



## Episode 6: Why Ukraine Is Doomed

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**Intro:** I would strongly encourage people not to believe what they read in the mainstream media about how well Ukraine is doing in this war and how poorly Russia is doing. The West is leading Ukraine down the Primrose path. The Israelis are executing a genocide in Gaza. It's not China's fault that it wants to be powerful. So, if you get into trouble and you dial 9-1-1, there's nobody at the other end.

**John Mearsheimer:** Hi, this is John Mearsheimer. And in today's episode, I'd like to talk about the situation in Ukraine, what's happening in the war between Russia on one side and Ukraine in the West on the other side. I think if you read the newspapers in the west every day and you listen to the mainstream media in the West – and this is certainly true in Ukraine as well – you get a picture that the Russians are in real trouble. They're struggling in this war. The future looks bleak for the Russians. And in contrast to the Russian situation, the Ukrainians are actually doing quite well, especially since they've adopted drones on the battlefield and they're waging this long-range drone campaign. And one has the sense that at least we have a stalemate here, and it may be the case that the Ukrainians are turning the tide and when negotiations eventually start, the Ukrainians will be in a quite favourable position. And of course, we're not talking just about the Ukrainians, we're talking about the Ukrainians and the West, because they are something of a tag team. I disagree almost completely with this view. I've long argued as many viewers know that the Russians would eventually win an ugly victory. And I think if you look at what's actually happening in the war, the Russians are winning the war and the Ukrainians are actually in terrible shape. Again, I don't think you get this picture from looking at what is in the mainstream media or listening to policymakers in the West speak, but I think they're wrong. I think there's a propaganda campaign at play here. And I want to tell you a story that is at odds with this propaganda campaign. I want to tell how I think about the war.

And I'm going to first focus on the battlefield, what's going on between both sides, the

Ukrainians and the Russians on the battlefield. Then I want to talk about the strategic bombing campaign or the air war that is being waged between the two sides. Then I want to talk about the state of outside support for Ukraine, and here we're talking basically about Western support for Ukraine, what it looks like today and where it might be headed. Then I want to talk a bit about politics or the political situation inside of Ukraine itself. And then I'll sum up by talking about where the war is today and where I think it's headed. So let me start by first talking about the battlefield. And the key to keep in mind here is that this is a war of attrition. I don't think this is news to anybody who's watching this video, but I do think you want to keep in mind that this war is a slugfest. This is a case of two armies standing toe-to-toe on the battlefield. And in a war of attrition, what really matters more than anything else is the balance of manpower or the balance of troops that each side has and the balance of weaponry. And in many ways, that can be reduced to the balance of firepower. So let me talk first about the balance of forces or the balance of troops up on the front lines.

I think that the Russians at this point have a significant advantage, which is hardly surprising because the population differences between the two sides is so great. Because the troops are drawn from the population. If one side has a much bigger population, you would expect that side to have more troops up on the front lines than the other side. And I would estimate that at this point, the Russians have a population advantage of roughly four and a half to one, it's probably close to five to one at this time, but that's really a massive advantage for the Russians. Just think about that. Even if it's just four to one, a four to one advantage in population size favouring the Russians tells you they're gonna have a lot more troops up on the front line than the Ukrainians are. And of course, that is the case. We know that the Russians have somewhere on the order of a two to one to three-to-one advantage in front-line troops. And this problem for the Ukrainians is exacerbated by the fact that they have a significant problem with draught dodging, and they have a significant problem with AWOLs. AWOLs are people who run away from the battlefield. They're soldiers who were sent up to the battlefield to fight, but at some point they flee the battlefield. And we know from listening to the former minister of defence in Ukraine speak that Ukraine has a huge problem with both AWOLs and draught dodging. So here you have an army that's probably outnumbered, probably close to three to one in terms of number of troops that has inside it a significant AWOL and draught dodging problem. So the balance of forces favours the Russians over the Ukrainians.

