

EUROPEAN SECURITY AFTER THE UKRAINE WAR



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There can be several scenarios about “the day after the war in Ukraine”. However, to date, there is one scenario that could make all others absolutely irrelevant, first and foremost “the day after”. It is a threat of a new world war as a result of the escalation of the Ukraine conflict to a global nuclear catastrophe. If we discard this apocalyptic scenario, then the remaining ones will depend on how the Russian “military special operation” in Ukraine ends. The array of possible options can be reduced to two main scenarios, but in any case the future developments will depend on the substance and terms of a peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine. A “good” agreement will result in durable peace; a “bad” agreement will result in delays, setbacks, or even the collapse of the peace process.¹

Under the best possible scenario, the way back to normal will be very long and painful. Solely, a good treaty”- a set of mutually acceptable compromises between Moscow and Kyiv – could provide a long lasting peace in Europe. Its general contours are already clear: first of all, this is an agreement on a ceasefire and massive humanitarian assistance to the civilian population of the territories engulfed in hostilities. On the basis of a truce under international control, there should be peaceful negotiations on the neutral and non-nuclear status of Ukraine, multilateral guarantees of its sovereignty and territorial integrity within the agreed borders, compensation to the conflict victims and restoration of the destroyed infrastructure. Hopefully, it will help to end the sanctions war and reestablish trade and economic cooperation in Europe and beyond.

A peace treaty on Ukraine can become a prerequisite for the renovation of the European security architecture. In line with the guarantees to Ukraine, a new system of European security should include guarantees of sovereignty and territorial integrity to other neutral non-nuclear states. Such guarantees

¹ Arnault Jean. GOOD AGREEMENT? BAD AGREEMENT? AN IMPLEMENTATION PERSPECTIVE. Available at: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/Good%20AgreementBad%20Agreement_Arnault.pdf

could be reinforced by the restoration of arms control regimes and restrictions on military activities in Europe. The latter involves the ban on INF deployment in Europe, the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons from forward bases and their reduction, a deep reduction in the general forces of NATO and Russia, and the coordination of many other measures proposed by Russia in December 2021.

After that, or even in the process of moving towards peace in Ukraine and beyond, it is possible to resume the dialogue between Russia and the United States on arms control. It is likely that overcoming the humanitarian, moral, political and economic consequences of the conflict in Ukraine will be a much more laborious and lengthy undertaking. However, the resumption of arms control is an absolute imperative for European and global security, as is the normalization of relations between Russia and the West.

In the worst case - in the absence of a "good treaty - there won't be stability in Europe. The Russia - West relations will continue to deteriorate but unlike the Cold War era they will be deprived of commonly recognised rules of behavior and solid legal foundation. The EU and US/NATO will never reconcile themselves with Russia's victory - even partial - over Ukraine and incorporation of Novorossiia. The sanctions war will intensify, as will the political, military and ideological confrontation.

To date, the sanctions adopted by the EU and its allies have not fulfilled their main task - they have not stopped Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, but only demonstrated the most severe rejection of its actions. At the same time, they showed how deeply Russia was integrated into the global economy, and how much has been achieved over the past decades in the field of international cooperation. Russia is likely to survive the sanctions, but will be set back in its economic development, and its modernization will face enormous difficulties and disappear by itself. The European Union will not give up its principles, but will get a poor and hostile country at hand.

In the context of the current situation in Ukraine, Europe and the rest of the world, a good scenario may seem like a naive good wish. But eyewitnesses to the history of the last decades should remember the situation and prevailing moods of 1983: the height of the war in Afghanistan, the destruction of the South Korean Boeing in the Far East, the beginning of the deployment of American Pershing missiles in Germany and etc. Then the prospects also seemed the darkest. But only four years have passed, and the INF Treaty was concluded, then the CFE Treaty and START-1, and then the Cold War and the arms race ended. Surely, this did not happen by itself, but as a result of the efforts of many people who saved the world from the threat of a nuclear apocalypse for the next quarter of a century.