The Hague Centre
for Strategic Studies

How wars end

War terminations: insights for the Russia-Ukraine War

Tim Sweijs and Mattia Bertolini

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Introduction

How do wars end? As the Russia-Ukraine war enters its third month, the fighting continues unabated. Despite staggering military losses and enormous human suffering, the war's termination is not yet in sight. The Ukrainian people and their President Zelensky are determined to defend their country. They even have hopes of pushing back the Russian forces to their pre-war positions. Russia meanwhile seems intent on consolidating its gains and expanding control over eastern Ukraine, and perhaps more. The outcome will no doubt be partially dictated by how things turn out on the ground, in the open lands of the Donbas. But absent any decisive Waterloo type of Battle, whether parties continue the war – or even escalate it – is determined by factors that transcend the battlefield, including their perceptions of prospects of victory, military, economic and humanitarian costs, international and domestic pressure, and faith in any post war settlement. This note considers what we can learn from war terminations in the past: how long they last, how they end, whether they relapse, what factors contribute to their end, and what this implies for the Russia-Ukraine war.

Every war must end:[1] insights on war termination

How and when have wars ended in the past and what can they tell us about war termination? In the period 1946-2005, 63 interstate wars have been recorded globally.[2] Only about one fifth (21%) of them had a decisive outcome in which one party ended up as the victor and the other as the loser (i.e., total victory/defeat). Almost one third (30%) of these wars ended in a ceasefire, while only one sixth (16%) were concluded with a peace agreement. The remaining cases had an outcome without clear victory/defeat nor any type of peace settlement. (see figures on the next page).[3] Worryingly, of the negotiated peace agreements between 1975 and 2018 almost four out of ten (37%) broke down following a reignition of the war between the same parties. Moreover, more than three quarters (76%) of the peace agreements that broke down did so within two years, 12% lasted for two to five years, and another 12% lasted for more than five years but eventually broke down.[4] Wars that end in a tie as opposed to a decisive victory, where both sides share an acrimonious history, and where one side's existence is threatened, are significantly more likely to be repeated.[5] Clearly, an initial ceasefire agreement between Russia and Ukraine does not mean an end to the war.

An important mitigating factor in the prevention of renewed conflict is a so-called 'thick' peace agreement. These are peace agreements that contain formal and detailed agreements on peacekeeping contingents, demilitarised zones, and joint commissions for dispute resolution, and contain explicit third-party guarantees are more likely to last.[6] Any potential peace agreement between the Russia and Ukraine should take note of such measures to decrease the chance the conflict between the two sides will reignite.

1 Fred Charles Iklé, Every War Must End, 2nd rev. ed (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

2 For similar data on war terminations over the past 200 years, see Dan Reiter, *How Wars End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Virginia Page Fortna, *Peace Time: Cease-Fire Agreements and the Durability of Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

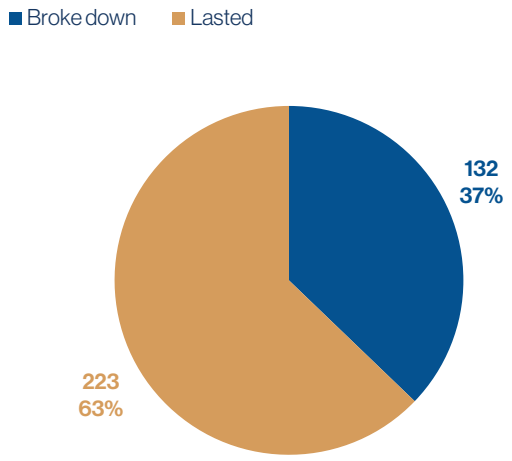
3 For example, one side may have chosen to withdraw for tactical purposes or fighting may have continued but did not reach the minimum of 25 battle-related deaths a year anymore, see Joakim Kreutz, 'How and When Armed Conflicts End: Introducing the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset', *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 2 (1 March 2010): 243–50, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343309353108.

4 Therése Pettersson and Magnus Öberg, 'Organized Violence, 1989–2019', *Journal of Peace Research* 57, no. 4 (July 2020): 597–613, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343320934986.

5 Virginia Page Fortna, 'Scraps of Paper? Agreements and the Durability of Peace', *International Organization* 57, no. 2 (2003): 337–72, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818303572046, p. 351.

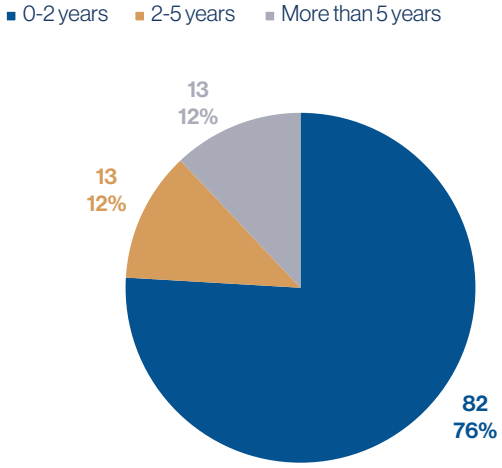
6 Fortna, p. 363.

