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Український Інститут політики  
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## SEVEN SCENARIOS FOR UKRAINE

*from triumph to decline*

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Scenario Development Team for Ukraine:

«Seven scenarios for Ukraine: from triumph to decline»

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# INTRODUCTION

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Analysis of development scenarios is one of the critical methods that help us “dispel the darkness” of the future, make the unknown (and, accordingly, frightening) predictable and operable, and prepare states, societies, economies, and ordinary people for it. Also, “scripting” impels essential policy changes that help bring closer a “good” future and avoid adverse developments, especially in a situation where the scientific world and the political environment still disagree about the origins of the crisis and its current stage of development.

The study’s authors proceed from the inviolability of the principles of the territorial integrity of internationally recognized borders and the rule of law of Ukraine. However, among other things, they are forced to analyze scenarios for their illegal violation. We also tried to expand the forecasting horizon.

The primary scientific method of research was the method of structural analysis and modeling, within which 22

internal and external factors were studied. The following were identified as critical factors: the course of hostilities in the Russian-Ukrainian war, the international situation, and social sentiments. Structural modeling was carried out for each of the scenarios.

During the work on the study, the team of authors agreed on the inexpediency and impossibility of scientifically based gradation of the likelihood of scenarios (due to the significant amount of unknown variables).

We insist that the scenarios are not an attempt to predict the future but to systematically analyze the interactions of a set of factors that affect the development of the state and society.

The UIP supports all efforts aimed at ending the war and preserving the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.



## Scenario #1 - "Triumph"

### **Markers:**

- *complete military victory for Ukraine;*
- *the defeat of the Russian troops, their withdrawal from the entire territory of Ukraine (including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and ORDLO);*
- *internal political crisis in the Russian Federation;*
- *the possible collapse of the Russian Federation and the transfer of power to the regional elites;*
- *Ukraine's claims to part of the territories of the Russian Federation and leadership in the post-Soviet space;*
- *strengthening the global dominance of the United States and allies.*

### ***Possible consequences for Ukraine:***

- **the political** - complete restoration of territorial integrity and the possible accession of the Kuban and the Belgorod region to Ukraine; formation of a new national identity in Ukraine; membership in the EU and NATO; one of the critical political roles in Eastern Europe - similar to France or Germany; strengthening the role of the military with the gradual restoration of democratic governance and competitive elections;
- **economic** – inflow of reparations and investments into the Ukrainian economy; industrial recovery and new industrialization; the role of one of the critical hubs of world trade; the rapid growth of the military-industrial complex and the export of military services; strengthening the position of a crucial agricultural exporter in the world;
- **social** – new civic solidarity, high standard of living, migration to Ukraine from Russia and all over the post-Soviet space.

### ***Implementation conditions:***

The scenario is possible with the active assistance of the United States, NATO, and the EU, providing Ukraine with weapons and financial aid in the required quantity to resume an active counteroffensive in several directions at once (Kherson, Donetsk, Kharkiv, etc.); achieving more profound isolation of the Russian Federation, including the deprivation of partnership with other countries - China, Turkey, India, and so on.

Under the pressure of Western sanctions, an economic recession inside Russia could occur, leading to a faster depletion of military resources and hastening its defeat. A "palace" change of power can occur with the assistance of a part of the Russian elites. The scenario with the internal resistance of the Russians themselves to get rid of the Putin regime looks less realistic at this stage.

## Scenario #2 - "Success"

### **Markers:**

- *the exhaustion of the Russian Federation in the war with Ukraine;*
- *a string of tactical military defeats; withdrawal of Russian troops from all territory of Ukraine;*
- *diplomatic definition of the future of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea within Ukraine;*
- *peace agreements between Ukraine and the new government of the Russian Federation;*
- *preservation of the Russian Federation as a single state during the change of power and the liberalization of the political regime;*
- *the refusal of the Russian Federation from global ambitions.*



### ***Possible consequences for Ukraine:***

- **the political** – the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine; the high role of the military in the political dominance of the presidential vertical and the presidential party; new civic solidarity; parliamentary and presidential elections; a gradual increase in the role of Ukraine in Europe; EU membership; probable NATO membership;
- **economic** – rapid economic recovery to pre-war levels thanks to external support and investment. The dominant industries are agriculture, metallurgy, export of raw materials, trade, logistics, military services, digitalization;
- **social** – a rapidly growing standard of living, the return of refugees to Ukraine.

