

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

Thursday, July 20

1:55 - 2:40 PM

What's Next for Ukraine?

[Colin Kahl](#), Senior Fellow, Stanford University, Former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, U.S. Department of Defense

[Oleksandra Matviichuk](#), Head, Centre for Civil Liberties, Ukraine and Nobel Peace Laureate

[Philip Zelikow](#), White Burkett Miller Professor of History, University of Virginia; Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University

Moderator: **[Susan Glasser](#)**, Staff Writer, The New Yorker

Susan Glasser:

Thank you to everyone for being with us today. I can think of no more urgent and pressing subject for this year's Aspen Security Forum than the question of Ukraine. And I think it's, um, really great and important that we get to have, uh, a sort of a report from the ground first, uh, from Kyiv. I believe we have Andre Yack already on the line on Zoom with us. Is that right? Hello?

Andriy Yermak:

Yeah.

Susan Glasser:

Ah, hello. Can you hear us? Hello?

Andriy Yermak:

Hi. Yes. Yes.

Susan Glasser:

Thank, thank you so much for joining us today. Uh, I think everyone here, uh, in Aspen at the security forum is eager really to hear your report from the ground. And I, I think we should just jump right in to that. Uh, there is an enormous investment, uh, among almost everyone here in the question of how Ukraine is fairing in its summer counter offensive against Russia. There is a sense and a fear and a concern, uh, that it's not going as quickly as we would have liked. Uh, and we would, we would really value, I think you beginning today by giving us a report on where you think things stand weeks into this counter offensive and what we should be looking for next. Thank you so much.

Andriy Yermak:

Thank you, Susan. Dear friends, I'm honored, uh, to be here and pleased to talk to you. First of all, I'd like to use this opportunity and I want to thank, uh, president Biden, his administration, congress, both parties. We are grateful to American people. You are good freedom, independence, and democracy in your ways, and so do Ukraine. Ukraine will definitely win this war, and it will be our common victory, the

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

United States. We are making every efforts to bring closer and secure peace in the future. And in the wi, uh, Withrow Wilson Pema, uh, 14 points, he stated, we cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end. Just like a century ago, determination and unity have given us a unique opportunity to change the world. So let's do it now. I am, uh, ready to answer to your questions, and as I understand the first questions, it's about the contra.

And I'd like to say, first of all, it's war and, uh, uh, I'd like to say that, uh, we in the, I think in historical and the very important cooperation, the, our partners, first of all the United States, and, uh, of course we, uh, I can say that it's, uh, counteroffensive it is going not sample once again because it's war. And it's very difficult, uh, to be sure and to guarantee that it will be this, particularly by this speed. But in general, it's going by plan. And, uh, and of course, uh, we do all the, all the best, first of all, our heroes in frontline our military, all Ukrainian nations, because the main goal, the main, our, uh, wishes of all Ukrainians is to win this world. And of course, it's, uh, absolutely, uh, once again, it's, it's great that the cooperation, the, the, our aliens today in the very high level. And, uh, it's, it's very helpful.

Susan Glasser:

Well, thank you so much. I, I noticed a report today that the new cluster munitions that the United States just approved sending to Ukraine are already there and being used, uh, on the ground in the fight. Uh, and I'm curious, what, what is most important for Ukraine in its fight that you do not have yet? From the west or from the United States?

Andriy Yermak:

First of all, uh, Susan, thank you very much that you have mentioned about cluster ammunition. Yes, it's great. And thank you very much for all these decisions, uh, uh, for President Biden, once again, for Congress, for, uh, all American people. It's really was, uh, uh, very important. And, uh, I can see the, my, my answer will be very simple. Uh, these, uh, uh, points, it's, uh, very clear and understandable. We need and waiting for decisions of other camps. Uh, we waiting, uh, and we talking with our partners and we happy that, uh, they hurt us. It's about we need more, our defense. You can see what happened last days in Odessa Nikolai, you know, I'm sure about what happened with the, uh, grain corridors. And this is a problem not just about for of Ukraine. It's a problem of the world, of the, of the many countries. And of course, we need f sixteens.