Peace agreements
(1975-2018)



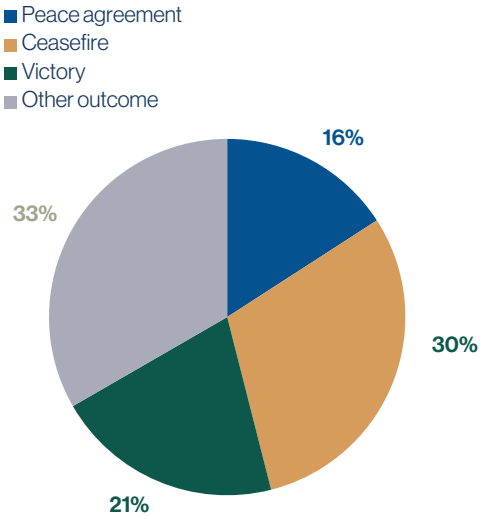
Pettersson, Therese; Stina Högbladh & Magnus Öberg (2019) Organized violence, 1989-2018 and peace agreements. Journal of Peace Research 56(4).

Peace agreements broke down within:
(1975-2018)



Pettersson, Therese; Stina Högbladh & Magnus Öberg (2019) Organized violence, 1989-2018 and peace agreements. Journal of Peace Research 56(4).

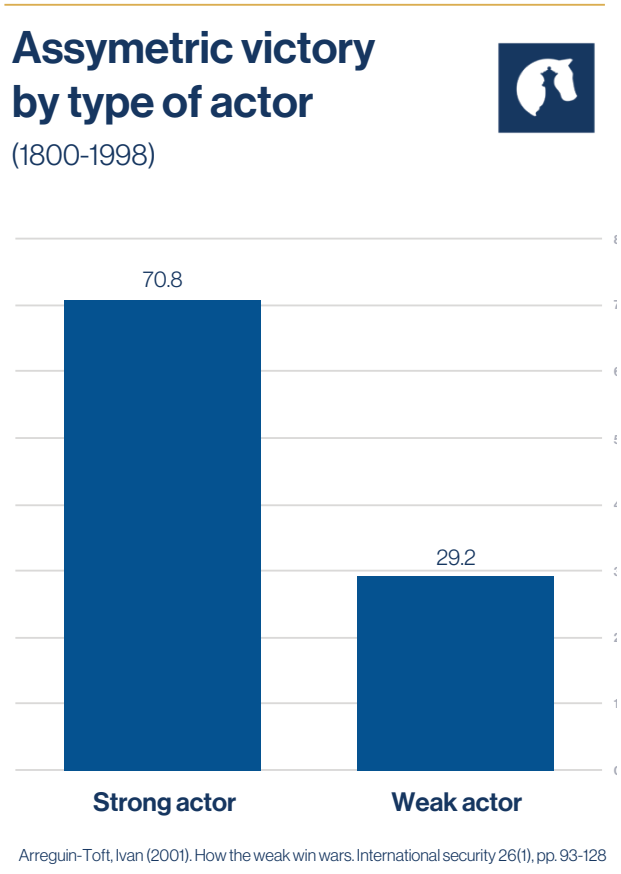
Interstate war outcomes
(1946-2005)



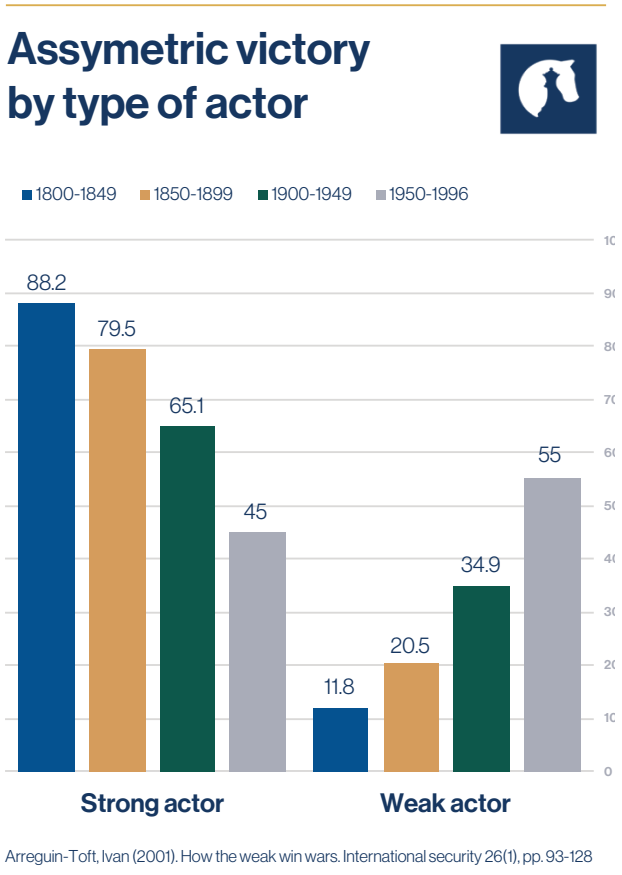
Kreutz, J. (2010). How and when armed conflicts end: Introducing the UCDP Conflict Termination dataset. Journal of Peace Research, 47(2), 243-250.