Moreover, when you talk about the balance of forces up on the front lines, you have to take into account the force to space ratio. In other words, do the Ukrainians have enough troops up on front lines to thickly populate the forward edge of the battle area? Or do they have a lack of troops, which produces a situation where there are gaps in the front line? Remember, there's a 1200 kilometre front line that has to be covered. And there is an abundance of evidence coming from Ukrainian sources that the Ukrainians do not have enough troops to thickly populate the front lines. And what's really saved them in this situation has been drones. Drones have been something of a stop gap. In other words, the Ukrainians can leave holes in the front line and then fill those lines with drones. And then if the Russians do push through a particular gap, they can move reserve troops to close the gap. But this is a significant problem for the Russians. So you see, when you look at the number of troops up

on the front line, the Russians significantly outnumber the Ukrainians, and number two, the Ukrainians do not have enough troops to thickly populate the front lines. Then we go to the matter of weaponry, and here we're talking about firepower. There's no question that throughout the entire war the Russians have had a significant advantage in artillery and nothing has changed in that regard. And if anything, the Ukrainians are having more difficulty than ever getting artillery from the West and that includes the United States. And one thing you want to remember about Russia is that it has a very formidable industrial base that can produce huge numbers of weapons on a monthly basis. So there's no shortage of artillery on the Russian side, whereas there is a shortage of artillery on the Ukrainian side. And as I'm sure most of the viewers know, throughout the course of this war, there's been talk about the Ukrainians being outnumbered in terms of artillery, sometimes five to one, sometimes seven to one and even sometimes ten to one.

Furthermore, and this cannot be underestimated, the Russians have a huge inventory of glide bombs that they have been launching at the Ukrainian forces on the ground pretty much since the start of the war. These glide bombs are basically smart bombs. They're old-fashioned iron bombs that have a special kit put on them that allows those bombs to land with precision on the chosen target. And estimates are that the Russians have launched about 100,000 glide bombs against Ukrainian forces since the war started. And they're now averaging somewhere in the range of 200 glide bombs per day against Ukrainian forces. So when you think about the balance of firepower here, you have to take into account artillery, and you have to take into account these glide bombs. And the Russians, as I said, have a significant advantage in terms of artillery. And in terms of glide bombs, I just pointed out what an impressive arsenal of glide bombs the Russians have. At the same time, the Ukrainians have hardly any glide bombs at all. So the Russians have an overwhelming advantage in terms of glide bombs, a significant advantage in terms of artillery. The only place where you have something of a balance in terms of firepower up on the front lines has to do with drones. And there's no question that both the Russians and the Ukrainians have a formidable force of drones up on the front line. And as I said before, these drones have played a key role in allowing the Ukrainians to compensate for the fact that they don't have enough troops to cover the frontline. So drones have been a saviour in a very important way for the Ukrainians. And I would argue that in the absence of drones, this war would have been over a long time ago, because without drones, both the balance of firepower and the balance of manpower is so lopsided in Russia's favour, of course, that I think the Russians would have rolled up the Ukrainians a year or two ago. But the fact is that drones are ever present on the front lines, and there you have a rough balance of power.

Now, what about Russian casualties? You hear all these stories in the news about the astronomical Russian casualty levels on the front lines. And there are these stories that have appeared that say that your average Russian conscript will only live 20 to 30 hours when he is sent to the front lines. Just think about the argument that if you take a Russian conscript, you send them to the frontline, and he'll be dead somewhere between 20 and 30 hours after arriving at the frontlines. John Ratcliffe, who was the head of the CIA, has actually repeated this argument. And this argument, of course, fuels the claim that the Russians are suffering

massive casualties on a daily basis, and well over 100,000 Russians have died or been severely wounded. These numbers are ridiculous. There's no question that the Russians have suffered a few hundred thousand deaths. I don't deny that for one second. This is deadly combat for sure. But the idea that your average Russian recruit only lasts somewhere between 20 to 30 hours is, I think, it's fair to say ludicrous. And in fact, if you look carefully at how the Russians are waging the war, they are waging it in a way that is designed to minimise the number of casualties. This cannot be emphasised enough. The Russians are moving very slowly and very carefully, and they are privileging firepower over manpower in their assaults. They want to do everything they can to use firepower to eliminate the Ukrainian forces before they bring soldiers to bear in the fight.