Susan Glasser:

Many people here, uh, f sixteens have you course

Andriy Yermak:

Elimination. Yeah, yeah.

Susan Glasser:

We have here, uh, someone who was until recently in the Pentagon. So I promise we'll ask him next, uh, to give us a report on your, on your list there. But let me ask you, so many of us here, of course, paid very close attention to the recent, let's call it, attempted mutiny by, uh, Yevgeni Prigozhin in Russia.

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

What I want to know is what effect, if any, has this division inside Russia's elite meant in on the ground in the fight? Do you perceive a weakening, uh, in the Russian military as a result of this? Do you perceive, uh, a weakening in Putin, or has it not made any difference yet that you can tell?

Andriy Yermak:

Uh, as you can see, the war unfortunately continue and, uh, it's, it's real war. And you can see by this attacks and, uh, by, uh, missiles rockets and the drones, uh, it's, uh, it's continued. Uh, what if you ask about the, our attitude for the, uh, uh, everything which happens in, in Russia the last month, I think that during this, uh, more than 500 days, first of all, Ukrainian nations, our soldiers, our army, it showed that the, the help of our partners show that this is the, not the reality that Russia is have the second strongest army in the world, or just strong army. And the second, I think that this event show absolutely clear and understandable for all people in the world, in the list of the strong leaders, uh, of, of the world, not more, and not placed, uh, for President Putin. This is my answer.

Susan Glasser:

So last week, of course, there was the, um, NATO summit in Vilna. And I guess at the end there was a lot of back and forth, uh, including a, uh, a very controversial tweet from your boss, president Zelensky. He called the language in the NATO statement. Absurd. I'm curious, at the end of the summit, how, how did you come out understanding what is it that Ukraine needs to do in order to get the invitation?

Andriy Yermak:

First of all, I'd like classify clarify that the tweets, uh, of President Zelensky was about his, uh, uh, estimate and for what goal he going to this summit. And, uh, I'd like to not, uh, enough to not found, uh, another and more sense of this tweet. The second it's necessary to look to the exactly results of the venue summit. And as I said, president Zelensky summit was successful, but of course, always it's possible to make more successful. But, uh, most important that, uh, we back to Ukraine and we exactly understand what's, uh, our next steps. First of all, we have to win this war and as soon as possible, and of course, we continue our cooperations and our coordination with our partners, and you listen, and we listen in this summit that, uh, all aliens not just believe they sure that Ukraine, uh, Ukraine will win second Ukraine.

Ukraine needs to, uh, get and crowd security guarantees. And I'd like to use this opportunity to say thank you very much, because we have long and, uh, hard work, uh, in the results of this work was announced declarations. And, uh, of course, it's a great work of my co-chairs of the international group of experts. Uh, Mr. Rasmussen, I'd like to say thank you very much. My colleagues, uh, advisor of national security, of the aliens of G seven, first of all, Jack Sullivan, Emmanuel Bon, uh, ner, and many others, uh, Tim Barlow Deli from Japan, deli from Italy, delis from Canada and other countries. And, uh, deferred. Uh, we need to continue working of the implementation of the peaceful formula of President Zelensky. And now I'm very involved of the preparation of the, uh, very soon, uh, second meeting of in the level of advisors, uh, in which we continue the consultations or the goal to organize peaceful summit.

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

I'd like to say that, uh, and this is confirmed by all colleagues, not just from the country of G seven, and it's, uh, also from the, uh, country, from global south, its platform, which united the world, because 10 points of the peaceful formula. It's not just about how to end the war in Ukraine, it's about the, uh, big, uh, crisis which, uh, uh, arise and appeared as a result of this war. I mean, about the crisis, uh, it's about food security, it's about nuclear security, and it's about ecology. And of course, it's, uh, about the very important humanitarian things because all Ukraine, we need to beg not just our territories, we need to beg all our people, especially, and ma one of the main, very painful for us, we need to beg, uh, to beg all our Ukrainians children, uh, who was illegally deported, uh, to the Russia Federation and, uh, uh, occupied territories. And now we are working. I'd like to say that we already, the, at least of the country, which we involved, very impressed. It's, uh, three, four times more than we, uh, have in the meeting in Gagan, and we continue this work. Once again, thank you very much for all colleagues in, uh, all the world, because it's really very important.