Figures 1, 2, and 3: Interstate war outcomes and peace agreements

Russian military equipment is both quantitatively and – at least on paper – qualitatively superior to that of Ukraine, which makes Ukraine a comparatively weaker actor in the conflict.[7] What are Ukraine's chances in its fight against the Russian armed forces? Between 1800 and 1998, in over 70% of the wars involving a strong and a weak actor, the strong actor won. In the other nearly 30% of cases the weak actor won or the war ended in a stalemate. Interestingly, over time a trend has emerged where asymmetric wars are less likely to be won by the stronger actor and have mixed outcomes (see charts below).[8] Recent asymmetric conflicts, such as the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan by the United States and the frozen conflict in Georgia, confirm this trend. The outcome to the Russia-Ukraine war is still uncertain, but Ukrainian persistent resistance to Russia's offensive campaign, bolstered by a group of more than 40 nations coordinating military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine,[9] does increase Ukraine's chances against the Russian armed forces, if not to defeat them than at least to create some sort of stalemate.



Arreguin-Toft, Ivan (2001). How the weak win wars. International security 26(1), pp. 93-128



Arreguin-Toft, Ivan (2001). How the weak win wars. International security 26(1), pp. 93-128

Figures 4 and 5: Asymmetric victory by type of actor

7 Jonathan Masters and Will Merrow, 'How Do the Militaries of Russia and Ukraine Stack Up?', Council on Foreign Relations, 4 February 2022, https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/how-do-militaries-russia-and-ukraine-stack.

8 Ivan Arreguin-Toft, 'How the Weak Win Wars', *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2001): 93–128.

9 John Ismay, 'A New U.S.-Led International Group Will Meet Monthly to Focus on Aiding Ukraine.', *The New York Times*, 26 April 2022, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/26/world/europe/lloyd-austin-ukraine-contact-group.html.

The conditions for war termination

There are two necessary conditions for the termination of war. First, the *culminating point* (*Kulminationspunkt*), formulated by Carl Von Clausewitz, stipulates the necessary precondition for a war to be brought to an end.[10] The point is reached when the attacking force in a military conflict can no longer sustain its advance, due to supply problems, the need for rest, or the opposing force. Whereas the goal of the attacker is to complete its objectives before this point is reached, the task of the defender is to lead the attacker to its *culminating point* before its objectives are achieved. Second, *ripeness*, set forth by I. William Zartman, lays out the conditions necessary for the initiation of negotiations between belligerents.[11] Two elements constitute a 'ripe' moment in a war, namely a *mutually hurting stalemate* (MHS) and a *way out*. A MHS occurs when the belligerents find themselves locked in a stalemate where absolute victory becomes unattainable, and the stalemate is painful to both parties. This, in turn, leads to both sides seeking a way out. No specific solution has to be identified, only an understanding that both parties share a sense and willingness to search for a negotiated solution.

Reaching the *culminating point* and the ripe moment in the Russia-Ukraine war depends on different factors that affect war termination. The existing war termination literature identifies the five following key parameters of influence on war termination:[12]

1. The **prospect of success/victory** as a function of the military balance of power between the parties and the attainability of the objectives set out by each party. When objectives seem unattainable through a continuation of a war, belligerents are incentivized to bring an end to the war.[13] It must be noted though that in some cases a low prospect of success does not always deter a state from continuing a war if the costs of ending the war are too high.[14]
2. The **human, economic, and military costs** of the war. The human costs of the conflict are measured in casualties, injuries and displacements (i.e., refugees). The economic costs of the conflict include all the economic ramifications that the war has on each side (e.g., GDP growth rate, interest rate, unemployment rate, government debt). The military costs of the conflict are measured in military casualties and loss or damage of military equipment. If

10 Carl von Clausewitz, On War, reissued, Oxford World's Classics (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

11 I. William Zartman, *International Conflict Resolution After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2000), https://doi.org/10.17226/9897.

12 Dan Reiter, *How Wars End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Steve Chan, 'Explaining War Termination: A Boolean Analysis of Causes', *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 1 (2003): 49–66; Ivan Arreguin-Toft, 'How the Weak Win Wars'; D. Scott Bennett and Allan C. Stam, III, 'The Duration of Interstate Wars, 1816-1985', *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 2 (1996); Fortna, 'Scraps of Paper?'; Virginia Page Fortna, *Peace Time: Cease-Fire Agreements and the Durability of Peace* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2004); Tansa George Massoud, 'War Termination' 33, no. 4 (1996): 491–96; Michaela Mattes and T. Clifton Morgan, 'When Do They Stop? Modeling the Termination of War', *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 21, no. 3 (July 2004): 179–93, https://doi.org/10.1080/07388940490487261.

13 Dan Reiter, *How Wars End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), chapter 3.

14 Chan, 'Explaining War Termination'; Kristopher W. Ramsay, 'Settling It on the Field: Battlefield Events and War Termination', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, no. 6 (1 December 2008): 850–79, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002708324593.

costs are high belligerents are incentivised to make concessions and reach for a settlement in the war.[15] Furthermore, wars with higher costs are often followed by more durable peace.[16]

3. The tangible **external pressure** exerted by the international community or third parties on the belligerents through, for example, mediation, intervention, or sanctions. The decision-making calculus to end or continue a war is shaped in part by the external pressure exerted on the warring states.[17] Most notably, third parties can exert pressure on client states to reach for a war settlement, such as for example in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and the 1956 Suez Crisis.[18]
4. The **internal pressure** exerted on the key decisionmakers on each side, measured through domestic public opinion, domestic political standing, and pressure exerted by political and military elites. Be it a major or minor power, a democracy or an autocracy, significant internal pressure creates conditions conducive to war termination and incentivise a leader to seek a negotiated settlement.[19]
5. The **positive incentives to reach a settlement** of the conflict for each party. Belligerents are less likely to reach for a war settlement if they are afraid a potential peace agreement would be violated by the other party. Specifically, a belligerent worried about a credible commitment problem (i.e., fear that a potential peace agreement will be violated) is more likely to seek a definitive resolution through the continuation of the war.[20] Positive incentives complemented by explicit third-party guarantees are more likely to push belligerents to reach a settlement at the negotiating table.[21]