And the reason here is that the Russians are deeply interested in not seeing their fighting forces die in large numbers. I mean, you occasionally see reference to the fact that Russian commanders forced their troops to engage in frontal attacks where they get mowed down by Ukrainian firepower. There's no evidence that this is happening. The Russians are not engaging in frontal attacks. They're moving forward in a very methodical way, depending very heavily on firepower, as I said before, to clear the way for the attacking forces and doing everything they can to keep the number of casualties down. On the other hand, it's quite clear that the Ukrainians are suffering significant casualties. Budanov, who is the head of, or was formerly the head of Ukrainian intelligence has recently said that the Ukrainian's need 30,000 new troops every month. If the Ukrainians need 30,000 new troops every month, this implies that they're losing 30,000 troops every month. Now, some of those troops may have been lost by desertion, by the troops going AWOL. That's a serious possibility. So let's say they're not losing 30,000 troops in terms of casualties every month, and when we talk about casualties here, we're not talking about people who are lightly wounded, we're talking about the people who were killed or severely wounded and cannot come back into the fight. So let's assume that the Ukrainians are losing 25,000. So we're modifying Budanov's number of 30,000, and if they're losing 25,000 troops a month, they have to replace those 25,000. 25,000 over 12 months is 300,000 troops. That would mean that Ukraine, according to its own numbers, is losing 300,00 troops a year. That is a huge number for an army that is outnumbered to begin with.

So the point that I'm making to you here with regard to Russian casualties and Ukrainian casualties is that these claims about the numbers that the Russians are losing, are wildly inflated, and at the same time, you do not want to lose sight of the number of casualties that the Ukrainians are suffering. And of course, this is hardly surprising when you take into account that the balance of firepower, when you look at things like artillery and glide bombs, greatly favours the Russians over the Ukrainians. Now one other issue we want to talk about regarding what's happening on the battlefield is the fact that the Russians are taking territory very slowly. Many people look at the slow pace at which the Russians are capturing territory. And they conclude that this is evidence that the Russian are failing to execute this war in what one might call a satisfactory way. I have a couple points to make here. First of all, one of the reasons that the Russians are taking territory very slowly is because they're moving very cautiously and they're very cautiously and very deliberately because they want to

minimise casualties. My point, my previous point about minimising casualties is linked to this point about the speed at which the Russians are taking territories. There's no question they're taking territory very slowly. And they're doing that, again, because they want to minimise casualties. Furthermore, the Russians are fighting on terrain where they have to go into large towns and cities and capture those cities. And to defeat the Ukrainians in those large towns and in those cities is a difficult task and it's a time-consuming task. There's no way as the Russians move from east to west in areas like the Donbass that they can take towns and cities quickly. It's just not in the courts. The Ukrainians are clearly fighting fiercely in those cities and it takes time for the Russians to capture territory, but the point we want to keep in mind here is that the Russians are slowly but steadily capturing Ukrainian territory, more and more Ukrainian territory. And at the same time, and this is very important in a war of attrition, the Russians are killing or badly wounding large numbers of Ukrainians and making it very difficult for the Ukrainians to stay in the fight.

I think when you put all these factors together and you look at what's happening up on the front lines, there's no question in my mind that the Russians are winning on the battlefield, that the Ukrainians are losing. And given drones, it has been difficult for the Russians to knock out the Ukrainians. There's no question about that. But at the same time, there's no question that the Ukrainians, given the fact that they're outnumbered in terms of troops and that they're outnumbered in terms of firepower, that they are destined to lose on the battlefield. Now, let me switch gears and talk about the air campaign. And let me first just talk about the inventory of weaponry on both sides, and then talk about the strategies that both sides are employing. And how those strategies are likely to affect the outcome of the war. First of all, let me talk about the Russian inventory. The Russians have a huge inventory of ballistic missiles and cruise missiles that they have been using against the Ukrainians. Most estimates are that the Russians have launched about 6,000 ballistic missile and cruise missile attacks against Ukraine. In addition to the ballistic missiles and the cruise missiles, the Russians have, as I said before, these glide bombs, these smart bombs that they can launch from the air and with pinpoint accuracy hit targets on the ground. And as I said, before, they've launched 100,000 glide bombs. In addition, the Russians are now getting assistance from North Korean short-range ballistic missiles because the North Koreans are fighting side by side with the Russians and they are bringing ballistic missiles with them. And very importantly, the Russians have a sophisticated inventory of drones, jet-powered drones. The Geran 4 and the Geran 5 are jet powered drones that are giving the Ukrainians fits.

