THE ESSENCE AND SCOPE OF UKRAINE'S VICTORY IN THE CONTEXT OF RUSSIA'S TOTAL WAR AGAINST THE UKRAINIAN STATE

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to clarify the essence and scope of Ukraine's victory in the context of Russia's total war against the Ukrainian state. A system-situational approach, historical analysis, and modeling methods were employed to address the research questions. The article demonstrates that a military victory in the physical realm becomes less significant than its representation in virtual space, where it can be shaped through propaganda in the public consciousness. The factors influencing the dynamics of scientific and official discourse regarding perceptions of victory in modern warfare are identified. It has been established that the essence of Ukraine's victory in the total Russian-Ukrainian war is as follows: in the military context – the defeat of Russia and Ukraine's achievement of the political and military-strategic objectives of its national and just war; in the political context – subordinating Russia to the goals and objectives of Ukraine's diplomatic and strategic efforts aimed at restoring its territorial integrity; and in the praxeological context – Ukraine's achievement of a peace superior to that which existed before the war. Ukraine's victory in the total Russian-Ukrainian war, in substantive terms, consists of: in the military context – the defeat of Russian armed forces and the cessation of hostilities within Ukraine's borders; in the political context – the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity; and in the international political context – achieving victory with guarantees of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the inviolability of borders from NATO and the EU, as well as securing peace without Russia's geopolitical dominance, a peace based on the rule of international law rather than the rule of force.

Keywords: national security, state sovereignty, public administration, territorial integrity, total war, victory in the war, Ukraine, Russia, goals of war, phenomenological model of victory.

1 Introduction

In Ukraine's official national security discourse, the Russian Federation's aggressive actions against Ukrainian statehood are defined as direct threats to Ukraine's national interests [14]. This reality underscores the connection between the broader issue of ensuring Ukraine's national security and the critical scientific and practical tasks of studying how to achieve victory in the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Despite the substantial contributions of national scholars who have explored the problems of war and peace, it is important to acknowledge the lack of research specifically addressing the concept of Ukraine's victory in the context of the current Russian-Ukrainian war, which has taken on the characteristics of a total war.

Thus, the aim of this article is to clarify the essence and scope of Ukraine's victory under the conditions of Russia's total war against the Ukrainian state. This clarification, we believe, will facilitate the future development of a comprehensive set of effective measures to secure Ukraine's victory in this conflict.

2 Literature Review

The problems of war and peace, as well as the concept of victory in past and contemporary conflicts, have been examined in the works of national researchers, including V. Abramov [1; 21], P. Hai-Nyzhnyk [19], R. Dodonov [6], V. Golovchenko, M. Doroshko [4; 3], V. Horbulin [5; 24], O. Zozulia, A. Lepikhov, H. Khrapach, V. Kyrylenko, and M. Shevchenko [25-26; 7; 20]. These authors analyze issues of war and peace through the lenses of social philosophy, the philosophy of history, political science, and military history.

An analysis of the scientific contributions of these scholars reveals that the category of "victory" is employed across a wide range of processes and phenomena in the military, domestic, and foreign policy domains, including:

- The defeat and complete demilitarization of the armed forces of the aggressor state.
- The destruction of the aggressor state's economy and the overthrow of its political regime.
- The capture of territory from the aggressor state.
- The dismantling of the aggressor state's system of governance and its relationship with the public.
- The dissolution of the aggressor state's military and political alliances.
- The demoralization of the aggressor state's population and military forces, including the erosion of their capacity to resist.
- The cessation of hostilities on terms dictated by the victor, formalized through relevant international legal agreements.

3 Method

To address the research problems, the following methods were employed:

- A systemic-situational approach to identify the specific threats to Ukraine's state sovereignty amid the ongoing total Russian-Ukrainian war.
- A historical analysis method to examine the experiences of modern warfare and the pathways to achieving victory in these conflicts.
- A modeling method to describe a phenomenological model of victory in war.

The article explores the essential characteristics that a robust state security system should possess, one that needs to be developed within the Ukrainian state.

4 Results and Discussion

The national objective of Ukraine's security policy is victory in the Russian-Ukrainian war [14].

Traditionally, the concept of "victory in war" is understood as the defeat of the enemy and the achievement, by one of the belligerent parties (whether a state or a coalition), of the war's political and military-strategic objectives. In the context of military operations, the formula for victory in a conventional war between state actors remains consistent: it includes the inevitable defeat and destruction of the enemy's armed forces, the collapse of its economy, and the overthrow of its political regime, which often entails the occupation of its territory. Typically, the immediate consequence of victory is the cessation of hostilities on the victor's terms, formalized through an international legal document, such as an act of capitulation, an armistice agreement, or a peace treaty.