In addition to an examination of the existing war termination literature and the existing quantative evidence, we coded eight wars, namely the First World War (1914-1918), the Second World War (1939-1945), the Korean War (1950-1953), The Suez Crisis (1956), the Gulf War (1990-1991), the Kosovo War (1998-1999), the Russian-Georgian War (2008), and the Azerbaijan-Armenian War (2021) according to these five parameters to get a better understanding of how these variables affect war termination.[22] What can these five parameters tell us about the prospects of war termination in the Russia-Ukraine conflict?

15 Tansa George Massoud, 'War Termination' 33, no. 4 (1996): 491–96, p. 492; Reiter, *How Wars End*, p. 16.

16 Virginia Page Fortna, 'Scraps of Paper? Agreements and the Durability of Peace', *International Organization* 57, no. 2 (2003): 337–72, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818303572046, p. 351.

17 Tansa George Massoud, p. 492.

18 Fortna, 'Scraps of Paper?', p. 359.

19 Mattes and Morgan, 'When Do They Stop?'

20 Reiter, *How Wars End*, p. 5.

21 Fortna, 'Scraps of Paper?', p. 359.

22 See annex 1 for a table with each war coded according to the five parameters.

The end of the Russia-Ukraine war is not yet in sight

Following the repeatedly failed peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, the prospects of a quick end to the war remain slim for now. Initially, the *culminating point* seemed near for the Russian attack, which was mired in supply problems and unable to break through to Kiev.[23] However, Russia has adopted more limited war objectives and continued the war in eastern and southern Ukraine.[24] Moreover, the 'ripe' moment in the Russian-Ukraine war to terminate the war is at this point not within reach. Both the Russian offensive and Ukrainian defensive campaigns are progressing but failing to bring about a mutually hurting stalemate that would induce both parties to seek a way out through peace negotiations. Both parties will first see through the ongoing Russian offensive campaign in eastern Ukraine before continuing any ceasefire negotiations.[25] A closer look at the variables of influence on war termination below confirms that peace is not yet in sight:

1. Both sides still believe in success on the battlefield

Although the initial military *balance of power* was clearly estimated by analysts to be in Russia's favour,[26] an assessment of the Russian offensive campaign to date has shown Russian attacks in Ukraine facing serious difficulties. Russian forces are continuously faced with logistical challenges, mounting casualties, and sustained Ukrainian counterattacks.[27] Russia's offensive in eastern Ukraine is making limited progress.[28] Moreover, the recent sinking of Russian flagship the Moskva,[29] fire at a key Russian defence research institute followed by a fire at one of Russia's largest chemical plants,[30] and reports of an attack at a

23 'Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, March 12', Institute for the Study of War, 12 March 2022, https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-12.

24 'Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, April 19', Institute for the Study of War, 19 April 2022, 19, http://dev-isw.bivings.com/.

25 'Ukraine Invasion Update 23', Institute for the Study of War, 15 April 2022, https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/ukraine-invasion-update-23.

26 Jonathan Masters and Will Merrow, 'How Do the Militaries of Russia and Ukraine Stack Up?'

27 'Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, March 12'.

28 'Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, April 24', Institute for the Study of War, 24 April 2022, http://dev-isw.bivings.com/.

29 Julian E. Barnes and James Glanz, 'Prized Russian Ship Was Hit by Missiles, U.S. Officials Say', *The New York Times*, 15 April 2022, sec. U.S., https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/15/us/politics/russia-moskva-ship-sunk-ukraine.html.

30 Martin Farrer, 'Seven Die in Fire at Russia Defence Institute – Reports', *The Guardian*, 22 April 2022, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/22/die-in-fire-at-russia-defence-institute.

key Russian oil depot near the Ukrainian border,[31] indicate that Russian (military) targets on Russian territory are now also being targeted. However, these setbacks have only led Russia to readjust its war strategy and has reportedly led Putin to harden his stance and lose interest in any diplomatic effort to end the war.[32] On the other side, Ukrainian successful resistance to the Russian offensive campaign has incentivised President Zelensky to continue the war. Moreover, the recent announcement by a group of over 40 countries to coordinate miliary and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, including the supply of heavier military equipment,[33] is likely to further embolden Ukrainian resistance.

