FRONTLINES OF TRANSFORMATION

UKRAINE AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN SECURITY



Victoria Vdovychenko

Ukrainian Voices, vol. 115

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Victoria Vdovychenko

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With a foreword by Brendan Simms

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Victoria Vdovychenko

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Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über http://dnb.d-nb.de abrufbar.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at http://dnb.d-nb.de.

ISBN (Print): 978-3-8382-2183-0
ISBN (E-Book [PDF]): 978-3-8382-8183-4
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Leuschnerstraße 40
30457 Hannover
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Printed in the EU unless stated otherwise on last page.

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Acknowledgements

This experimental monograph is an attempt to present a more in-depth analysis of the policy papers and book chapters published as part of my work as co-Director of the Future of Ukraine Program, Center for Geopolitics, University of Cambridge. Chapter 1 reprints my book chapter in the "Euromaidan" book by Hurst Publishers (2026). Legal permission to reprint was granted for this series.

A special acknowledgment goes to the Unmanned System Forces of Ukraine, the Armed Forces of Ukraine; Tetiana Khutor, Institute of the Legislative Ideas; Yulia Ziskina, Razom for Ukraine; Captain (N) Kurt Engelen, Center for Security and Defense Studies; Ian Ralby, Auxilium Worldwide; Andriy Klymenko, Institute for Black Sea Strategic Studies; Svitlana Musiiaka, Anti-Corruption and Defense Expert; Andriy Klymosiuk, Institute of the Legislative Ideas; Yulia Usenko, All-Ukrainian Sustainable Development & Investment Agency; Kai Schlegel, military expert; Manuel Pohl, military expert; Andrea Marchesetti, EPIK, Sir Lawrence Freedman; Edward Lucas.

This monograph would not have been possible without the generous support, expertise, and cooperation of many institutions across academia, government, parliaments, and civil society.

I am deeply grateful to Ambassador Valeriy Zaluzhnyy, the Embassies of Ukraine in the United Kingdom, Georgia, Lithuania, and Italy, and the Permanent Missions of Ukraine to NATO and the European Union. I also wish to thank the Department of Public Diplomacy of Ukraine at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine, the National Defense University of Ukraine, and the Central Research Institute of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. My warm regards go to Senator Giulio Terzi (Italian Senate), Dame Nia Griffith (House of Commons), and Baroness Julie Smith (House of Lords) for their engagement and support.

I am indebted to colleagues at the George C. Marshall Center for European Security, the Egmont Institute, the Swedish Defense University, the Norwegian Institute for Social Research, Université catholique de Louvain, KU Leuven, the University of Tor Vergata (in particular, Andrea Romano), LUISS Guido Carli University, Vytautas Magnus University, Catholic University Lublin, St Andrews University, and King's College London, including the Royal College of Defense Studies. I also gratefully acknowledge the Center for Defense Strategies, the Center for Russian Studies, the Council on Geostrategy, and American Councils for International Education in Ukraine.

The empirical foundations of this monograph reflect the insights and assistance of Ukrainian municipal leaders and communities. I am particularly grateful to the Vinnytsia City Council, especially to Serhii Morgunov, Vladyslav Skalskyy, and Andrii Ocheretnyy, as well as to the Mykolaiv, Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhzhia, and Sumy City Councils. I also wish to thank Strategy XXI, Razom for Ukraine, Ukraine-Britain Business Council, and B4Ukraine.

Finally, I warmly thank Ukrainian MPs for their expert efforts.

I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding support provided by Gonville & Caius College, University of Cambridge (in particular, Master Richard Gilbertson, Dr Anita Bunyan), the Center for Geopolitics (in particular, Brendan Simms), Department of Modern and Medieval Languages and Literature, University of Cambridge; the NATO Defense College, and all other colleagues and partners.