If you look at the Ukrainian media, if you look at the Kyiv Independent, for example, it's quite clear that the Russians are having a powerful effect in terms of waging the air war against Ukraine with all of these new jet-powered drones that the Ukrainians are having a very difficult time shooting down. And these drones are not only difficult to shoot down, but they are also very accurate because they are steered to the target by ground operators, by Russian ground operators. They're not just simply pre-programmed to go after a particular target and then sent on their way. On the contrary, they're basically manoeuvred to their target by ground-based operators, and they fly at reasonably high altitudes, they have the ability to

manoeuvre. And the Ukrainians are having a devil of a time dealing with this massive inventory of jet-powered drones that the Russians have. So when you look at what the Russians have, you see, again, a huge inventory of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, glide bombs and jet-powered drones, and now they have North Korean ballistic missiles at their disposal as well. If you look at what the Ukrainians have, as I said before, they have virtually no glide bombs, they have virtually no ballistic missiles of any consequence. They do have some cruise missiles, mainly cruise missiles that they've gotten from the West. These are the Storm Shadows that they've gotten from the British, but they have not gotten large numbers of cruise missiles, the number of cruise missiles that the Ukrainians are firing at the Russians pales in comparison to the number of cruise missiles that the Russians are firing at the Ukrainians. And there's no reason to think that's going to change anytime soon.

And in terms of drones, there's no question that the Ukrainians have a significant drone force. This is a situation that's analogous to the battlefield. To go back to the battle field, remember what I said, I thought that drones had been Ukraine's saviour on the battlefield, my argument was that without drones. Ukraine would have lost on the battlefield, in my opinion, at least a year ago, maybe two years ago. Drones have kept them in the fight. And in terms of this inventory of strategic air assets, I think drones are where the Ukrainians have been, by and large, able to match the Russians. They don't have the sophisticated force of jet-powered drones that's the equivalent of what the Russians have, but nevertheless there's no question that the Ukrainians have a powerful force of drones that they have been using. But otherwise, if you move away from drones, you look at all these other weapons, the Russians have a decisive advantage in the number of cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, glide bombs and so forth and so on. So that's the basic inventory. But what's more important than the inventory, or at least as important than inventory, is the question of how you employ those air assets to affect the outcome of the war. And I think you can talk about an air campaign in two different ways. First, you can envision an air campaign as a punishment campaign. And with a punishment campaign, you end up killing lots of people or wrecking the other side's economy or damaging the other sides' economies in ways that cause great pain for the population and you force the population to put pressure on the government to end the war.

So the idea is that if you hit a city and you take out the energy network in that city and people don't have water or they don't have heating, people will rise up and put pressure on the government to end the war or the government itself will say enough is enough, so much pain is being inflicted on our population, so much punishment as being inflicted on our population that this war has to be ended. That's one way you can think about employing air power. Second way you could think about employee air power is you tear apart military infrastructure in the rear areas of your adversary and you wreck the other side's economy in ways that affect its ability to wage war up on the front lines. So you're not with this second strategy, you're punishing the civilian population. You're not causing the civilian population to rise up against the government or causing the government to say enough is enough because the civilian population is being so badly hurt. No, the second strategy calls for doing great damage to the economy and to military infrastructure in ways that influence the fighting between the two sides. Now I think up until recently, the Russian campaign really focused on

the first strategy. It was really, by and large, a punishment campaign and I think if you look at what Ukraine is doing, Ukraine's strategy has been and still is a punishment campaign. And when we talk about Ukraine's air campaign here, we're talking about its drone campaign. Basically a punishment strategy. And as I say, I think the Russians have been waging a punishment strategy up until recently as well. Punishment strategies just don't work.

