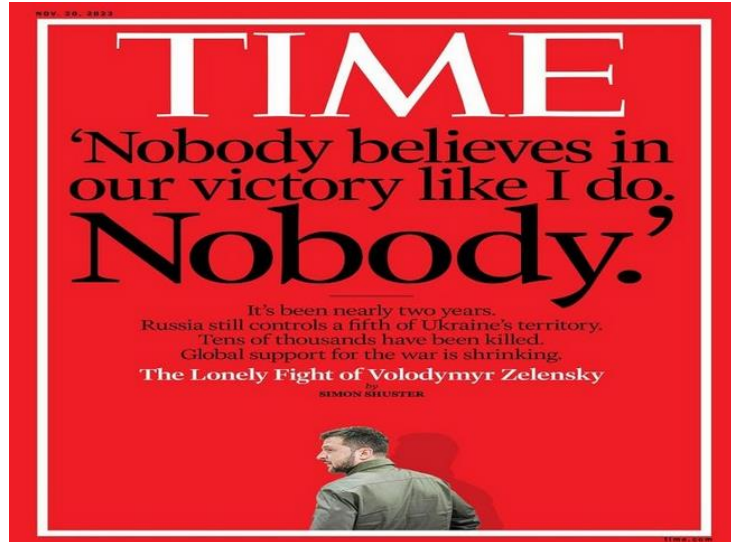


Time Magazine Shared Some “Politically Inconvenient” Truths About Ukraine

By Andrew Korbko



The most “politically inconvenient” truth of them all is that NATO’s proxy war on Russia through Ukraine failed to strategically defeat that targeted Eurasian Great Power, the awareness of which is becoming widespread but it still remains taboo to admit this. Time Magazine’s cover piece comes the closest to doing so out of anything produced by a major Mainstream Media outlet thus far, however, and this might make it easier for folks to admit the West’s own self-inflicted strategic defeat.

Time Magazine’s latest cover story on Zelensky drew attention to a slew of “politically inconvenient” truths about [NATO’s proxy war on Russia through Ukraine](#). Titled “[‘Nobody Believes in Our Victory Like I Do.’ Inside Volodymyr Zelensky’s Struggle to Keep Ukraine in the Fight](#)”, it contains numerous accounts from his unnamed closest aides and senior advisors that completely contradict conventional narratives. What follows are the top takeaways and their associated excerpts, which will then be briefly analyzed.

*** Zelensky has become physically exhausted after 20 months of begging for aid all the time**

- *“The reason, he later said, was the exhaustion he felt that night, not only from the demands of leadership during the war but also the persistent need to convince his allies that, with their help, Ukraine can win. ‘Nobody believes in our victory like I do. Nobody,’ Zelensky told TIME in an interview after his trip. Instilling that belief in his allies, he said, ‘takes all your power, your energy. You understand? It takes so much of everything.’”*

*** He said that the West is exhausted too and has started tuning out of the Ukrainian “show”**

- *“Tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians have been killed, and Zelensky can feel during his travels that global interest in the war has slackened. So has the level of international support. ‘The scariest thing is that part of the world got used to the war in Ukraine,’ he says. ‘Exhaustion with the war rolls along like a wave. You see it in the United States, in Europe. And we see that as soon as they start to get a little tired, it becomes like a show to them: ‘I can’t watch this rerun for the 10th time.’”*

*** Zelensky “feels betrayed by his Western allies”, whom he suspects don’t want him to win anymore**

- *“Another (longtime member of his team) tells me that, most of all, Zelensky feels betrayed by his Western allies. They have left him without the means to win the war, only the means to survive it.”*

*** Those close to him worry that he’s become “deluded” with a “messianic” complex**

- *“His belief in Ukraine’s ultimate victory over Russia has hardened into a form that worries some of his advisers. It is immovable, verging on the messianic. ‘He deludes himself,’ one of his closest aides tells me in frustration. ‘We’re out of options. We’re not winning. But try telling him that.’”*

