 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/sanctioning-russia-is-a-long-game-heres-how-to-win/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> US Department of State, 'United with Ukraine. Sanctions'.

<sup>67</sup> The White House, 'Remarks by President Biden on the United Efforts'.

Although the sanctions imposed on Russia by the US and the West are severe, Roberts claims they will not change Russia's attitude towards the war in Ukraine.<sup>68</sup> In addition, Russia has a great ability to avoid sanctions, and there are countries in the world that use this situation for their own interests, which helps Russia. This applies, inter alia, to the purchase of Russian raw materials, which are currently cheaper than those produced by other countries. Due to the increase in the prices of natural gas and crude oil, despite the reduction in exports of these raw materials, Russia continues to draw large profits from their sale. In the long run, the sanctions imposed by the West will cause serious economic problems in Russia. However, it is necessary to ensure that they are jointly and severally maintained and sealed.

### **American perspective for further assistance to Ukraine and ending the war**

After the war broke out, 75 per cent of Americans supported doing whatever was possible to help Ukraine, without risking a direct war between the US and Russia, and only 17 per cent supported the US doing whatever it could to help Ukraine, even if it provoked a war.<sup>69</sup> After nearly three months of the war, more Americans approved (45 per cent) than disapproved (34 per cent) of the Biden administration's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.<sup>70</sup> At present, the American authorities are determined to continue to support Ukraine significantly. However, there are people in the US Congress who use anti-Ukrainian rhetoric but are in a clear minority. An example is a young Republican congressman, Madison Cawthorn, who talks about Zelenskyy as a "thug". In the media, there are commentators, such as conservative Tucker Carlson, who question the legitimacy of Ukraine's defense, claiming that there is no benefit to the US.<sup>71</sup> Biddle is afraid that if Trump returns to power, there will be a radically less forceful US response to Russia.<sup>72</sup>

On 25 April 2022 in Poland, Secretary Austin said: "We want to see Ukraine remain a sovereign country, a democratic country able to protect its sovereign territory".<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Professor Cynthia Roberts.

<sup>69</sup> A. Durkee, 'Americans Overwhelmingly Don't Want US to Risk War With Russia in Aiding Ukraine, Poll Finds', *Forbes*, 16 March 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2022/03/16/americans-overwhelmingly-dont-want-us-to-risk-war-with-russia-in-aiding-ukraine-poll-finds/?sh=634e12757622> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>70</sup> Pew Research Center, 'Americans' Concerns About War in Ukraine: Wider Conflict, Possible U.S.-Russia Clash', 10 May 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/05/10/americans-concerns-about-war-in-ukraine-wider-conflict-possible-u-s-russia-clash/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Professor James H. Lebovic.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Professor Stephen Biddle.

<sup>73</sup> US Department of State, 'Secretary Antony J. Blinken and Secretary Lloyd Austin Remarks to Traveling Press', 25 April 2022, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-and-secretary-lloyd-austin-remarks-to-traveling-press/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).



At the same time, the administration of President Biden was in favor of negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, which indicated a preference for a compromise solution to the war.<sup>74</sup> US military support for Ukraine is to give Ukraine the strongest possible position at the negotiating table.<sup>75</sup> Currently, Ukrainians are declaring their struggle to complete victory. As Roberts pointed out, however, the question that should be asked is how this victory will be if Ukraine is devastated and bankrupt. Therefore: “we should consider various options for outcomes, and it will be up to Ukrainians how much blood and treasure they’re willing to put up”. In warning about Russia, she referred to the analogy of the Second World War, when the USSR faced the Nazi army, which was relatively much stronger than the modern Ukrainian army. With the great effort of the nation, with enormous waste, huge costs, very high own losses, and fatal mistakes made, the USSR was finally able to defeat the Nazis.<sup>76</sup> It should be noted, however, that at that time, the USSR had received support from the West, and today, it is Ukraine that receives considerable support. Nevertheless, even with the support of the West, it is not certain that Ukraine will be able to stop the Russian army, and if it does, the cost of it may be devastating.

In order to stop the increase in the number of victims on the Ukrainian side, President Zelenskyy began to allow the idea of making certain concessions to Russia. In the first months of the war, however, there was no breakthrough, as Russia was merely simulating the conduct of negotiations, hoping that it would be able to win the war and impose its own peace conditions on Ukraine. If, however, there are real negotiations, the decision on concessions should rest with the Ukrainian government. Possible concessions would certainly be a very difficult choice and could be opposed by some circles in Ukraine. The West, including the US, should not put pressure on the Ukrainian authorities to accept or reject specific provisions of the agreement. Such a decision should be a consequence of the Ukrainians themselves being convinced, which is or is not in their interest.<sup>77</sup> As stated by Richard K. Betts, if the war is not to go on indefinitely, it might be a necessary move for Ukraine to give up Crimea and Donbas in exchange for Russia’s stoppage of military operations and for international security guarantees.<sup>78</sup>

According to Stephen Sestanovich, it will be legitimate for Ukrainians to start serious negotiations with Russia only after Ukrainian forces push the Russians back to

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<sup>74</sup> M. Kalb, H.J. Aaron, ‘Is time on Ukraine’s side?’, *Brookings Institution*, 10 June 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/06/10/is-time-on-ukraines-side/> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>75</sup> W.B. Taylor, ‘The United States Speaks Clearly on Russia’s Ukraine War’, *USIP*, 3 June 2022, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/06/united-states-speaks-clearly-russias-ukraine-war> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Professor Cynthia Roberts.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Ambassador Steven Pifer.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Professor Richard K. Betts, Columbia University, New York, 28 April 2022.

the pre-invasion lines of February 23, or close to them. It would be a “genuine strategic defeat for Putin”, who would be forced to negotiate. Before that happens, agreeing to a difficult compromise would harm the unity of Ukraine, undermine Western unity, and strengthen Putin’s resolve. The United States should consistently support Ukraine in the liberation of the occupied territories.<sup>79</sup> With much more efficient equipment and training support from the US and the West, including the transfer of a sufficient number of the most advanced missile systems and traditional heavy equipment to the Ukrainian army, including tanks and aircraft, such a scenario could become possible.