Susan Glasser:

Andre Yack, we wanna thank you very much, uh, for being with us, joining us today from Kyiv, and we look forward to hosting you here in person, uh, next year once the war is over. So thank you very much, Andre. Y

Andriy Yermak:

Thank you very much. And I'm sorry that I can't be today with you physically, but I hope very soon after our victory, we can meet. Thank you very much, SLA.

Susan Glasser:

Thank you again. And now we're gonna jump right in to the panel because I think we've been given a lot to discuss, as I mentioned we have with us today. Colin Kahl, who until I think about two weeks ago, was the undersecretary of defense for policy, which means he was in charge of that long list of, um, uh, wishlist, if you will, of what, uh, Ukraine needs and wants in order to fight its war. So, Colin, why don't we just go ahead and start with that. As, as the conversation, uh, uh, many of us here have gotten used to what seems like a bit of a pattern, uh, that has sort of unfolded, probably not necessarily, uh, by design, uh, that we've gone from one round of debates over weapon systems to another. Most recently, the cluster munitions, uh, Andre Yack mentioned the attack. S uh, and so I guess I'll ask you now that you're on the outside, you can be very frank with us, uh, <laugh>. Are we looking at another, uh, no, no, no. Yes. Situation for that.

Colin Kahl:

Uh, well, thanks. Uh, it's great to be, uh, with you all. Um, look, I, we just announced another package yesterday. I've, I've been off the clock for six days, so I I, my filter is gradually, uh, coming down. Ruthless

Susan Glasser:

Candor, ruthless candor here.

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

Colin Kahl:

Uh, no, the administration announced another package yesterday, 1.3 billion. I think that brings the total of security assistance, uh, since the war began 17 months ago, uh, to 43 billion. Um, that's never happened in the history of the world. It defies bureaucratic, uh, uh, physics that it was possible. And I know that there's this critique out there that, that it has been an incremental, uh, approach and two incremental. Uh, but the reality is, as generous as Congress has been, and as generous as the American people has been, uh, we didn't have 43 billion on day one of the war. Uh, we've had tranches of money. And so at each phase, we've had to decide what Ukraine needs most right now, which means what can get to them? What are they trained on? What's sustainable, what's relevant for the period of the fight? So for example, in the first six weeks of the war, which will go down in history as the most impactful, uh, period, because it was the period in which the Russians were defeated in the battle for Kyiv, and therefore, uh, Putin's objectives in Ukraine were thwarted.

We had about \$3 billion to spend, and we could have spent it on patriot missiles and f sixteens and Abrams tanks. None of that stuff would've arrived, uh, uh, for months. Uh, the Ukrainians weren't trained on any of it, so instead we focused on javelins and stingers and ammunition for Soviet legacy equipment. And that enabled the Ukrainians with their extraordinary courage and resilience to defeat the Russians. Uh, and so if you went back in a time machine and said, should I have spent that 3 billion on other stuff? Of course not. Uh, so we've been incremental, and as we moved into the next phase of the world, we shifted towards artillery, uh, high Mars, then patriot systems and air defense systems, because that's what they needed. And then we helped build this mountain of steel, uh, for the counter offensive, which is ongoing. So at each point, we've delivered what, uh, is at the top of the Ukrainian, uh, priority list.