Just look at the damage that Russia has done with its air war against Ukraine over the past few years. And there is zero evidence that it has caused Ukraine to think about quitting the war. And the same thing is true when you look at Ukraine's drone campaign – this is its long-range drone campaign against the Russian heartland. There's no way that's going to cause Russia to quit the war, punishment campaigns don't work. And the Ukrainian punishment campaign against Russia is a much less potent punishment campaign than the Russian campaign against Ukraine. And again, the Russian punishment campaign did not get Ukraine to quit. But what's happened here, what's changed in the Russian strategic bombing campaign, is that it has gone from a punishment campaign to a campaign that's designed to wreck the Ukrainian economy in ways that will significantly influence events on the battlefield. And that bombing campaign is also now directed at influencing actual military events by going after targets in the rear areas of Ukraine that contain military infrastructure.

Now, what exactly am I talking about here? In recent months, what Russia has done is that it has turned Ukraine into a landlocked country. The importance of this cannot be underestimated because Ukraine depends heavily on its Black Sea ports to export and import agricultural goods, industrial goods, and military wherewithal; military wherewithal, you want to think about that. So what's happened here is that Russia has concentrated on shutting down ports like Odessa and other ports along the Black Sea, these are Ukrainian ports, which has made it virtually impossible for Ukraine to import and export goods – be they military or economic, out of those ports. And this is why I said that what's happened here is that Russia has turned Ukraine into a landlocked country. This is having devastating effects on the Ukrainian economy. There's no way that that could not be the case. And we know from back in 2022, when those ports were shut down for a number of months, that it then had devastating effects on the Ukrainian economy. So there's no question that given that the Russians have shut down those Black Sea ports, turned Ukraine into a landlocked country, that this will go to great lengths to severely damage the Ukrainian economy. And this matters because the Ukrainian economy, a healthy or a reasonably healthy Ukrainian economy, or a functioning Ukrainian economy is essential for supporting the troops on the front line. On top of the damage that's being done to the Ukrainian economy, the fact is that lots of Ukrainian military material came in through the Black Sea ports, and that is no longer the case. So weaponry, precious weaponry that was coming in through those Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea.

Furthermore, if you look at what the Russians are doing to the transportation network inside of Russia, they are wrecking railroad lines, they are attacking locomotives, they're destroying gas stations in droves in eastern Ukraine, they're tearing apart road networks and rail lines as well, and the end result of this is the transportation network inside of Ukraine is being badly

damaged which not only hurts the economy but makes it very difficult to move material from the rear areas to the frontline forces. It's quite clear that if you look at retail warehouse storage, retail warehouse storage inside of Ukraine, that estimates from high-level government officials are that the Russians have destroyed 90% of retail warehouse storage, which has a significant effect on the Russian economy. And the Russians, up to now, have either damaged or destroyed about 80% of Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Just think about the Russians up to now have destroyed or damaged about 80 % of Ukraine energy infrastructure, a lot of that has been repaired. I want to be clear. But what the Russians are now saying that they're going to do is they're gonna destroy that energy infrastructure almost completely. They're going to purposely target that infrastructure, that energy structure with the goal in mind of destroying it. So you can see what's happening here and that is that the Russians are no longer engaged in a punishment campaign. They're interested in wrecking the Ukrainian economy to the point where it will greatly hinder Ukraine's ability to support the frontline forces. And in addition, they're going after military infrastructure. They're going to after military targets in Ukraine's rear, which of course will eventually weaken Ukraine's efforts on the front lines. So, what I am saying here is that when you look at what Russia is doing up on the front lines, the successes that it's having up on the battlefield. And you couple that with the change that has recently taken place and the strategy it is employing in the air war, it's quite clear that the Russians are at a significant advantage or have a significant advantage over the Ukrainians.