As rightly pointed out by Roberts: “The most important thing is to be strong and firm, because the Russians, whoever is in the Kremlin, respect strength, so we should never be weak”.<sup>80</sup> In order to win in Ukraine, the United States, along with allies and partners, must dissuade Putin from hoping that Western unity will collapse under pressure from the high cost of energy and food, which is a consequence of sanctions. Then Putin will be forced to start looking for an exit strategy.<sup>81</sup> Lebovic believes that as long as Putin remains in power in Russia, the war in Ukraine will not end, because he will try to scare the escalation and will go as far as possible.<sup>82</sup> James Goldgeier said: “The message to Russia should be very clear: as long as Putin is in power and threatens us all, the West has no choice, but to keep in place punishing economic sanctions and to try to help the Ukrainians defend themselves as much as possible... we really don’t have a choice because we can’t afford to have Putin threatening Europe, the way he has in the past”.<sup>83</sup> According to Betts, good relations with Moscow are unlikely unless there is a revolution in Russia, but a satisfactory peace agreement may be achieved even with the Putin government.<sup>84</sup> There is, in principle, agreement among American researchers that the attitude towards Russia should be tough and firm. On the other hand, most of them allow the possibility of negotiation and seeking a compromise. Negotiations, however, cannot be conducted under the Russian pressure of escalating the conflict and intimidating the West. Moreover, both sides would have to be ready to make concessions, and the final decision on accepting its terms would rest with Kyiv and Moscow. There is no doubt that the negotiating position of the parties will mainly depend on the situation on the front. Therefore, Ukraine needs unwavering and decisive support from the US and the West.

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<sup>79</sup> S. Sestanovich, ‘Ukraine Should Wait on Cease-Fire Talks With Russia. Here’s Why’, *CFR*, 24 May 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/ukraine-should-wait-cease-fire-talks-russia-heres-why> (accessed: 10 Aug. 2022).

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Professor Cynthia Roberts.

<sup>81</sup> S. Sestanovich, ‘Ukraine Should Wait’.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Professor James H. Lebovic.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Professor James Goldgeier, American University, Washington DC, 16 May 2022.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Professor Richard K. Betts.

## Conclusion

By carrying out a full-scale aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, Russia broke the basic principles of international law, including the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. Thus, President Putin challenged the West, hoping that it could be intimidated and divided, and thus would not be able to effectively defend these values and Ukraine itself. To prolong the dominance of the democratic West in the world in the face of increasing pressure from authoritarian powers, the United States took the lead in response to Russian aggression, which it deemed unjustified and unprovoked. The US is an undisputed leader of Ukraine's military support. The weapons it provides allow the Ukrainian army to hold back or at least slow down the aggressor's forces. For Ukraine to be able to conduct an effective counter-offensive and liberate the occupied territories, military aid from the US and the West would have to be much larger and delivered faster. However, the US is held back by several reasons, including the fear that Russia might escalate the conflict, the need to simultaneously strengthen the security of NATO allies, and the necessity to maintain combat readiness in the event of increased tensions in relations with its main strategic rival – China. The sanctions imposed on Russia are aimed at the long-term effect of weakening Russia, so that it cannot rebuild the military potential that is being exhausted in Ukraine. In the coming months, they will not be able to force the Kremlin to change its policy towards Ukraine. US actions against Russian aggression are aimed at preventing the defeat of Ukraine and creating the best possible negotiating position for it when there is a stalemate on the battlefield.

## Abstract

The aim of the paper is to analyze and evaluate the response of the United States to Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2022. It covers the first six months of US action in the wake of the war. The main research problem is whether the manner of the United States' response and its scale were adequate to effectively support Ukraine in defending against Russian aggression, maintaining state sovereignty, and also preventing the conflict from spreading to NATO countries. The main hypothesis assumes that the directions of the actions implemented by the United States were justified, and they diametrically contributed to supporting the defense of Ukraine. However, the increase in military aid to Ukraine was too slow, which prevented its army from carrying out a full-scale counter-offensive that would have allowed it to liberate all the occupied territories. The sanctions imposed on Russia have significantly increased the costs of the war, but so far, they have not been able to force the Kremlin to change its policy towards Ukraine. Due to the American support of defense and deterrence on NATO's eastern flank, and Russia's military difficulties as a consequence of the support of Ukraine by the US and its allies, Russia does not have the potential to effectively escalate the conflict to NATO countries. The paper was written on the basis of interviews conducted by the author with researchers from selected universities and think tanks located in Washington, DC, and New York. The content of documents and other sources issued by American state institutions and international organizations, as well as the content of expert opinions of leading think tanks from Washington DC and New York, were also examined.

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