2. The increased costs of war have led both sides to readjust their war aims

The costs of the war are rapidly increasing for Russia. The military costs for Russia are significant. The U.K. estimates that around 15,000 Russian troops have been killed in in the conflict while over 2,000 armoured vehicles have been destroyed, in addition to 60 helicopters and fighter jets.[34] Wounded who cannot immediately return to battle are usually twice the number of dead.[35] This would mean that Russian troops may have incurred 45,000 battle-related casualties at this point. The economic costs of the war for Russia are more difficult to estimate. In the early stages of the war the Russian rubble lost more than one-third of its value compared to the US dollar followed by a crash of the Russian stock market. However, the initial shock to the Russian economy seems to have subsided. The value of the rubble has increased to its pre-war levels, the stock market has stabilised, Russian bonds in foreign currencies are able to be paid off, and the initial run on banks has ended. Even though the Russian government has been able to stabilise the economy in the short term, experts project that Western sanctions will have significant impact on the Russian economy in the middle- to long term. If the sanctions are maintained and expanded the Russian GDP will realistically decrease by an estimated 8.5% by the end of the year.[36] The increasing costs of the war have led Russia to readjust its war objectives by focussing their offensive campaign the Donbas region.[37]

The human, economic, and military costs have undoubtedly been extremely high for Ukraine. The UN has recorded an estimated 5,718 Ukrainian civilian casualties since the start of the war, an estimate which is likely to be much higher in reality.[38] Moreover, over five million Ukrainians have fled the country.[39] The economic costs are also very high. The World Bank estimates

31 'Fire Engulfs Key Russian Oil Depots Near Ukraine', *The Moscow Times*, 25 April 2022, https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/04/25/fire-engulfs-key-russian-oil-depot-near-ukraine-a77477.

32 Max Seddon and Henry Foy, 'Vladimir Putin Abandons Hopes of Ukraine Deal and Shifts to Land-Grab Strategy', *Financial Times*, 24 April 2022, https://www.ft.com/content/a16c4ecd-e835-4e71-a12d-c7bec9f34d7c.

33 Ismay, 'A New U.S.-Led International Group Will Meet Monthly to Focus on Aiding Ukraine.'

34 'Russian Casualties in Ukraine: Reaching the Tipping Point', CSIS, 31 March 2022, https://www.csis.org/analysis/russian-casualties-ukraine-reaching-tipping-point.

35 'Russian Casualties in Ukraine'.

36 'Russian Federation', IMF, 11 April 2022, https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/RUS.

37 'Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, April 16', Institute for the Study of War, 16 April 2022, https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-16.

38 'Ukraine: Civilian Casualty Update 25 April 2022', OHCHR, 25 April 2022, 25, https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2022/04/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-25-april-2022.

39 'Ukraine Refugee Situation', UNHCR, 3 April 2022, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine.

that the Ukrainian GDP will fall by an estimated 45% in 2022.[40] The Ukrainian government estimated on the 28th of March that the total economic damage of the war would exceed 565 billion US dollars.[41] Little is known about the costs incurred by the Ukrainian military, but they are undoubtedly very high. The high human, economic, and military costs for Ukraine have, however, not led Ukraine to make concessions on its core interests but has instead hardened its resolve. President Zelensky has repeatedly stated that "there will be no compromise on sovereignty and our territorial integrity".[42]

3. External (Western) pressure on Russia is high, but fails to induce war termination

Western countries have imposed unprecedented sanctions on Russia by banning various Russian banks from the SWIFT banking system, freezing billions of dollars in assets, and the closure of airspace to Russian aircraft amongst other things. Currently, the European Union is even drafting a phased import ban on Russian oil.[43] NATO has also increased its military activities and strengthened its operations in eastern Europe. Moreover, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has received extensive diplomatic condemnation. President Biden recently stated that Russia is committing 'genocide' in Ukraine.[44] However, the external pressure on Russia has not incentivised Putin to seek a war settlement. The continued export of Russian gas to the European Union has dampened the effectiveness of Western sanctions on Russia. Moreover, various non-Western countries, notably China, India, Iran, Pakistan, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates, have not joined the West in its economic sanctions against Russia,[45] and have repeatedly backed Russia in the UN.[46] Continued trade between these countries and Russia has softened the blow of the economic sanctions on the Russia and dampened the external pressure exerted on Russia.

Ukraine, on the other hand, has received extensive diplomatic support. A vast majority of the UN General Assembly voted to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and called for its

40 'Russian Invasion to Shrink Ukraine Economy by 45 Percent This Year', Text/HTML, World Bank, 10 April 2022, https://doi.org/10/russian-invasion-to-shrink-ukraine-economy-by-45-percent-this-year.

41 'Direct Damage Caused to Ukraine's Infrastructure during the War Has Already Reached Almost $63 Billion. Global Economic Losses Are about $543–600 Billion', *Kyiv School of Economics* (blog), 24 March 2022, https://kse.ua/about-the-school/news/zbitki-naneseni-infrastrukturi-ukrayini-v-hodi-viyni-skladayut-mayzhe-63-mlrd/.

42 'There Can Be No Compromise on Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity – Zelensky', Ukrinform, 30 March 2022, https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-polytics/3443450-there-can-be-no-compromise-on-sovereignty-and-territorial-integrity-zelensky.html.

43 Matina Stevis-Gridneff, 'Europe Reluctantly Readies Russian Oil Embargo', *The New York Times*, 14 April 2022, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/14/world/europe/european-union-oil-embargo-russia-ukraine.html.

44 Victoria Kim, 'President Biden Accuses Russia of Committing Genocide in Ukraine.', *The New York Times*, 13 April 2022, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/13/world/europe/biden-russia-genocide-ukraine.html.