Now just one final point on this, and that is if you look at the Ukrainian air campaign against Russia, which is being waged with drones, there's no question that that is inflicting punishment on Russia. We want to be very clear on that point. The Ukrainian drone campaign is inflicting punishment on Russia, but that punishment campaign is not going to cause Russia to surrender or to reduce its goals in this war. If anything, it's going to incentivize the Russians to take war territory and to ramp up its own air campaign against Ukraine to the highest possible level. The Ukrainians have no war-winning strategy when it comes to the air war. When you read all these stories about how successful this drone attack or that drone attack by Ukraine against Russia is, you should understand it's not going to influence the outcome of this war in any meaningful way. So that concludes my discussion of the military side of the war.

I want to talk now about outside support for Ukraine. As I think everybody understands, Ukraine could have never stayed in this war without support from the West, especially from the United States. If you think about where we are today and where we're headed, it's quite clear that US support for Ukraine has been reduced significantly since the war started in February 2022. The United States, under President Trump, has made it clear that what the White House wants to do is reduce the American burden of supporting Ukraine. And shift that burden onto the shoulders of the Europeans. So the United States is interested in reducing its commitment to Ukraine to take this further. Remember that the United States, because of what happened in the Gulf War, has a significant shortage of precious munitions. For example, it has a significant shortage of Patriot missiles. The Ukrainians are desperate to get American Patriot Missiles. They need Patriot missiles to help defend against the ballistic



missiles and cruise missiles that the Russians are now firing at Ukraine in huge numbers. But the United States has no Patriot missiles that it can give to the Ukrainians. The Ukrainians therefore have virtually no defence against the incoming ballistic and cruise missiles from Russia. And that situation is not going to change anytime soon. The United States is not in a position where it can give lots of weaponry to Ukraine and furthermore, the United States, as I said, is interested in shifting the burden of supporting Ukraine from its shoulders to the European shoulders. On top of all that, the US has just initiated the study to assess what sort of troop levels the US should maintain in Europe moving forward and given the imperative of pivoting to Asia and giving what's going on in the Middle East it's almost certain that the United States is going to reduce its troop levels in Europe in the not-too-distant future. And this is just going to be another sign of America's reduced commitment to Ukraine.

So you see you have a situation here where the American commitment to Europe, I don't want to say it's been withering away, that's too strong, but it has been greatly reduced over time. It hasn't been reduced to zero, but the United States is no longer the loyal supporter of Ukraine that it once was. And if you look at the European countries, relations between Poland and Ukraine have badly deteriorated. The Poles have made it clear they will not fight in Ukraine under almost any circumstances. There's a lot of bad blood these days between Poland and Ukraine, because Ukraine has been supporting or has been celebrating its history in World War II, in which Ukrainian forces massacred Poles, which has enraged Poles. And therefore, Polish-Ukrainian relations are terrible today. And if you look at what's happening inside France and Germany, it is possible that the right will win in both France and Germany in a future election. And if the right wins in one of those elections, it's likely that France or Germany will abandon its strong support for Ukraine because the right in Germany and the right in France have made it clear that they have no love lost for NATO, number one, and number two, they think it's time to end this formidable, be it German or be it French, commitment to Ukraine.

So when you look at the future and you think about Ukraine's heavy dependence on support from the United States and from the Europeans, you don't see a pretty picture at all. And then I want to talk about what's going on inside of Ukraine. First of all, there's a lot of war weariness. Recent polls show that 66% of Ukrainians think it's time to negotiate an end to the war. Only 24%, this is roughly one out of every four Ukrainians, wants to continue this war. Furthermore, if you look at Zelensky's standing inside of Ukraine, there's no question that he still garners significant political support. It's not like the body populace wants to throw him out of office, but it's quite clear that if you were to have an election today, it is likely that two or three other Ukrainians would defeat him because he is not the most popular leader anymore in Ukraine. There are others like Budanov, who I was talking about before, his former defence minister, Fedorov and his former commanding general, General Zaluzhnyi, all of whom are more popular than Zelensky. So Zelensky has some political problems on the home front. And then the final point I'd make about what's going on regarding Ukraine's home front is that Zelensky was recently forced into a position where he had to fire both the Minister of Defence, this is Fedorov, who is now interested in having an election because he thinks he could beat Zelensky in an election, but he was not only forced to fire Fedorov, he