Abbreviations

AI	artificial intelligence
AIS	Automatic Identification System
C2	command-and-control
C6ISTAR	Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber Defense, and Combat Systems, integrated with Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance
C6ISR.IO	Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber Defense, and Combat Systems, integrated with Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance, and Information Operations
CRINK	China, Russia, Iran, North Korea
EDDI	European Drone Defense Initiative
ERMA	European Raw Materials Alliance
ESI	energy storage installations
EW	Electronic Warfare
EU	European Union
FPV	first-person view (drones)
FLOT	forward line of own troops
GRC	Ground Robotic Complexes
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
MARSUR	European Defense Agency's Maritime Surveillance
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
REE	rare earth element
RES	renewable energy sources
RF	Russian Federation
RFID	Radio Frequency Identification
RSC	Reconnaissance-Strike Complex
SECA	Sulfur Emission Control Areas
SPP	solar power plants
STS	ship-to-ship (transfer)
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (also known as drones)
UDCG	Ukraine Defense Contact Group
UGV	Unmanned Ground Vehicles
USV	Uncrewed Surface Vehicles (naval surface)
UUV	Uncrewed Underwater Vehicles
UMS	Uncrewed Maritime Systems (often used to group USVs and UUVs)
UxS	Unmanned Systems

Foreword

'Ask not what your country can do for you', President John F. Kennedy famously intoned during his inaugural address in January 1961, 'ask what you can do for your country'. Ever since Vladimir Putin's full-scale and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, many Europeans have been thinking about how to help that country resist Russian aggression. It is true that much has been done in that regard, for example through sanctions, economic and military aid, but not nearly enough.

In her remarkable new book, Dr Victoria Vdovychenko, my valued collaborator on the Centre for Geopolitics Future of Ukraine Programme, certainly does not want us to support Ukraine less. In fact, she highlights a number of ways we can do more. For example, Dr Vdovychenko points out how the UK might tighten its sanctions regime by closing loopholes and by improving its interception of Russia's 'shadow fleet' tankers.

But Dr Vdovychenko is really out to make a much bigger point. We should not only be asking how much more we can do for Ukraine, but also and more importantly what Ukraine can do for us. In particular, what can we learn from Ukraine? The time when Europe just 'gave', and Ukraine simply 'took', are long over. Here Dr Vdovychenko makes a compelling case that Ukraine should instead be reconceived as 'strategic partner' and its 'integration into Europe's defense and technological ecosystem' as 'indispensable to ensuring long-term continental security'.

Dr Vdovychenko is, among other things, and expert on maritime security, especially the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. As she points out, traditional naval paradigms have been completely upended by Ukraine, which has no navy to speak of, but whose drones and missiles have effectively forced the much Russian Black Sea fleet to remain in port for fear of being sunk.

More broadly, Ukraine has shown a phenomenal capacity to develop its drone and missile capacity under very adverse circumstances. As Dr Vdovychenko shows, the Ukrainian armed forces and defense industry operate a highly dynamic form of collaboration with feedback loops which cuts the time between learning from the battlefield and new equipment to a few weeks and sometimes a few days. This contrasts sharply with the cumbersome and sclerotic western procurement systems, which are fixated a on big-ticket 'legacy' items and have struggled to produce drones within an acceptable timeframe.

We would do well to learn these lessons, because as the author points out, while Russia is bogged down in Ukraine, it is constantly pushing the boundaries in the erst of Europe. Russian drones frequently violate Polish,

Estonian, Latvia, Lithuanian and Moldovan airspace. Denmark has been subject to signals jamming. Civil infrastructure has been damaged in Romania. And so on. There are regular Russian air and maritime provocations even around the British Isles. We need Ukraine in fact, at least as much as it needs us.

The author makes a series of concrete suggestions. For example, the EU could establish a program 'that integrates operational requirements, tactical experimentation, and technological development into a comprehensive force-modernisation strategy'. Countries like Sweden and Norway, instead of investing in 'legacy' surface vessels of dubious use might allocate the funds instead to a 'distributed network of uncrewed surface and underwater systems, offering greater strategic flexibility and survivability on contested maritime environments'. Dr Vdovychenko also recommends the setting up of a single EU body tasked with leading the tracking effort, to avoid national duplication. This would have to be given a more robust political mandate and rules of engagement.

The author is not blind to Ukraine's weaknesses, and she does try to minimise the trauma it is suffering. The country bleeds daily, under constant attack on its cities and infrastructure. As she argues persuasively two things are true at the same time. Ukraine is both a 'society enduring sustained destruction and material depletion' and 'a resilient, innovative, adaptive society'. The incredible performance of its armed services, economy and society has come at a terrible cost. Her point is that we are not only morally obliged to help but that it is in our self-interest to do so, and to allow Ukraine help us to become resilient, innovative, adaptive societies in or turn.