45 Mujib Mashal, 'India Says It's in Talks with Russia about Increasing Oil Imports.', *The New York Times*, 15 March 2022, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/15/world/europe/india-russia-oil-imports.html; Joe Webster, 'China Deepens Economic Ties with Russia as Western Sanctions Bite', SupChina, 24 March 2022, https://supchina.com/2022/03/24/china-deepens-economic-ties-with-russia-as-western-sanctions-bite/; Martin Chulov and Joanna Partridge, 'Dubai Throws Open the Doors for the Rich Russians Escaping Sanctions', *The Observer*, 26 March 2022, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/26/dubai-throws-open-the-doors-for-the-rich-russians-escaping-sanctions.

46 Julian Borger, 'UN Votes to Condemn Russia's Invasion of Ukraine and Calls for Withdrawal', *The Guardian*, 2 March 2022, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/02/united-nations-russia-ukraine-vote.

withdrawal.[47] Diplomatic support has been reinforced through economic sanctions on Russia, as well as military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine with the new U.S.-led international group of over 40 countries committed to the provision of military equipment and humanitarian aid to Ukraine providing Ukraine a necessary lifeline.

4. There are signs of internal pressure on Putin, but public support remains high

It is difficult to gage the sentiment on the war inside the Kremlin. However, there are signs that disagreement exists amongst key decisionmakers in Russia on the war, for instance the detention of a high-ranking Russian spy.[48] However, a recent poll by an independent Russian pollster shows that support for Vladimir Putin has significantly increased amongst the Russian population since the onset of the war.[49] The war in Ukraine seems to have created a *rally around the flag* effect, which could indicate that internal pressure on Putin is currently still limited. In Ukraine, public support for President Zelensky has surged since the start of the war, creating a similar effect.[50] Internal pressure to end the war on both leaders seems limited.

5. Both sides lack positive incentives to reach a negotiated settlement

Neither Ukraine nor Russia seem to have faith in the outcomes of a peace negotiation process. Ukraine seeks strong security guarantees in any new peace settlement given that past agreements, most notably the Budapest Memorandum (1994) and the Minsk agreements (2015), have been repeatedly violated.[51] President Zelensky and other Ukrainian officials have said to have little faith in the ongoing peace negotiations.[52] Some Ukrainian members of parliament consider the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine to be a 'smoke screen' to buy time.[53] Ukraine has requested security guarantees overseen by the interna-

47 Borger.

48 Warren P. Strobel and Michael R. Gordon, 'Reported Detention of Russian Spy Boss Shows Tension Over Stalled Ukraine Invasion, U.S. Officials Say - WSJ', *The Wall Street Journal*, 19 March 2022, https://www.wsj.com/articles/reported-detention-of-russian-spy-boss-shows-tension-over-stalled-ukraine-invasion-u-s-officials-say-11647687601.

49 Ivan Nechepurenko, 'Faced with Foreign Pressure, Russians Rally around Putin, Poll Shows.', *The New York Times*, 31 March 2022, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/world/europe/putin-approval-rating-russia.html.

50 The Kyiv Independent news desk, '70% Believe in Ukraine's Victory, 91% Support Zelensky', *The Kyiv Independent* (blog), 27 February 2022, https://kyivindependent.com/uncategorized/70-believe-in-ukraines-victory-91-support-zelensky/.

51 Andrew E. Kramer, 'What Are the Minsk Accords, and Could They Defuse the Ukraine Crisis?', *The New York Times*, 8 February 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/08/world/russia-ukraine-minsk-accords.html.

52 Volodymyr Zelensky, 'We do not believe anyone', Facebook, 30 March 2022, https://www.facebook.com/zelenskiy.official/videos/654652892502821/.

53 Mason Bissada, '"We Do Not Believe Anyone": Zelensky And Ukrainian Politicians Wary Of Russia's Withdrawal Claims And Peace Talks', *Forbes*, 30 March 2022, https://www.forbes.com/sites/masonbissada/2022/03/30/we-do-not-believe-anyone-zelensky-and-ukrainian-politicians-wary-of-russias-withdrawal-claims-and-peace-talks/.

tional community if a peace agreement with Russia were to be signed.[54] However, the will of the international community, especially NATO countries, to provide these security guarantees remains low. On the other hand, the mistrust of Russia towards the West and NATO is high. President Biden calling Putin a 'war criminal' and accusing Russia of committing 'genocide' in Ukraine have further damaged the diplomatic relations between Russia and the West.[55] There are no proposals from the Western side to lift sanctions if Russia ceases hostilities nor is there little prospect of such positive incentives given Russia's atrocities. Putin is unlikely to accept any provisions in a peace settlement that would include security guarantees for Ukraine by Western countries. Putin is reportedly not even interested to negotiate with Ukraine at all.[56] Therefore, both Ukraine and Russia are disincentivised to agree on a settlement at this point.

What comes next?

An assessment of the variables of influence on war termination indicate that an end of the war between Russia and Ukraine is not yet in sight. The readjustment of Russian war aims has pushed the *culminating point* further away. Moreover, the 'ripe' moment for war termination has not yet been reached as both parties are likely to see out the resolution of the Russian offensive campaign in eastern Ukraine before continuing any negotiations. First, both sides still believe in success on the battlefield, which incentivises the continuation of war. Second, the increasing economic and military costs on the Russian side have only led Russia to readjust its initial war objectives. Third, external (Western) pressure on Russia is high, but is dampened through continued export of Russian gas and the tacit support of its economy by non-Western countries. Fourth, internal pressure on Putin remains limited, disincentivising him from seeking a war settlement. Fifth, and final, both sides lack a positive incentive to reach a negotiated settlement and neither Ukraine nor Russia seem to have faith in guarantees to the outcome of a war settlement.