It should be noted that, by far, the primary manifestation of Ukraine's victory in the national war with Russia would be success in the armed struggle—specifically, the defeat of Russian armed forces and the liberation of Ukrainian territories under occupation. A direct victory in this war will be achieved through the military efforts of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. However, in the pursuit of victory in a modern war, it is essential to consider a number of factors that significantly, or even decisively, influence the course of the conflict and the attainment of victory, such as:

1) Transformations and erosion of state actors – The state's loss of its monopoly on violence, where the right to use force is increasingly privatized by other actors in international relations, particularly transnational corporations (TNCs), which maintain private military companies (PMCs) for various purposes [24].

2) Transformations in warfare, specifically:

- Complication of the war domain – Modern warfare extends beyond the traditional military domain, encompassing social, psychological, and cognitive dimensions. The

experience of contemporary wars shows that victory in complex or hybrid conflicts cannot be achieved through the strategies of conventional warfare, nor can it be reduced to tactics or tactical operations [11].

- Changes in the forms of war – While traditional wars between states were (openly) symmetrical, the illegitimacy of aggression under international law and opposition from the international community have led to an increasing reliance on asymmetric warfare. Asymmetric conflicts often take the form of small wars, hybrid wars, terrorism, insurgencies, proxy wars, and metawars [12].
- Delegitimization of war – This involves a shift in the paradigms of how asymmetric wars are officially justified. Rather than targeting specific states, the stated objectives are often framed as combating terrorism, extremism, nationalism, etc. Nevertheless, the real target remains a particular state, with the goal being regime change or altering the course of the targeted state's policies [16].
- Changes in the form of victory – While past world wars concluded with one coalition's clear victory over another, formalized by acts of unconditional surrender, the nature of transnational military operations today makes such outcomes increasingly unattainable [20].

3) Transformations in the domain of geopolitical conflict, specifically its virtualization, where symbolic realities increasingly dominate over actual events. This shift significantly, and sometimes decisively, influences how victory in war is interpreted. A military victory, therefore, becomes less important than its portrayal or "war for its own sake," which is constructed through the mass media and embedded in the collective consciousness of societies in the warring states. A particular pattern emerges: purely "technical" victories in asymmetric wars may be tactically effective in traditional terms, but they offer no guarantees of achieving the war's strategic objectives, which are always political in nature and pursued through the state's diplomatic and strategic efforts. This regularity provides a valuable framework for analyzing the history of warfare, particularly in understanding the necessary and sufficient conditions for achieving victory [17].

4) 4) Interaction of five levels of war strategy. The concept of designating the following levels of warfare, each with its own distinct reality, was introduced by U.S. researcher Edward Luttwak [10]:

- technical level – where one type of weapon is opposed by another, and the development of countermeasures is subordinate to the methods of warfare at the tactical level.
- tactical level – reflects the use of specific types of weapons in combat.
- operational level – involves the interaction of multiple units on both sides, with outcomes depending on the efficiency and effectiveness of tactical-level combat operations. While operational-level developments may cover a broad scope, they are never fully autonomous as they are entirely dependent on the coordination of forces within the theater of war.
- theater strategy level – reflects the overall consequences of individual operations and shapes the general deployment of offensive and defensive forces within the theater of military operations.
- grand strategy level – encompasses the broader perception of war, taking into account domestic politics, international diplomacy, economic activity, and all factors that can either weaken or strengthen national power.

Since the ultimate objectives and outcomes are realized only at the level of grand strategy, the final result of military actions is determined exclusively at this highest level. Even a successful conquest may serve as a preliminary outcome, which could be negated by diplomatic interventions from more powerful state actors. Conversely, even a significant defeat can be mitigated through the intervention of new allies, who may seek to restore the balance of power due to concerns about the weakening of the losing side.

These five levels of strategy form a recognizable hierarchy, but they do not simply flow from top to bottom; rather, they interact dynamically. Technical efficiency is important only insofar as it has tactical implications (e.g., skilled pilots may shoot down more advanced enemy aircraft). However, tactical actions are heavily influenced by available technology. Similarly, most tactical events that shape the operational level also affect its outcome, but they, in turn, are influenced by the operational framework. Likewise, actions at the operational level generate outcomes at the theater strategy level, which defines their purpose. All military efforts ultimately influence the grand strategy level, even though it is this highest level that determines the overall outcome of the war.