*** He correspondingly still refuses to countenance a ceasefire despite it being a pragmatic scenario**

- *“Zelensky’s stubbornness, some of his aides say, has hurt their team’s efforts to come up with a new strategy, a new message. As they have debated the future of the war, one issue has remained taboo: the possibility of negotiating a peace deal with the Russians.”*

*** His WWII fearmongering, arguably a sign of psychosis, has failed to restore Western attention**

- *“‘A third world war could start in Ukraine, continue in Israel, and move on from there to Asia, and then explode somewhere else.’ That was his message in Washington: Help Ukraine stop the war before it spreads, and before it’s too late. He worries his audience has stopped paying attention.”*

*** Zelensky’s last trip to the US was predictably a failure and he’s becoming toxic to associate with**

- *“Congressional leaders declined to let Zelensky deliver a public address on Capitol Hill. His aides tried to arrange an in-person appearance for him on Fox News and an interview with Oprah Winfrey. Neither one came through.”*

*** He candidly admitted that the conflict still continues only because of American aid**

- *“The Democrats, for their part, wanted to understand where the war was headed, and how badly Ukraine needed U.S. support. ‘They asked me straight up: If we don’t give you the aid, what happens?’ Zelensky recalls. ‘What happens is we will lose.’”*

*** Ukrainians might turn on Zelensky if more blackouts occur as expected**

- *“Three of the senior officials in charge of dealing with this problem told me blackouts would likely be more severe this winter, and the public reaction in Ukraine would not be as forgiving. ‘Last year people blamed the Russians,’ one of them says. ‘This time they’ll blame us for not doing enough to prepare.’”*

*** At least one senior general might soon be fired to distract from the failed counteroffensive**

- *“Before the winter sets in, his aides warned me to expect major changes in their military strategy and a major shake-up in the President’s team. At least one minister would need to be fired, along with a senior general in charge of the counteroffensive, they said, to ensure accountability for Ukraine’s slow progress at the front. ‘We’re not moving forward,’ says one of Zelensky’s close aides.”*

*** Some troops have begun refusing Zelensky’s orders to advance because they lack arms and men**

- *“Some front-line commanders, [one of Zelensky’s closest aides] continues, have begun refusing orders to advance, even when they came directly from the office of the President. ‘They just want to sit in the trenches and hold the line,’ he says. ‘But we can’t win a war that way.’ When I raised these claims with a senior military officer, he said that some commanders have little choice in second-guessing orders from the top.*

At one point in early October, he said, the political leadership in Kyiv demanded an operation to ‘retake’ the city of Horlivka, a strategic outpost in eastern Ukraine that the Russians have held and fiercely defended for nearly a decade. The answer came back in the form of a question: With what? ‘They don’t have the men or the weapons,’ says the officer. ‘Where are the weapons? Where is the artillery? Where are the new recruits?’”

*** Older and less healthy recruits replaced the youth after the latter were culled over the months**

- *“[The casualty toll] has eroded the ranks of Ukraine’s armed forces so badly that draft offices have been forced to call up ever older personnel, raising the average age of a soldier in Ukraine to around 43 years. ‘They’re grown men now, and they aren’t that healthy to begin with,’ says the close aide to Zelensky. ‘This is Ukraine. Not Scandinavia.’”*

*** Forcible conscription measures have become increasingly frequent**

- *“Now recruitment is way down. As conscription efforts have intensified around the country, stories are spreading on social media of draft officers pulling men off trains and buses and sending them to the front. Those with means sometimes bribe their way out of service, often by paying for a medical exemption.”*

*** Zelensky’s performative anti-corruption move only worsened Ukraine’s conscription crisis**

- *“Such episodes of corruption within the recruitment system became so widespread by the end of the summer that on Aug. 11 Zelensky fired the heads of the draft offices in every region of the country. The decision was intended to signal his commitment to fighting graft. But the move backfired, according to the senior military officer, as recruitment nearly ground to a halt without leadership.”*

*** The US is reportedly making more aid dependent on Kiev meeting strict anti-corruption conditions**

- *“In recent months, the issue of corruption has strained Zelensky’s relationship with many of his allies. Ahead of his visit to Washington, the White House prepared a list of anti-corruption reforms for the Ukrainians to undertake. One of the aides who traveled with Zelensky to the U.S. told me these proposals targeted the very top of the state hierarchy. ‘These were not suggestions,’ says another presidential adviser. ‘These were conditions.’”*