was forced to fire General Syrskyi as well. And I believe that General Syrskyi was a quite successful battlefield commander. I think one of the reasons, not the only reason by any means, but one of reasons that the Ukrainians have been able to hold out against the Russians over time was because of General Syrskyi, who was, I think, a quite competent military commander. But anyway, Zelensky has been forced to fire Syrskyi, he was forced to fire Fedorov. And when you're in the middle of a tough war and you have to simultaneously fire your Minister of Defence and the commanding general of your armed forces, that tells you that you are in serious trouble.

So the point that I'm making here is that if you look inside Kiev, there's all sorts of trouble brewing. And if you'll look at the outside support for Kiev, there's also sorts of trouble brewing there. And then when you marry that to what's happening on the battlefield and what's happening in the strategic bombing campaigns, this is a very bleak picture. Now, where exactly is the war today? The Russians have annexed 4 oblasts plus Crimea. They've annexed somewhere on the order of 20 plus percent of Ukrainian territory. Of course, they don't control all of that territory. But I would estimate they control slightly more than 80% of those four oblasts. They control all of Crimea and about 80% of the four oblasts that they annexed. And they're, of course, in the process of conquering all of the territory in those four oblasts. So if the war ended today, Ukraine would have lost about 20% of its territory. Not only has Ukraine lost all this territory, but there's virtually no chance it's going to become a member of NATO. First of all, NATO is a badly damaged institution as a result of this war. Serious damage has been done to NATO because of the Ukraine war, and you see this very clearly in America's interest in reducing its presence in Europe, reducing its influence in NATO, and basically letting the Europeans play a much larger role in terms of running the alliance. So I think the alliance is in trouble. But furthermore, there's no way you're going to get a European consensus to bring Ukraine into NATO. And furthermore given the state of Ukraine, given the damage that's been done to Ukraine, Ukraine will be in no position to enter NATO or the EU for that matter. So again, you end the war today, Russia controls a huge slice of Ukrainian territory in the East. And furthermore, it has succeeded in preventing Ukraine from joining NATO.

Finally, huge destruction has been done to Ukraine. Estimates are that it'll take \$600 billion, just think about that, \$600 billion to repair all the damage that has been done to Ukraine. And this doesn't take into account the demographic consequences, all the people who have fled Ukraine and will never come back, all of the Ukrainians who have died. Before this war started, it was commonplace for people to talk about Ukraine being in a demographic death spiral, if anything, that situation has only been exacerbated. So, in terms of where we are today in the war, were that war to end today, I think it's quite clear that Ukraine is in a disastrous situation. And I think there is no chance that Ukraine can reverse this situation. Anybody who believes that Ukraine can recapture territory that it lost, that it can wage a strategic bombing campaign that can bring the Russians to their knees and get them to negotiate an agreement, get the Russians to negotiate an agreement that is favourable to Ukraine and reverses much of the damage that has been done is living in a dream world. This is just not going to happen. The best that the Ukrainians can hope for at this point in time is

freezing the status quo. And as I say, if you freeze the status quo, this is a disastrous outcome for Ukraine. It's a dysfunctional rump state. It's lost at least 20% of its territory. It's suffered enormous physical destruction. Large numbers of people have left the country. Huge numbers of people have died. This is a disaster. But the real problem is that this war is not over with; that the Russians are on the march. I do not deny for one second that the Russians are moving slowly. But when you look at the strategic bombing campaign and the damage that's being done to Ukraine, and you take into account the fact that Russia is capturing territory on the front lines, and it is killing more and more Ukrainians, again, you wanna remember that General Budanov says that Ukraine needs 30,000 new men each month, you understand that as bleak as the situation is now, it only gets worse with the passage of time. So when all is said and done, I would strongly encourage people not to believe what they read in the mainstream media about how well Ukraine is doing in this war and how poorly Russia is doing. Because I think if anything, exactly the opposite is happening. Thank you very much for listening to this video and I look forward to our next episode together. Thank you.

**END**

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