My team put together all of those packages, every single one. Uh, and I'm extraordinarily proud, uh, for what they did. I'm also particularly grateful to Secretary War Booth, who's sitting out there because the Army gave more of its stuff than anybody else. And one of the things that obviously you heard from Andre was, uh, the continued desire for the attack them. These are the long range missiles that fire off the back of the high mar systems. I'll just say one of the considerations we've had to have as we've put together these security assistance packages is not just what Ukraine has, but to the degree that we draw them down from our stockpiles. What needs do we have around the world? We don't make attack them anymore. They're a very precious commodity, and they are required, they would be required for any contingency we have anywhere in the world, Iran, North Korea, China, you name it.

And so if they were provided in substantial quantities, that would come at real with real implications for our readiness. Now, the good news is Ukrainians already have deep fires capabilities. They've got the storm shadow cruise missile that the UK has provided. The French are providing the scalp missile. The problem with the offensive right now is not their ability to strike deep. They have that ability. They are doing it now. The Russian command and control, their logistics have been disrupted in the deep, the problem is not a hundred kilometers away, it's one kilometer in front of them with the minefield. So we'll continue to help, uh, uh, them with that, uh, and will continue to provide, uh, the security assistance that they need.

Susan Glasser:

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

Colin, I know we wanna bring in the other panelists, but just Andre did not really answer on the counter offensive, so I'll ask you, is it, is it a fair characterization that this, uh, progress so far has been slower than we expected, than US model showed? And, and what is the reason for that?

Colin Kahl:

You know, there's the old adage, you know, uh, no plan survives first contact with reality. Uh, this was, uh, obviously something that we talked a lot with the Ukrainians about. They, I think, you know, there's not one counter offensive, there are actually several counter offensives. There's a major push in the East. There's also a number of points where there's a push in the South. I think the Ukrainians are being very deliberate because, you know, we, we had six months to build the Ukrainians, this mountain of steel tanks, armored vehicles, Bradley fighting vehicles, mine clearing equipment, engineering equipment, uh, a lot of artillery. But the Russians also had six months to dig in. Uh, and those, uh, defensive belts, uh, particularly in the South, are particularly nasty. And so they are going slowly, but that's because they're going deliberately. And I will just say this, the counter offensive is not over. The majority of Ukrainian combat power has not been devoted to the counter offensive. Most people don't realize that. And I'm confident that when, and if the Ukrainians find a soft spot in Russian defenses, they will have an opportunity to breach and make progress. Uh, so let's see. Uh, uh, we're still, I think toward the beginning, not at the end of the counter defenses. Yeah.

Susan Glasser:

So Oleksandra Matviichuk, you are a Nobel Prize winner, uh, as, uh, as Anya mentioned, and that, uh, head of the Center for Civil Liberties, I noticed that just a few days ago, you know, you were sharing on social media, uh, what it's like to be under attack and spending the night in the corridor in, in Kyiv, uh, and just today, of course, it's your friends in Odessa who are under attack. You have expressed the view publicly that Ukraine is not and will not be safe until, uh, Russia cannot strike at Ukraine from Crimea. So, you know, tell us a little bit about what you think is, is possible right now. What if it is not possible militarily for Ukraine to take back Crimea? What does that mean to you and your friends? In, in Kyiv?

Oleksandra Matviichuk:

I'm a human rights lawyer, and I have been applying the law to defend people in human dignity for many years. And at present, I found myself in situation when the law doesn't work, because Russian troops deliberately shall in residential buildings, schools, churches, hospitals attack evacuation corridors, managed filtration camps, system organized forcible deportations, commit murders, tortures rapes, abductions, and other kind of offenses against civilians. And the entire international architecture of international treaties and international organizations can't stop such Russian atrocities. So our panel is title What Next for Ukraine, but I think the better name of our panel is What's next for Ukraine? What's next for the world? Because it's not just a war between two states. This is a war between two systems, authoritarianism and democracy. Putin started this war, not in February 22, 22, but started this war in February, 2014 when Ukraine obtained a chance for the quick democratic transition after the revolution of dignity.