During the early years of the Soviet satellite German Democratic Republic, the authorities sued to declare that 'to learn from the USSR is to learn how to win'. That was not true, as we know, but we can say with confidence today that given the question-mark over the American commitment to our continent, Europe, including the United Kingdom, has no chance of prevailing unless it learns from Ukraine.

This penetrating work is the fruit of nearly three years of research, events and briefings organised by the author at the Centre for Geopolitics, University of Cambridge. I hope will find the widest possible audience. Her book charts Ukraine's transition from victim to actor, and from object to subject of European politics.

Professor Brendan Simms
Director of the Centre for Geopolitics
University of Cambridge
United Kingdom

Introduction

There is a persistent tendency in both academic and policy-related literature to present Ukraine as an object of transformation within European security debates: a state to be supported with reforms after independence, financed, guided and protected. This experimental monograph proceeds from a different logic. It presents how Ukraine has contributed to the transformation of the European security architecture from 2014 onwards, with the process continuing after February 2022.

Books like this one trace Ukraine's journey from the transformative Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity (Euromaidan) to its reconstitution as a country and nation despite the threats and implications of the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation. To substantiate this claim, the chapters that follow are written as policy-oriented analyses grounded in concrete decision-making processes: each is intended to be read by officials and legislators as much as by scholars, and each is anchored in a specific decision to be made. Collected together, their purpose is to demonstrate that Ukraine's transformative experience is not merely a source of lessons for others to learn gradually, but a body of tested practice that Europe's own security can draw upon immediately.

Methodologically, the chapters combine process tracing with comparative policy analysis and structured expert consultations conducted during 2024-2026. The evidentiary base draws on battlefield reporting and direct practitioners' accounts, some of which were presented at the experts' round tables and specialised conferences.

The book examines Ukraine's wartime transformation in defense and security, as well as its endurance, rooted in Ukrainian society's desire to be ingenious and innovative in order to endure and prosper. It illustrates how a state under high-intensity warfare can still innovate, reform, and contribute to European and transatlantic security, because Ukrainian adaptability, anchored in its will to survive, is the reason for its relative success in the unprovoked war launched by Russia.

To situate Ukraine's path of transformation, I turn to the global context in which it has unfolded. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine constitutes the most extensive armed conflict on European soil since the Second World War, marked by large-scale land operations and sustained aerial and missile bombardment on a scale unseen since 1945. In response, European governments, including European NATO countries, have substantially reoriented their military and economic support for Ukraine, imposed economic sanctions on Russia, revised collective defense planning within

NATO, and expanded the EU's security and defense role[1]. Finland and Sweden abandoned decades of military non-alignment to join the Alliance[2].

European and global academia adopted the view, that strategy operates through 'scripts' that set agendas and translate ideas, theories, and objectives into practical outcomes. Unlike the dramatist's script, the strategist's script is a point of departure (the concept presented by Freedman)[3]. However, it remains inherently susceptible to social processes of interaction, construction, and constitution, through which the script revises the original formulation. This is equally true for the Russian Federation's strategic and ideological steps, as well as for the Ukrainian approach to overcoming it.

The Russian Federation sees violence as a means of coercion, as a way to instil fear and to force adversaries to comply with demands. More than 200 rounds of Russia-Ukraine negotiations since 2014 confirm that Russia views compromise as weakness, using concessions solely to buy time, rebuild military capabilities, strengthen authoritarian alliances, and ultimately resume violence until its objectives are fully achieved. An unjust peace deal, propped up by hollow security assurances, risks leaving Ukraine 'empty-handed' and challenged hybrid subjugation by Russia via political and economic coercion once global attention shifts to new crises[4].

> "You rightly do not want another Budapest Memorandum or a Minsk Agreement... Direct talks are now underway and this is important progress. But Russian attacks like those last night, do not signal seriousness about peace." (Mark Rutte, NATO Secretary General, Address to the Verkhovna Rada, 3 February 2026)

The period from 2022 to 2024 was marked by considerable coordination among the EU, European NATO member states and the US. Under the Biden administration, the United States and its European partners prioritised economic, financial and military support for Ukraine. However, 'Too little, too slow': that's how Ukrainian and European scholars later characterised this period. Fear of 'escalation' dominated public debate, suggesting

1 Cottey, A., Cladi, L., & Ewers-Peters, N. M. (2025). Introduction: the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine and the re-making of the European security order. *Defense Studies*, *25*(4), 759–778. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2025.2577333