*** Nevertheless, no progress has been made, and corruption continues corroding the state**

- *“Amid all the pressure to root out corruption, I assumed, perhaps naively, that officials in Ukraine would think twice before taking a bribe or pocketing state funds. But when I made this point to a top presidential adviser in early October, he asked me to turn off my audio recorder so he could speak more freely. ‘Simon, you’re mistaken,’ he says. ‘People are stealing like there’s no tomorrow.’”*

*** Zelensky is trying to spin corruption-related criticisms as part of a self-interested game by some allies**

- *“He also suggested that some foreign allies have an incentive to exaggerate the problem, because it gives them an excuse to cut off financial support. ‘It’s not right,’ he says, ‘for them to cover up their failure to help Ukraine by tossing out these accusations.’”*

*** An allegedly corrupt official claimed that capitulating to such pressure could lead to regime change**

- *“Perhaps, I suggested, amid all the concerns about corruption in Ukraine, it would have been wiser for Shurma to step aside while under investigation for embezzlement, or at least sit out Zelensky’s trip to Washington. He responded*

with a shrug. 'If we do that, tomorrow everybody on the team would be targeted,' he says. 'Politics is back, and that's the problem.'"

*** Zelensky admitted that the latest Israeli-Hamas war takes attention away from his cause**

- "It's logical,' Zelensky tells me. 'Of course we lose out from the events in the Middle East. People are dying, and the world's help is needed there to save lives, to save humanity.' Zelensky wanted to help. After the crisis meeting with aides, he asked the Israeli government for permission to visit their country in a show of solidarity. The answer appeared the following week in Israeli media reports: 'The time is not right.'"

To summarize the “politically incorrect” truths shared by Time:

1. Zelensky's physical exhaustion has led to him becoming mentally exhausted, which resulted in messianic delusions and psychotic WWII fearmongering, and all of this makes him look like a fool.
2. Ukraine is losing the “race of logistics”/“war of attrition” with Russia, some troops have even refused to follow suicidal orders despite coming from Zelensky himself, and the West's attention is waning.
3. Out-of-control corruption and the latest Israeli-Hamas war provide Ukraine's patrons with the “publicly plausible” pretexts for gradually disengaging and negotiating a “new normal” in their ties.

All of this will now be briefly analyzed to help the reader understand where everything is headed.

Simply put, the failure of Kiev's ultra-expensive and over-hyped counteroffensive decisively shifted popular Western perceptions about the conflict, particularly the impact that any further funding could have on changing the status quo. It's now becoming toxic to associate with Zelensky because he represents an increasingly lost cause into which over \$160 billion worth of Western taxpayers' funds were invested to no avail. Few politicians want to risk the public's wrath by continuing to promote him.

There are more urgent financial priorities for the West nowadays anyhow, first and foremost domestic ones followed by aid to their bloc's Israeli ally (though some prioritize Israel over their own country), which make the Ukrainian cause even more unappealing than before. That's not even mentioning the influence that upcoming elections are expected to have as politicians make demagogic pledges about where they'll redirect potential Ukrainian aid in exchange for the public's vote.

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Upon this finally happening, and it's arguably inevitable no matter how long it ultimately takes, meaningful discussions can then be held on negotiating a ceasefire with a view towards freezing the conflict like President Putin indicated he's been interested in doing since the summer as proven [here](#). The devil is in the details, some of which [the reportedly ongoing Track 1.5-2 talks](#) are trying to hammer out, but it's better to publicly confirm these talks and make them official sooner than later.

Ukraine is struggling to hold the Line of Contact, and with dwindling Western aid as earlier earmarked items are [urgently redirected](#) to Israel instead, this might become impossible. From the West's perspective, a potential Russian breakthrough would be among the most realistic worst-case scenarios right now since it would force them into a dilemma between Ukraine and Israel. For this reason, it's in their objective interests to formally initiate peace talks, which Time Magazine's piece facilitates.