54 'During the Negotiations with Russia, the Ukrainian Delegation Officially Outlined Its Proposals for a New System of Security Guarantees for Our Country', Official website of the President of Ukraine, 29 March 2022, https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/na-peregovorah-iz-rosiyeyu-ukrayinska-delegaciya-ofici-jno-pr-73933.

55 Michael Crowley, 'U.S. Calls Putin a "War Criminal," but Consequences Are Unclear', *The New York Times*, 17 March 2022, sec. U.S., https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/17/us/politics/russia-ukraine-war-crimes.html; Kim, 'President Biden Accuses Russia of Committing Genocide in Ukraine.'

56 Seddon and Foy, 'Vladimir Putin Abandons Hopes of Ukraine Deal and Shifts to Land-Grab Strategy'.

Risks of escalation

Meanwhile, the current conflict once again highlights war's escalatory tendencies. What was intended as a Blitzkrieg campaign to capture Kiev and annex the country, has turned into a bloody war. Russia's reorientation of the war to eastern Ukraine by no means implies that a resolution to the Russia-Ukraine war is near. On the contrary, the war seems to be evolving and expanding. Recent attacks on Russian (military) targets indicate that the war is expanding to Russian territory. Over the course of just one week multiple attacks on Russian territory have been reported, most notably on Russian oil depots that fuel Russia's invasion of Ukraine,[57] in the Bryansk region that serves as a logistics base for Moscow's military campaign,[58] as well as on a weapons research centre, [59] a chemical plant with reported military uses,[60] and an ammunition depot.[61] No official cause of these incidents have been found, but Ukraine is likely to be behind them. Not only do these attacks on key Russian military infrastructure affect its capacity to sustain its military campaign, but the attacks also affect Russia's business model by targeting its oil reserves, and it is bringing the war to the Russian homeland. The U.S.-led group of over 40 countries coordinating military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, including the provision of heavy military equipment, will enhance Ukraine's ability to sustain the war.[62] But the war also has a real risk of escalating beyond Ukraine and Russia. A series of explosions in Transnistria, a Moscow-backed region in Moldova, have the risk of drawing the small European nation into the war.[63] American Foreign Minister Blinken following a visit to Kiev said that he wanted "to see Russia weakened to the point where it can't do things like invade Ukraine."[64] Moscow is increasingly vocal in its condemnation of the West's military support for Ukraine. Russia's Foreign Minister Lavrov accused NATO of engaging in a "proxy war" against Russia warning for dire consequences including the risk of nuclear weapons use and the start of World War III. Efforts to support Ukraine's attempt to protect its territorial integrity and to survive as a sovereign entity need to be matched with dedicated efforts to manage and control the risks associated with escalation.

57 Pjotr Sauer, 'Large Fires Break out at Russian Oil Depots', *The Guardian*, 25 April 2022, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/25/large-fires-break-out-russian-oil-depots-bryansk-near-ukraine-border.

58 Reuters, 'Russia Says Ukraine Helicopters Strike Homes in Cross-Border Attack', *Reuters*, 14 April 2022, sec. Europe, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-says-ukraine-fired-mortars-bryansk-border-post-2022-04-14/.

59 Farrer, 'Seven Die in Fire at Russia Defence Institute – Reports'.

60 Farrer.

61 Reuters, 'Russia Reports Blasts in South That Ukraine Calls Payback for Invasion', *Reuters*, 27 April 2022, sec. Europe, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/blasts-heard-russias-belgorod-regional-governor-2022-04-27/.

62 Ismay, 'A New U.S.-Led International Group Will Meet Monthly to Focus on Aiding Ukraine.'

63 'Where Is Transnistria and Why Is It Being Drawn into Ukraine War?', *The Guardian*, 27 April 2022, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/27/where-is-transnistria-and-why-is-region-being-drawn-into-ukraine-war.

64 https://time.com/6170616/russia-ukraine-world-war/

A ceasefire is not war termination

Even if at some point the two sides agree on a ceasefire, it is important to keep in mind that a ceasefire agreement does not mean an end to the war. First, ceasefires have a good chance of eventually breaking down.[65] Especially wars without an absolute war outcome (i.e., a total victory/defeat), where both sides share a history of conflict, and where one side's existence is threatened, are significantly more likely to be repeated.[66] All these factors are likely to apply to the Russia-Ukraine war, making any future ceasefire agreement between the two sides particularly precarious. Second, when the current active armed conflict will come to an end, absent any absolute victory for Ukraine, eastern Ukraine will remain a frozen conflict zone, similar to Abkhazia in Georgia, creating an environment of instability and insecurity. Moreover, a potential ceasefire agreement between Russia and Ukraine is likely to be violated due to miscommunication, miscalculations, and because both sides will want to strengthen their respective positions at the negotiation table for a potential peace agreement.

65 Fortna, Peace Time, p. 45-48; Reiter, How Wars End, p. 12.

66 Virginia Page Fortna, 'Scraps of Paper? Agreements and the Durability of Peace', *International Organization* 57, no. 2 (2003): 337–72, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818303572046, p. 351.