2 House of Commons Library. (2024, June 17). *NATO enlargement: Sweden and Finland* (Research Briefing No. CBP-9574). UK Parliament. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9574/

3 Freedman, L. (2015). *Strategy: A history* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. https://global.oup.com/academic/product/strategy-9780199325153

4 Davlinakova, E., Vdovychenko, V. (2025) Winning the Future: Strategies for Resilient Europe and Secure Ukraine. P. 6.

that European and US political leaders allowed the Russian Federation to establish escalation dominance, also through the use of 'reflexive control'[5]. There was also a lack of a theory of victory from Ukraine's partners: if victory is not defined and strategised, we are only helping Ukraine to forestall losses.

From early 2024 onwards, however, this consensus began to erode, particularly within a Republican-controlled US Congress increasingly divided over the scale and duration of continued assistance. The election of Donald Trump in November 2024 and his return to office the following January intensified this shift: the new administration sought an expedited end to the conflict, a reduction in American support for Ukraine, and a normalisation of relations with Moscow, especially after the Anchorage meeting[6]. While the first year of the second Trump administration suggested that these objectives would prove considerably more difficult to realise than anticipated.

In the course of 2025, several announcements have started to broach the terms for a new, more equitable relationship: a long-term economic partnership and critical mineral, technological licensing for PAC3 missiles, Ukrainian provision of interceptor drones to US and Gulf countries to protect against Iranian attacks and the provision of US targeting intelligence for Ukrainian deep-strike attacks against the Russian oil industry.

For fiscal year 2024, the Pentagon allocated $14.7 billion to the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, compared with $3.6 billion to the European Deterrence Initiative[7]. This China-first orientation intensifies competition for the United States' finite military resources and has prompted a corresponding reorientation of military production priorities, with a focus predominantly on the air, maritime, space, cyber, and technology domains. Washington's approach to reducing support for Ukraine raised pressing questions about whether European states and EU institutions could compensate for any resulting shortfall.

A comprehensive, scenario-based study conducted in 2019 by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) estimated that European states would need to invest up to $357 billion to build a force capable of addressing a serious Article 5 contingency in the Baltic region, absent

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5 Adamsky, D. (2023). *The Russian way of deterrence: Strategic culture, coercion, and war*. Stanford University Press. https://www.sup.org/books/politics/russian-way-deterrence

6 Lapham, J. (2025, August 10). *What to know about the Trump-Putin meeting in Alaska.* BBC News. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crev9ep2vdgo

7 U.S. Department of Defense. (2023, March 13). *Department of Defense releases the President's fiscal year 2024 defense budget* [Press release]. https://www.war.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3326875/department-of-defense-releases-the-presidents-fiscal-year-2024-defense-budget/

substantial US support[8]. However, the shift in 'defense spending' approach started to be present more consistently not only since 2022, but since 2025 with Donald Trump's presidency. Fear of a US disengagement from Europe has started to create a perception among European NATO allies that the military-strategic, operational, and threat environment is characterised by increasing multipolarity and strategic rivalry. One issue that European states thus face is how to prioritise investment in their own rearmament, spending meant to replace US capabilities, a great involvement in the defense of Ukraine, whilst keeping an eye on the "Chinese dragon".

The answer to this balancing exercise should not be to leave Ukraine dry, reverse sanctions, hoard scarce weapons systems in Western Europe or treat Ukrainian security as divergent from European security. Perhaps, it is about reshaping the rules of the game in the international order, shaped by uncertainty and instability[9]. States, their economies, and populations are all targets. The growing interconnectivity across geopolitical and geoeconomic 'theatres' demonstrates that building reliable and resilient partnerships will be a defining test during periods of disruption and radical transformation.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, followed by significant military and economic strain, created strong incentives for the Kremlin to seek new strategic partnerships, catalysing the formation of the 'CRINK' coalition. Although often described as an 'axis', it is more accurately characterised as a network of deepening bilateral relationships between the People's Republic of China (PRC), Russia, Iran, and North Korea, states that have become critical to sustaining the Russian war effort. As a series of predominantly bilateral relationships concentrated in the fields of security and defense, these ties can be characterised as pragmatic, enhancing the collective interests of the states involved, and challenging the prevailing international order while simultaneously increasing their resilience against free and open nations' efforts to constrain or deter their activities. Russia has functioned as a catalyst for this evolving network, becoming increasingly