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

And in order to stop us on this way, Putin occupied Crimea, part of Lugansk scan's region, and last year extended this war to the large scale invasion. And this is a clear sign that Putin as like any dictator, is afraid of the idea of freedom. And with this war, putting attempts not just to punish Ukrainians for our democratic choice, which we made nine years ago, when millions of Ukrainians stood up their waste against corrupt and authoritarian our previous government, just for a chance to build a country where the rights of everybody are protected, government is accountable, judiciary is independent, and police do not beat students who are peacefully demonstrating. And we paid a high price for this chance. But Putin attempts to convince the whole world that democracy, rule of law and human rights are fake values because they couldn't protect you during the war.

And this is not just a task for Ukraine to respond to this value dimension of this war is a joint responsibility of entire international community, because look what is going on. We are in a situation when the member of security council of UN can start the war of aggression, commit horrible, horrible atrocities just to break people resistance and occupy the country, and nobody can stop it. So may I ask you, as a human rights defender, how we people who live in 21 century will protect a human beings their lives, their freedoms, their dignity. Can we rely on the law or just nuclear weapons matter?

Susan Glasser:

Phil Ko, I'm not gonna ask you to bear the whole burden of answering Alexandra's very important question. Uh, but I do think that she has, has raised some of the, the big picture issues that are, that are faced Erin and Andre did as well, which is what does it, what does it mean to offer a security guarantee to Ukraine at this moment in time? President Biden often speaks of, uh, the US being willing and committed to fight as long as it takes. Uh, but of course, there is a political reality of an election here in the US as well as elections that will take place in European partners, uh, over the next year. Uh, do you think that we are in a position to offer, uh, a security guarantee or to, in any way really respond to the profound question that, that Alexandra has asked us?

Philip Zelikow:

I think the way to think about this is life is answering this question. Now, uh, are we or are we not actually guaranteeing Ukraine security in life in results? And that's the real measure, not what performative gestures, uh, we utter at a meeting in some foreign capital. And what I'd really like to emphasize, because colon has already addressed the traditional military stuff and the battlefield that everyone is following, I'd actually like to call your attention to the other battlefield, the other part of the war. This is a war of staying power. Russia knows it, and a lot of Ukrainians know it, and there's bad news and there's good news. The bad news and friends of Ukraine need to be clear about this and talk straight to each other about it. The bad news is Ukrainians are moving towards what will be a, could be a winter of discontent.

To borrow phrase Bob Zeek used recently. Last year, Ukraine lost 29% of its gdp, more than a third of the population of Ukraine is displaced. And a large fraction of that has had to leave the country and is wondering whether or when they will ever come home. This is the country, the largest country that's wholly inside Europe. It has no civil aviation. Its transportation system has now gone back to the 1950s. It's losing its access to the sea. And this is a country whose basic business model was the export of food

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

and fertilizer to the world for a lot of its, uh, for a lot of its business and economic growth. And it's a country that is financially insolvent simply to keep the lights on in the Ukrainian government. It's getting budget support from the US and the EU in the neighborhood of 3 billion a month, not a year, a month, a hundred million a day.

And that doesn't touch the reconstruction costs, which are in the hundreds of billions. And that was before the destruction of the Haka dam and much more that's the bad news. In other words, Russia, Putin looks at this and says, why do I need to stop the war? My enemy is, uh, entering a period where eventually it will its social society and economy may disintegrate. The good news is, one A, the Ukrainian people in the crucible of this war are emerging stronger than they were before the war. A generation of Ukrainians like Alexandra, actually are coming into the foreground and are determined to build a new society after the victory, as they say, two, Europe and the world has united behind Ukraine in a really heartening and gratifying way in a lot of different ways. In other words, a lot of people are convinced by Alexandra's argument and are looking for a way to demonstrate accountability now. And third, in a unique circumstance in the history of the world, the aggressor state left the means to help its victims in the jurisdiction of law abiding states. Russia left more than 300 billion in dollars in Euros in bank accounts, inside law abiding states, which has now been frozen by those states and is sitting idle, waiting to see if it can be mobilized to help Ukraine. In other words, the willpower, the people, and the means are at hand to launch what Bob Zeluck and Larry Summers and I have called the other Counter offensive, a European recovery program that offers hope to Ukraine to the region, to the future of the European Union, and to a sense of justice and accountability if we can mobilize this as we move from the stage of sanctions to the stage of countermeasures and launch the other counter offensive.