Recommendations

Our assessment of how wars terminate and what facilitates their ending provide the basis for the following recommendations to European policymakers. The objective is to bring an end to the current war on terms acceptable to Ukraine, avoid escalation into a wider conflict, and to lay the foundations for a durable peace afterward between Russia and Ukraine:

1. Continue to provide Ukraine with robust military and humanitarian assistance to enable Ukraine to end the war on acceptable terms including preservation of its sovereignty and avert more human suffering.
2. Keep putting pressure on Russia. Prepare for short term and longer term measures. Find alternatives sources of energy that can substitute Russian gas to further increase the pressure on the Russian economy. Incentivise non-Western countries through political or economic means to join the effort to put pressure on Russia.
3. Complicate Russia's ability to rearm by further stepping up efforts to cut of its supply of military relevant technologies for which it depends on external suppliers including semi-conductors, computers, and telecommunications technology.
4. Manage sources of escalation carefully. Watch out for potential escalation of the conflict outside of Ukraine. Reaffirm NATO's unity including NATO's commitment to Article 5 based on a robust deterrence posture. Prevent allies from engaging in behaviour that could trigger further escalation. Keep lines of communication with Moscow open.
5. Start thinking about and preparing for a 'thick' peace agreement inclusive of formal and detailed agreements on peacekeeping contingents, demilitarised zones, and joint commissions for dispute resolution, in the context of a larger post war security order. Include positive incentives for both parties to find a path out of this crisis once the conflict is ripe. Consider ways in which a peace agreement can be underwritten by external guarantees.

Annex 1: **War Termination – A Preliminary Assessment**

Based on the war termination literature, we identified five factors that influence war termination.[67] To gain a better understanding of how these five factors affect war termination, we selected a (non-representative) sample of eight wars. For each of these wars, we assessed the parameters and coded them on a 5-point scale (i.e., very low, low, medium, high, very high) based on an assessment of the analyst informed by a close reading of at least two secondary sources. (see Table 1 on the following page). Note that for reasons of limited time and resources we neither operationalised our 5-point scale nor did we fully write up and reference our assessments. The findings in the table are therefore neither exhaustive nor definitive. We nonetheless present them here as an illustration of our analytical approach for others to build on it should they wish to do so.

Table 1 Preliminary Coding of Eight Wars on five parameters that affect war termination

	Parameter 1: Military: Prospects of success/victory based on balance of power	Parameter 2: Cost: human, economic, military (impact)	Parameter 3: External Pressure: International mediation/ intervention, third party behavior (pressure exerted)	Parameter 4: Internal Pressure: Public opinion, domestic political standing, military elite	Parameter 5: Positive Incentives for Settlement
Case 1: First World War (1914-1918)	Low (Central Powers) High (Allied Powers)	Very high (Central Powers) Very high (Allied Powers)	High (Central Powers) Very low (Allied Powers	Very high (Central Powers) Medium (Allied Powers)	Very high (Central Powers) Very high (Allied Powers
Case 2: Second World War (1939-1945)	Low (Axis Powers) High (Allied Powers)	Very high (Axis Powers) Very high (Axis Powers)	High (Axis Powers) Very low (Allied Powers)	Medium (Axis Powers) Low (Allied Powers)	Very high (Axis Powers) Low (Allied Powers
Case 3: Korean War (1950-1953)	Low (China/North Korea) Low (US/UN/South Korea)	Very high (China/ North Korea) High (US/UN/South Korea)	Low (China/North Korea) Low (US/UN/South Korea)	Medium (China/North Korea) Medium (US/UN/ South Korea)	High (China/North Korea) High (US/UN/South Korea)
Case 4: Suez Crisis (1956)	High (Israel, France, UK) Low (Egypt)	Medium (Israel, France, UK) High (Egypt)	Very high (Israel, France, UK) Very low (Egypt)	High (Israel, France, UK) Very low (Egypt)	High (Israel, France, UK) Low (Egypt)
Case 5: Gulf War (1990-1991)	Very low (Iraq) Very high (Coalition forces)	Medium (Iraq) Very low (Coalition forces)	Very high (Iraq) Very low (Coalition forces)	High (Iraq) Very low (Coalition forces)	Medium/High (Iraq) Low (Coalition forces)
Case 6: Kosovo War (1998-1999)	Very low (FRY) High (Kosovo/NATO)	High (FRY) Low (Kosovo/NATO)	Very high (FRY) Low (Kosovo/NATO	High (FRY) Low (Kosovo/NATO)	Very high (FRY) Medium (Kosovo/NATO
Case 7: Russia – Georgia War (2008)	Very high (Russia) Very low (Georgia)	Very low (Russia) Low (Georgia)	Very low (Russia) Very low (Georgia)	Very low (Russia) Medium (Georgia)	Very low (Russia) High (Georgia
Case 8: Armenia – Azerbaijan War (2021)	High (Azerbaijan) Low (Armenia)	Very low (Azerbaijan) Low (Armenia)	Very Low (Azerbaijan) Very Low (Armenia)	Very low (Azerbaijan) Medium (Armenia)	Very low (Azerbaijan) Low (Armenia)

67 Reiter, How Wars End; Chan, 'Explaining War Termination'; Ivan Arreguin-Toft, 'How the Weak Win Wars'; D. Scott Bennett and Allan C. Stam, III, 'The Duration of Interstate Wars, 1816-1985'; Fortna, 'Scraps of Paper?'; Fortna, *Peace Time*; Tansa George Massoud, 'War Termination'; Mattes and Morgan, 'When Do They Stop?'

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