8 Barrie, D., Barry, B., Béraud-Sudreau, L., Boyd, H., Childs, N., & Giegerich, B. (2019). *Defending Europe: Scenario-based capability requirements for NATO's European members*. International Institute for Strategic Studies. https://www.iiss.org/globalassets/media-library---content--migration/images/comment/military-balance-blog/2019/july/defending-europe---iiss-research-paper.pdf

9 Federal Ministry of Defense, Germany. (2026, April). The overall concept of military defense: Military strategy and plan for the armed forces. Responsibility for Europe. https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/6093998/678875025812878cfa657f9801f62ffc/dl-gesamtkonzeption-der-verteidigung-eng-data.pdf

dependent on its partners to advance its strategic objectives and operational requirements[10].

Ukraine suffers from an acute shortage of high-quality air defense systems even at the end of 2026. This deficiency has been exploited by Russia, which has sought to employ an increasing proportion of ballistic missiles on civilian infrastructure. Russia has launched dozens of North Korean ballistic missiles against Ukraine since late 2023, and the deployment of North Korean missile forces, as reported by Ukrainian intelligence, represents a further expansion of the already close military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang[11].

As for European partners, drone incursions over the EU and European NATO partners have become a new reality with limited response testing the limits of when 'hybrid warfare' can become a collective response. German Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt characterised the explosive-laden drone discovered at Leipzig Airport as indicative of 'a new level of danger' and a part of a more sophisticated 'hybrid attack scenario'[12].

One of the key questions in contemporary warfare is "What defines superiority? Quantity or quality?" The Ukrainian experience demonstrates that quality and quantity should not be at odds; they should be in synergy. Mass development and high technology increase effectiveness, but the war of the future will rely on low-cost technological systems combined with human resources and autonomous systems, cost-effectiveness optimisation, and the pursuit of maximum effect[13]. What the UK MOD calls a 'mix of high and low'.

However, the challenges for Ukraine also include how to become not only defensive but also offensive, considering that 'defense can ensure survival but never victory'. Thus, asymmetric and multi-front approaches in strategic, tactical and operational levels in Ukraine were viewed as a chance to reach for the strategic depth as an ability to conduct operations

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10 Theodoulou, G., & Vdovychenko, V. (2026). CRINK. In *GeoAtlas* (2nd ed., pp. 36–38). Council on Geostrategy.

11 A North Korean missile unit has begun deploying in Russia's Voronezh region, potentially equipped with six launchers and 120 ballistic missiles, of which Russia has already received 40 from North Korea. More: Reuters. (2026, August 5). *North Korean missile unit deploys in Russia for Ukraine war, Kyiv says*. https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/north-korean-missile-unit-deploys-russia-ukraine-war-kyiv-says-2026-08-05/

12 Deutsche Welle. (2026, August 5). *Germany: Leipzig explosive drone "new level of danger"*. DW. https://www.dw.com/en/germany-leipzig-explosive-drone-new-level-of-danger-minister/live-78241747

13 Lebedenko, A. (2026). Foreword. In Ministry of Defense of Ukraine & Central Research Institute of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Military innovations in contemporary warfare: Abstracts' collection (pp. 27–28). Lira-K. https://micw.mil.gov.ua/files/2026/MICW_2026_%20abstr_collect_fu

outside of the territory of Ukraine (GUR attacks against Russian military in Mali and bases in Western Libya, Kursk operation 2024-2025).

Volodymyr Horbulin, a prominent Ukrainian scholar, argues that asymmetry is the only viable strategy for Ukraine to overcome a much larger adversary in mass, particularly given the massive investment in technological innovations[14]. He claims that following the attack in 2019, in which the deployment of no more than a dozen explosive-laden unmanned aerial vehicles reduced Saudi Arabia's daily oil production by half, and the massed Turkish strike-drone offensive in Syria at the end of February 2020, resulting in the destruction of Syrian air defenses, it became evident that the world had entered a new technological phase[15]. The war between Azerbaijan and Armenia served only to confirm conclusions already reached: that the size of an army and its tank inventory are of negligible consequence in contemporary warfare. The Bayraktar TB2 drones, which Baku had procured from Ankara, enabled the Azerbaijani Armed Forces to achieve battlefield dominance[16].