Susan Glasser:

So Phil, I do wanna ask you though about, uh, the other scenario, which is that Vladimir Putin, uh, will be able to wait out the resolve of the United States, uh, and other countries. And looking ahead to our election, I'm wondering, uh, what you think is possible to do, uh, in order to, uh, uh, Trump proof the US commitment to Ukraine? It's not a forever commitment If we can change our policy in, in 18 months.

Philip Zelikow:

I think actually if the United States, Europe and the world successfully launched these other counter offensives, and those are up and running by next year, it'll be impossible for any American president to then try to undo a huge forces will be put in motion that are clearly helping an embattled democracy. And I don't think any American president will then want to, uh, um, turn the ignition off on that car.

Susan Glasser:

Alexandra, you mentioned your work as a human rights lawyer, and, and actually Andre mentioned, you know, some of the atrocities that, that Russia has committed against civilians in Ukraine in the course of the war. Uh, I'm, I'm curious, number one, whether you think it's possible to pursue accountability for Russia while the fighting is still going on. Uh, and then number two, what you know, what you've

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

learned about the Russian way of war, uh, which seems very much directed, uh, right at Ukraine's civilian population. That seems to be a core part of their entire strategy for this conflict.

Oleksandra Matviichuk:

Russia uses where crimes as a methods of our fear, Russia deliberately provide enormous pain and suffering to civilians in order to break people resistance and occupy Ukraine and all this hell, which we now face in Ukraine. Its result of total impunity, which Russia enjoyed for decades because Russian troops commit horrible war crimes in Chich, in Moldova, in Georgia, in Mali, in Syria, in Libya, in all the countries of the world. And they have never been punished. Russians believe they can do whatever they wanted. That is why we must break the circle from unity, not just for Ukrainians, but to prevent possible Russian attack to other nations and other countries. And in order to do it, we have to change our way of thinking because when I speak with stop officials of different countries, I see how they still look into the world through the prisma of Berg trials, which was essential step to establish law injustice in past century. But I will remind you that Berg trials were tried, Nazi were criminals after Nazi regime had collapsed, but we live in youth century. We must move further. Justice must be independent of the magnitude of Putin's regime's power. We cannot wait. We must establish special tribunal on aggression now and hold Putin Luca Shanka and their surrounding accountable.

Susan Glasser:

So Colin, uh, many of your colleagues have talked about the, the war in Ukraine, as you know, fundamentally, at least right now, uh, as a conflict that's focused on artillery and air defense, that those have been the most urgent and pressing needs for Ukraine. And, and, and that was the explanation that the Biden administration used for why it very reluctantly to, uh, send the cluster of munitions, uh, to Ukraine, despite objections from many politicians here, despite, uh, many European allies who've actually signed on to the international convention. I, I, I wonder if you can help us understand why it is that the US did not have other ammunition available 16 months into the war. What is it that is making it so hard, uh, to ramp up our production? And when do you envision, uh, that, that it might be able to supply both Ukraine's needs and also the United States' own needs?

Colin Kahl:

Yeah, it's a really important question, actually. One, a question that, um, is front of mind for, uh, uh, secretary Austin, who's very focused on solving this problem. Look, the reality is that collectively over multiple administrations, uh, we have over-invested in platforms and under-invested in munitions. It's also the case that the Ukrainians are expending artillery munitions at a rate that our services would never, uh, uh, intend to expend. When you're expending, uh, you know, 90,000 rounds of 155 millimeter ammunition a month in steady state conditions, and when you go on the counter offensive that goes up two three x, uh, it's just not nar a scenario that we planned against and weren't resourced against. That's the bad news. Uh, the good news is that we've already doubled the domestic production of 155 millimeter ammunition. We will double and triple it again over the course of the next 12 to 18 months.