### ***Conditions for implementation:***

The scenario is possible while maintaining the unity of the political elites and the successful counter-offensive of Ukraine, as well as the depletion of the military resources of the Russian Federation. The complete liberation of the Kherson, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions should take place, after which hostilities will be suspended. At the same time, Western partners should strengthen the sanctions policy against the Russian Federation and provide arms supplies and financial assistance to Ukraine in the required amount.





## Scenario #3 - "Overweight"

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### **Markers:**

- *repelling the Russian attack on Ukraine and restoring the pre-war status quo;*
- *return to the borders until February 24, 2022;*
- *the permanent or temporary refusal of the Russian Federation to continue the war against Ukraine;*
- *resumption of negotiations on the status of ORDLO;*
- *freezing the issue of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea; mitigation of global confrontation.*

### ***Possible consequences for Ukraine:***

- **the political** – the risks of a new war and aggression on the part of the Russian Federation; the actual military neutrality of Ukraine upon accession to the EU; the dominant presidential vertical in domestic politics; limitedly competitive elections; high popularity of the military;
- **economic** – partially recovering the economy at a slow pace due to significant human, infrastructural and financial losses. The dominant industries are military services, agriculture, and the exploitation of natural resources;
- **social** – the standard of living of citizens remains at the level reached at the time of the end of the war/suspension of hostilities by the Russian

Federation with the prospect of gradual growth in the future, as well as the partial return of refugees to Ukraine.

### ***Implementation conditions:***

The scenario is possible with an active counter-offensive of Ukraine and a significant depletion of the Russian army. There must be a complete liberation of the Kherson region and parts of the Zaporizhzhia and Kharkiv regions, after which there will be a suspension of hostilities without any agreement or a deal with a weak status leaving the parties in limbo. Agreements between the US/NATO and the Russian Federation and international mediators can play a decisive role.

## Scenario #4 – "Dead End"

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### **Markers:**

- *prolonged low-level war and temporary freezing of the conflict without political agreements;*
- *new agreements of the type "Minsk";*
- *both sides declare their "strategic victory";*
- *the front line/demarcation line acts as a conditional border;*
- *continuation of the confrontation between the Russian Federation and the United States with partners.*

***Possible consequences for Ukraine:***

- **the political** – the risks of a new war and aggression from the Russian Federation remain; conditional borders run along the front line; rigid presidential vertical in Ukraine and lack of political competition; formal elections; strong external influence on Ukraine;
- **economic** – "subsidized" nature of the economy, dependence on external financial support. The economic situation in the country remains difficult: a partial recovery is underway, but due to the lack of stability and significant risks of defrosting the conflict, it is impossible to restore the economy to the pre-war level fully. In a more favorable situation are the regions that do not border on the front line, where the business remaining in Ukraine will mainly "flow." The dominant sectors of the economy are agriculture and the military industry;

- **social** – the standard of living of citizens is slowly recovering, and there is a partial return of refugees to Ukraine. Still, the emigration of the most prosperous and educated citizens continues.

***Implementation conditions:***

The scenario is possible if financial and military assistance to Ukraine is sufficient to contain the advance of the Russian army but not enough to launch an active counteroffensive and liberate the occupied territories. Ukraine and the Russian Federation - will be primarily exhausted to continue the "hot" phase of the war but are not ready to negotiate effective peace agreements. It is also possible that the world elites will reach a consensus regarding freezing the military conflict in Ukraine.