> "The distance to a target or object of engagement will no longer matter. No point on the planet will remain safe" (Volodymyr Horbulin, Interview to the NV Radio, June 15, 2026).

In my childhood, I read in a book that before World War II the United States was not an aviation superpower, but the circumstances of the war changed everything. By 1944, a single factory, Willow Run, was rolling out a brand-new B-24 bomber every 63 minutes. At the time, such stories seemed to belong only in books, and I could never have imagined witnessing something similar firsthand in Ukraine. At the outset of the full-scale war, Ukraine had no serial drone production, which was the domain of a handful of enthusiasts. Since then, Ukraine has become a vast workshop of innovation, with the ambition to build a dedicated drone fleet and present a fully integrated ecosystem for its deployment (to be discussed further in the monograph). No, drones are not aircraft, and frontline workshops are not Ford factories. But Ukraine is also not the United States: our production operates under constant missile and drone strikes, and our engineers are developing new weapons quite literally on the edge of the battlefield.

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14 Horbulin, V., & Badrak, V. (2026). The war of the future: How the technologies of the Russian-Ukrainian War of 2022–2025 changed the battlefield. Bright Books.https://www.nas.gov.ua/en/news/viyna-maybutnogo-yak-tehnologi-rosiysko-ukransko-viyni-2022-2025-rokiv-zminili-pole-boyu-viyshla-nova-kniga-akademika-volodimira-gorbulina-i-valentina-badraka

15 Horbulin, V. (2021), P.10.

16 Horbulin, V (2021), P.12.

The global availability of AI-based technologies, together with automation and robotisation, will constitute the foundation of the new wave of geopolitical transformation and will require new technological alliances[17]. These processes have already begun and cannot be halted. Along with the war and the use of innovative technologies, military art is developing too. Compared with all previous centuries, we clearly see that modern warfare is characterised by the absence of a clearlymarked front line. Instead, to achieve both kinetic and non-kinetic objectives, more combined influence models are being used. Thus, the 'weaponisation of everything' is a clear characteristic of the XXI century, combining hard power with soft power tools[18].

Mario Draghi openly argues that open trade, cheap energy, and geopolitical stability have progressively eroded as the backbone of EU history and prosperity. Trade openness enabled the EU to import inputs freely while exporting specialised manufactures, but the multilateral trading system is now in crisis, with world trade growth projected well below its 2000-2019 average. Finally, the erosion of US-guaranteed geopolitical stability and deteriorating US-China relations, have ended Europe's separation of economic policy from security considerations[19]. For Ukraine and its European partners, the erosion of cheap energy and stable trade regimes has directly translated into the weaponisation of energy and critical minerals.

While the notion that 'economies win wars' holds true, especially given economic sanctions as a primary means of deterring Russia, it remains incomplete[20]. Wartime developments are increasingly becoming intertwined with the economic factors of the war. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has been at least as disruptive for the Gulf states as for European and Asian markets. Oil crises may prove as damaging to exporters as to importers. States routinely employ energy as an instrument of foreign policy and a form of hard power, deployed to inflict serious economic,

17 Chatham House. (2026, February 24). Ukrainian ambassador Valerii Zaluzhnyi says future wars will require 'technological alliances, not treaty articles' https://www.chathamhouse.org/2026/02/ukrainian-ambassador-valerii-zaluzhnyi-says-future-wars-will-require-technological

18 Galeotti, M. (2022). *The weaponisation of everything: A field guide to the new way of war*. Yale University Press. https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300270419/the-weaponisation-of-everything/

19 Draghi, M. (2024). *The future of European competitiveness* (Part A). European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/draghi-report_en

20 Davlinakova, E., Vdovychenko, V. (2025) Winning the Future: Strategies for Resilient Europe and Secure Ukraine. P. 7.

ecological, and physical harm[21]. This refers to energy in various forms: not only oil and gas, but also the mineral resources required for the technology. It also encompasses geography, particularly maritime transport routes, as a key concern within the geopolitics of energy. One evident example is the use of hundreds of oil vessels to circumvent sanctions on the Russian oil trade. By now, their sailing patterns, cargoes, and destinations have largely become matters of record. The Russian 'shadow fleet' and the wider weaponisation of energy form part of the same strategic landscape in which Europe now must operate. Ukraine hasn't been passive in receiving energy threats and acts as a reminder to other European nations of their own history of irregular warfare[22].