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

We will be capable from the perspective of our defense industrial base to keep Ukraine in the artillery game for the foreseeable future if we build a bridge to that future. And that was fundamentally the, the decision on the D P I C M issue, the cluster munitions. I'll also say, you know, cluster munitions are controversial. They are not all the same. Uh, we have an export, uh, uh, ban on any munition with a dud rate of more than 1%. The cluster munitions we're sending have a dud rate of between 1.3 and 2.35%. Contrast that with the cluster munitions the Russians have been using with impunity against Ukrainian civilians with a dud rate of 30 or 40%. And even had we not provided these weapons, you know, for the next 30 or 40 years, Ukraine is gonna have a demining issue because there's enormous, not just the minefield scattered throughout the south, but unexploded ordinance throughout the country. So we have to help Ukraine with that issue regardless. And frankly, the best way to help Ukrainian civilians is to, is to make sure that Ukraine is not defeated and that more Ukrainian territory is not taken so that the type of atrocities we've seen in the first 17 months of this phase of the war aren't repeated.

Susan Glasser:

So I, I wanna ask you one more question quickly before I come back to Phil, and that is about Russia. Cuz we spent a lot of time, you know, talking about Ukraine, talking about nato. I would like to know what has been the pentagon's assessment of whether Putin has been weakened, uh, by the recent events in Russia, and whether you've seen any evidence that that's made a difference on the in Ukraine. And, and also why is it, you know, that Russia is attacking these civilian targets? Is that a militarily, uh, valuable tool for them at this point? Are there other escalations? Uh, and I'm not talking about nuclear escalation. Are there other escalations that we could potentially be seeing in the coming months if Russia's efforts, uh, do not bear better fruit with doing what they're doing right now?

Colin Kahl:

You know, you'd have to ask Vladimir Putin why he's, uh, attacking Ukrainian civilians directly. I think if it's an effort to terrorize and coerce, it's demonstrably failed and it will continue to fail. It's brought Ukraine, uh, and the Ukrainian people closer together. Um, uh, and I think it has a whiff of desperation to it. I do think it speaks to Phil's point, which is part of it is to put a strain on the Ukrainian economy and infrastructure in a way that creates a lasting burden on Ukraine and the West. But I will defer to Phil on that. I would say two things from the Pentagon's perspective. First, um, regardless of how the counter offensive goes, um, Russia has already lost the war. Strategically. Uh, every ambition Putin had going into the war, uh, has fallen flat and cannot be resuscitated. Uh, he wanted to conquer the entire country and wipe us sovereign, democratic and independent Ukraine off the map.

That didn't happen, it's not going to happen. He wanted to demonstrate that he was a, a global power in a multipolar world. His military has been shattered, uh, by the war, uh, in Ukraine and are less capable of threatening the rest of Europe and the world, uh, as a consequence. And he wanted to divide the west than nato and the exact opposite as happened. Finland's now in the alliance. Sweden will soon, uh, be in the alliance. Defense spending is going up, uh, across, uh, nato. The defense industrial base is being, uh, rejuvenated. So across the board this has been a strategic loss. Last point, I I I, I agreed very much with Phil's, uh, uh, portrayal of the good news, bad news. I'll add one other, which is, I'm not sure

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

Putin, I think Putin's theory of victory is that he'll outlast us all. He'll outlast, Ukrainians, the Americans, uh, the West.