5) Russia's Transition from Hybrid to Total War has significantly influenced the strategies and tools employed in the war against Ukraine. Specifically, during the Russian-Ukrainian total war, Russia aims to achieve its political, military-political, and military objectives.

According to the concept of total war [25], Russia has implemented measures to achieve these objectives during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict:

1) Political Objectives of Total War:

- Overthrow of the Ukrainian Government: To this end, Russia is engaging in a campaign of missile and aerial bombardment against the Ukrainian population, which, under certain conditions, could lead to socio-political destabilization in Ukraine and potentially result in a coup d'état or the toppling of the constitutional order [2].
- Establishment of Geopolitical Control: Russia seeks to assert control over the territory of Ukraine.

In pursuit of these political objectives, Russia regularly conducts extensive missile strikes and bombardments targeting civilian, critical, energy, military, economic, and transport infrastructure in Ukraine. This strategy creates conditions conducive to provoking a domestic crisis, which may lead to a loss of legitimacy for the government, potential changes in state power, or capitulation in the war, as well as the international isolation of Ukraine. A more detailed analysis of this issue can be found in [2].

2) Military and Political Objectives of Total War:

- international Isolation of Ukraine: Russia aims to deprive Ukraine of military aid from the anti-Putin coalition and diminish international support for the protection of state sovereignty and the restoration of territorial integrity.

To achieve these objectives, Russia employs several strategies:

- nuclear Blackmail: Targeting Western democracies to deter military aid to Ukraine.
- escalation of Military Conflict: Heightening tensions in Europe and the Middle East.
- provocation of a Global Food Crisis: Undermining Ukrainian grain exports to African countries.
- formation of Negative International Public Opinion: Creating a highly unfavorable perception of Ukraine globally.

3) Military Objectives of Total War:

- destruction of Military Potential: The aim is to disarm national military formations in Ukraine.
- termination of Resistance: This involves the complete cessation of Ukraine's resistance to the aggressor state.
- establishment of Military Control: Russia seeks to exert control over the entire territory of Ukraine.

Therefore, the Russian Federation is waging a total war against Ukraine, with the primary goal of completely dismantling the

Ukrainian state and its people. The objectives of Russia in this war are as follows:

1. Liquidation of the Ukrainian State and Its Leadership.
2. Destruction of Critical and Civil Infrastructure: This includes Ukraine's economic and transportation systems.
3. Genocide of the Ukrainian People: This is aimed at the population across the entire territory of the country.
4. Ethnic Cleansing: This involves purges in the northern, eastern, and southern regions of Ukraine, along with the forcible deportation of Ukrainian citizens to Russia.
5. Erasure of Ukrainian History and Culture: Efforts are made to obliterate the cultural heritage of the Ukrainian nation.
6. Disabling the Ukrainian Armed Forces: This objective seeks to deprive the Armed Forces of Ukraine of the capacity to engage in armed resistance against the Russian Federation, the aggressor state [25; 26].

It is important to note that in the official discourse surrounding Ukraine's national security during the Russian-Ukrainian war, President Volodymyr Zelensky has articulated several perspectives on what constitutes victory for Ukraine. In particular, during a meeting with Ukrainian journalists on April 5, 2022, Zelensky reiterated that the only acceptable outcome in the national conflict with Russia is victory, which he defines as follows [22]:

1) Preserving Ukraine's State Sovereignty.
2) Safeguarding the Lives of Hundreds of Thousands of Ukrainian Citizens.
3) Restoring Temporarily Occupied Territories: Specifically, Crimea and Donbas must return to the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian state.

President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine emphasized several key factors that must be considered when making crucial military and political decisions:

a) The current developments in the war theater and the combat readiness of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.
b) The presence of nations that guarantee the security of Ukraine.
c) A complete mistrust of Russia in security matters following the blatant acts of genocide committed on Ukrainian territory (Bucha, Irpin, Mariupol, and other cities and towns).

On June 29, 2022, President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine stated in an interview with NBC that Ukraine's victory in the war with Russia will be a collective victory for the entire democratic world [21].