Thus, modern warfare is increasingly intertwined with the struggle for resources. The critical capabilities supplied by the United States but largely absent in Europe are extensive and well recognised: strategic enablers, long-range precision-strike assets, advanced intelligence and surveillance capabilities, resilient logistics, and effective missile defense, among others. Europe also suffers from an acute mass deficiency[23]. In practice, this means it lacks both qualitative and quantitative depth. Beyond capability shortfalls, Europe is constrained by limited battle-hardened manpower and weaknesses in command-and-control, artillery, missile inventories, and both air-to-air and air-to-ground capabilities.

A 2024 research study demonstrates that export controls remain effective in limiting access to many high-tech products[24]. Still,

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21 UN News. (2026, August 4). *Strait of Hormuz disruption hits energy, fertilizer and industrial trade*. United Nations. https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/08/1168074

22 Pancevski, B. (2026). *The Nord Stream conspiracy: The inside story of the explosions that shook the world*. Henry Holt and Co.

23 Spatafora, G. (2025, June). *Fit for purpose? Reforming NATO in the age of Trump 2.0* (Brief No. 13). European Union Institute for Security Studies. https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-06/Brief_2025_13_NATO%20and%20European%20defense.pdf; Some of examples in quantum technologies: Cho, D.-H., & Shagina, M. (2026, July 29). *Securing the quantum stack: Export controls, choke points and strategic competition*. International Institute for Strategic Studies. https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2026/07/securingg-the-quantum-stack-export-controls-choke-points-and-strategic-competition/;

24 Bilousova, O., Hilgenstock, B., Ribakova, E., Shapoval, N., Vlasyuk, A., & Vlasiuk, V. (2024, January). *Challenges of export controls enforcement: How Russia continues to import components for its military production*. KSE Institute. https://kse.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Challenges-of-Export-Controls-Enforcement.pdf; Yermak-McFaul International Working Group on Russian Sanctions. *Yermak-McFaul Group*. Kyiv School of Economics. Retrieved August 6, 2026, from https://sanctions.kse.ua/en/yermak-mcfaul-group/

inconsistencies in sanctions policies across jurisdictions create loopholes that allow designated companies to continue operating despite imposed restrictions.

Russia has adapted its supply chains and continues to receive significant volumes of military inputs and goods supporting its economy. This is one example of sanction evasion, while other critical ones are still functioning: the Russian shadow fleet and shady liquefied natural gas (LNG) deals.

Deterrence and war preparations in Europe are carried out using innovative capabilities. Consequently, European challenges involve addressing its strategic capability gaps while also expanding and hardening its existing force structures. Quite simply, it currently lacks sufficient force to meet the demands of high-intensity conflict[25]. One of the most salient lessons from Ukraine is that mass, 'smartness' and ingenuity remain indispensable components of modern warfare.

The European security architecture is undergoing its most profound transformation since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This transformation, together with the United States' strategic reorientation, including the renewed 'transactionalism' and the unpredictability of U.S. foreign policy visible since 2025, has significantly reshaped Europe's threat landscape. For the first time in decades, NATO is re-focusing on its core task: deterrence and defense[26].

It also analyses the legal feasibility of seizing Russian state assets to support Ukraine's reconstruction and identifies gaps in allies' current frameworks for action. The book examines the challenge posed by Russia's 'shadow fleet', highlighting deficiencies in sanctions enforcement and maritime coordination across EU and NATO theatres. It also explores energy resilience in frontline communities, emphasising decentralisation, microgrids, and local governance capacity as necessary considerations for European communities amid wartime disruption.

The volume opens by tracing the roots of Ukraine's wartime resilience to a moment that long precedes the full-scale invasion: the Euromaidan protests and the Revolution of Dignity of 2013-14. This is a deliberate choice of starting point. It is not possible to understand the speed and coherence of Ukraine's institutional and societal response after February 2022 without recognising how the memory of the Heavenly Hundred,

25 Watling, J. (2025, October 23). *Emergent approaches to combined arms manoeuvre in Ukraine*. Royal United Services Institute. https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/insights-papers/emergent-approaches-combined-arms-manoeuvre-ukraine

26 Zagorodnyuk, A. (2026, June 19). *Wartime innovation in Europe's defense transformation*. International Centre for Defense and Security. https://icds.ee/en/wartime-innovation-in-europes-defense-transformation/