I don't think the long game looks great for Putin right now. Uh, he is not in a good position domestically for an, for a mass mobilization. I think that would be incredibly fraught given the events of Prigozhin. He can't trust his military cuz the military did not lift a finger in the face of Ian's mutiny. They let him, they let him waltz in and take the southern military, uh, district, uh, headquarters. And then they let him, you know, get two thirds of the way of a thunder run, uh, to the Kremlin, uh, without being attacked by a single Russian military, uh, unit. Um, I wouldn't trust my military, uh, in, in their circumstance. And oh, by the way, after Pian did all of that, he was essentially let off, uh, uh, Scott free. So I'm not sure if I'm Vladimir Putin. I think, you know, it would be great. Let's do five or 10 more years of this. Uh, so I, I and his defense industrial base is also in bad shape and all his assets are locked up and the export controls are making it harder for him to reconstitute. So we have real leverage over him too. Whenever this comes to the end game.

Susan Glasser:

Phil, I'm gonna ask you a simple question. Uh, it's the question that, uh, David Petraeus asked, uh, in the beginning days of the war in Iraq. How does this end?

Philip Zelikow:

That's a great question. Um, no, but the way to envision how this ends is, um, don't think so much about the tactics of war termination. Um, imagine the post-war future. Imagine what do you want Europe and the world to be like two or three years from now? Uh, that's partly why I emphasize the, the economic points so much and the whole idea of European revitalization along with Ukrainian revitalization. There's a level at which, you know, the Korean War was fought to a draw on a ceasefire line, but uh, South Korea had, but South Korea was then beginning what would become a historic economic revival. The political economic health of South Korea is what ultimately guaranteed its future and its safety and actually changing the whole nature of East Asia. You can repeat this illustration. So you have to envision what's the post-war world we want to envision? Then what are the things we need to do then to start advancing that vision and get there and get there in a way in which whatever Vladimir Putin wants to do or decides to do, Ukraine's going to be on the upward path. Ukraine is going to have a promising future in Europe, and that future is going to be the living rebuke to what Putin is doing in neighboring Russia.

Susan Glasser:

Alexandra, of course, I'm gonna give you the last word and I wanna know from you not only what you think about how this might end, but what is it that we here do not understand, you know, that is so clear to you from your vantage point in Kyiv.

Oleksandra Matviichuk:

When large scale invasion started, the Democratic countries told, let's help Ukraine not to fail. And Ukraine obtained the first weapons to be able to defend ourselves. And first Syria sanctions against Russia were introduced into force. And we are extremely grateful. Ukrainians will always remember all

*****Note that this is an automated transcription and may contain inaccuracies. Please refer to the [original YouTube recording](#) as well*****

democratic countries who are with us in this very dramatic part of our history. But it's time to change this narrative to another one. Let's help Ukraine to win fast. There is a huge differences between let's help Ukraine not to fail and let's help Ukraine to win fast. These differences can be measured in types of weapons, speed of of decisions, gravity of sanctions. The problem is that we have no time, the time for us converted in numerous deaths in battlefield, humorous deaths in occupied territories, in humorous deaths. In deep rare and more important point, when we say that Ukraine has to win, it means that Russia has to lose.

And the problem is that democratic countries still have no vision. What they will do in this situation, and this is on my opinion, is a main barrier to change this narrative, to help Ukraine to win fast, to set a common goal. Because when we have a common goal, we have common strategy and we'll find common resources how to fulfill this strategy. And they were no necessity for my friend Adriana Susa, who left her six year old son and joined Ukraine, armed forces to fight for her son. Peaceful future. She will never blown up in a mine in civilian car when so much democratic countries have armed vehicles in their storages. So I know that nobody from democratic countries wants Russia to win because it's will be catastrophe. It's resulted, uh, deep decrease of level of freedom in our world, which is so interconnected that only spread of freedom make our world safer. But why we are afraid of Russia will lose. Why? Like we see the problem more problematic post-war period, that ongoing war Russia will lose. It's inevitable the Soviet Union collapsed regardless whether or not we were ready for its collapse, its happened and Russia will lose because Putin tries to returns to the past future place against Putin. It's better to elaborate the common vision and be prepared for this future.

Susan Glasser:

Well, thank you very much, Alexandra. I can't think of a, a more important note to end on and maybe Anja will have us back and a new group to discuss, uh, the implications of Russia losing. How about that? Thank you everyone.