In [23], the evolution of Volodymyr Zelensky's vision of Ukraine's victory in the Russian-Ukrainian war is highlighted:

May 2022: Advancing to the line of contact that existed until February 24, 2022, and initiating diplomatic negotiations;

December 2022: Realizing the aspirations of generations from the era of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi to the national liberation struggles of the 20th century;

June 2023: Restoring state sovereignty within internationally recognized borders without restrictions on sovereign rights, as well as ensuring the return of all prisoners of war and deportees;

August 2023: Acknowledging the impossibility of future wars against Ukraine;

December 2023: Achieving the liberation of the entire territory of Ukraine from invaders, including Crimea and Donbas.

Currently, the national official discourse presents the "Peace Formula" proposed by Volodymyr Zelensky. This formula is grounded in the key principles of the UN Charter and international law, emphasizing respect for state sovereignty and

territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders [22].

The "Peace Formula" includes the following points [15]:

1. Radiation and Nuclear Safety and Security.
2. Food Security.
3. Energy Security.
4. Release of All Prisoners of War and Deportees.
5. Implementation of the UN Charter and Restoration of Ukraine's Territorial Integrity and World Order.
6. Withdrawal of Russian Troops and Cessation of Hostilities.
7. Restoration of Justice.

It is important to note that the implementation of the "Peace Formula" proposed by President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine requires coordinated measures across the military, political, economic, and international dimensions of Ukraine's national security policy. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the Ukrainian state has managed to preserve constitutional order, mobilize nations within the anti-Putin coalition for military assistance [8; 9; 18], and uphold the paradigm of "Ukraine's victory" [13]. Today, the concept of "Ukraine's victory" is viewed by the majority of international partners as a promising scenario for stabilizing European security and maintaining the international balance.

To formulate the conclusions of this study and justify the proposals, we employed a phenomenological model of victory in war, which allows us to clarify the essence of victory in military, political, and praxeological contexts [20]. According to M. Shevchenko, the essence of victory in war is:

- in the military context: Defeating the enemy and achieving the political and military-strategic goals of the war by one of the warring parties;
- in the political context: Subordinating the adversary nation to the goals and objectives of the diplomatic and strategic efforts of the victorious nation;
- in the praxeological context: Achieving a better peace than before the war for the victorious state.

We should specify these provisions regarding the essence of victory in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which currently exhibits characteristics of a total war.

In our opinion, Ukraine's victory in the war with the Russian Federation can be understood in substantive terms as follows:

- in the military context: The defeat of the enemy and the cessation of hostilities on Ukrainian territory;
- in the political context: The restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity;
- in the international political context: Ukraine achieving victory, along with obtaining guarantees of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the inviolability of borders from NATO and the EU, as well as establishing peace without Russia's geopolitical dictate—peace based on the power of international law rather than on the power of force.

5 Conclusion

1. It has been demonstrated that a military victory in the tangible realm becomes less significant than its representation in the virtual realm, which can be shaped by propaganda in the collective consciousness of a particular society. Thus, in addition to the traditional military context for interpreting the concept of "victory" in modern warfare, it is important to emphasize the political and praxeological contexts. This approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges associated with achieving victory in war.
2. It has been established that the factors influencing the dynamics of scientific discourse regarding ideas of victory in modern warfare include the transformation and

profanation of the institutions of state, war, peace, national security, and international law, all within the context of evolving paradigms of international relations and conflict. Furthermore, the factors shaping the dynamics of a specific state's official discourse regarding concepts of victory in modern warfare and the methods for achieving it are grounded in the realities of diplomatic, strategic, and military efforts.

3. It has been determined that the essence of Ukraine's victory in the total Russian-Ukrainian war is:

▪ in the military context: Defeating Russia and achieving Ukraine's political and military-strategic goals in a national and just war;
▪ in the political context: Subordinating Russia to the diplomatic and strategic objectives of the Ukrainian state aimed at restoring its territorial integrity;
▪ in the praxeological context: Achieving a better peace for Ukraine than existed before the war.
▪ The victory of Ukraine in the total war unleashed by Russia, in substantive terms, is:
▪ in the military context: The defeat of the Russian armed forces and the cessation of hostilities on Ukrainian territory;
▪ in the political context: The restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity;
▪ in the international political context: Ukraine achieving victory alongside guarantees of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability of borders from NATO and the EU; a peace that is free from Russia's geopolitical dictate, based on the authority of international law rather than the use of force.

We see prospects for further research in the theoretical substantiation of options for Ukraine's victory in the Russian-Ukrainian war.

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