## Scenario #5 - "Imbalance"



### **Markers:**

- *a problematic compromise on the "Istanbul option" - Ukraine and the Russian Federation sign a peace agreement or other agreements on the cessation of hostilities without a complete defeat/victory of one of the parties;*
- *military democracy, the possibility of a new war;*
- *returning to the borders before February 24 and accepting part of the Russian demands for a non-bloc status;*
- *freezing "territorial" issues; local compromise between the Russian Federation and the United States with partners.*

### ***Possible consequences for Ukraine:***

- **the political** – the Russian army returns to the borders on February 23, 2022; several states of the world provide security guarantees to Ukraine (they may include the United States, Great Britain, France, Turkey, Germany, Canada, Italy, Poland, Israel) that do not apply to Crimea and ORDLO; Ukraine limits its sovereignty in the matter of international cooperation in the field of security and guarantees it is not joining NATO or other military alliances; the prospects of joining the EU remain; internal political competition is gradually being restored, and competitive presidential and parliamentary elections are being held; political disunity ;
- **economic** – there is a gradual economic recovery thanks to external support. Agriculture, the exploitation of natural resources, the service sector,

the military sector, and trade remain the dominant sectors of the economy;

- **social** – citizens' living standard is gradually improving, and most refugees return to Ukraine.

### ***Implementation Conditions:***

A deadlock on the fronts (optional) could lead to such a scenario, which could create conditions for the resumption of the peace negotiation and settlement. At the same time, tacit agreements between the US and EU elites between themselves and the Russian Federation are possible that the war in Ukraine must be stopped since the global security crisis is acute, and the world economy is suffering significant losses. International mediators - China, Turkey, and other countries- can play an important role.

## Scenario #6 - "Failure"

### **Markers:**

- *the capture of the Russian Federation of the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine while maintaining Ukrainian statehood in the rest of the territory;*
- *forced asymmetrical concessions by Ukraine with or without signing a peace agreement;*
- *the likelihood of a new war;*
- *continuation of the confrontation between the Russian Federation and the United States with partners.*

***Possible consequences for Ukraine:***

- **the political** – the Russian Federation reserves all the occupied territories; high level of external control; restrictions on the sovereignty of Ukraine in the issue of international cooperation in the field of security; domestic power in the hands of the military and militarized elites; political instability; elections are nominal;
- **economic** – Ukraine falls into political and economic dependence on the Russian Federation and the West; the exclusively raw-material type of economy remains;

- **social** – continued decline in citizens' standard of living; the mass exodus of people abroad.

***Implementation conditions:***

The scenario is possible in case of a significant reduction or complete cessation of military and financial assistance by Western partners, which can lead to depletion of resources and weakening of Ukraine. Under such conditions, the troops of the Russian Federation will retain the possibility of moving deep into the territory of Ukraine, which will lead to its gradual capture.



## Scenario #7 - "Decline"

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### **Markers:**

- *achievement of the Russian Federation of its goals by military means;*
- *occupation of all or most of the territory of Ukraine; continuation of local hostilities;*
- *chaos and anarchization of management processes;*
- *severe humanitarian crisis;*
- *the ongoing global conflict between the Russian Federation and the United States with partners;*
- *cybersecurity crisis for the EU.*

### ***Possible consequences for Ukraine:***

- **the political** – the formation of quasi-state formations on the territory of Ukraine by the forces of the Russian Federation; maintaining control of the legitimate government of Ukraine only over part of the territory; the dominant external dependence of the legitimate government; democratic elections are not held (although formal plebiscites are not ruled out); absolute power is in the hands of military commanders; authoritarian and totalitarian regimes; political fragmentation ;
- **economic** – the destruction of a complex economy; enhanced exploitation of raw materials and resource base; natural type of management; dependence on imports of critical goods;

- **social** – citizens' standard of living is critically reduced; a sharp increase in mortality, morbidity, and crime rates; the most productive (educated and wealthy) of the citizens emigrate.

### ***Implementation conditions:***

The scenario is possible in the event of the significant military success of the Russian Federation (with the involvement of allies), including the use of nuclear or other non-conventional weapons, as well as due to a significant reduction or complete cessation of military and financial assistance from Western partners. At the same time, the Russian Federation remains under sanctions, as a result of which the standard of living in the occupied territories will also be deficient.

# AFTERWORD

The Ukrainian Institute of Politics sincerely thanks all the participants of the study, the team of authors, the editorial and design team, as well as those who made the publication of this research material possible.

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