

# "The Illusion of Victory" for Short-sighted Russia

By: Fazil Amzaev\*

A number of events have occurred over the past few months that support the assumption that the United States is continuing its strategy of protracting the conflict in relation to the Ukrainian crisis.

It is necessary to recall that the continuation of this conflict in the active phase weakens all the main forces located on the Eurasian continent - Europe, Russia and China.

The weakening of European countries and Russia is evident due to the huge military expenditures, as well as the breakdown of economic ties between Russia and Europe. As for China, Russia's uncertain position makes it impossible for China to build effective economic cooperation with it, forcing the Chinese economy to suffocate without Russian resources.

Here it is necessary to recall the unsuccessful counteroffensive of Ukraine in the summer of 2023. The main reason for the failure of the counteroffensive was the insufficient provision of the Ukrainian army with appropriate weapons by Western partners, primarily by the United States.

In an interview with the Economist magazine on November 1, 2023, then Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Valeriy Zaluzhny hinted in diplomatic words at insufficient arms supplies from the United States, saying: "To get out of this impasse, we need something new, like gunpowder, which the Chinese invented and with which we are still killing each other."

He warned that without a significant advantage, Ukraine faced a protracted trench war that could exhaust the Ukrainian state. In the interview, he argued that the delay in Western arms deliveries, while disappointing, was not the main reason for Ukraine's predicament.

Apparently, it was Zaluzhny's unwillingness to fight Russia without "inventing gunpowder" that led to his dismissal from the post of commander-in-chief.

On December 1, 2023, in his interview with the Associated Press, Ukrainian President Zelensky also stated: "We did not receive all the weapons we wanted, I cannot be happy with that, but I also cannot complain too much."

Almost a year later, on October 17, 2024, already in his capacity as Ukraine's ambassador to the UK, Zaluzhny made a more frank statement about the reasons for the failure of the Ukrainian counteroffensive, saying that the 2023 counteroffensive under his command was not successful because the West did not provide sufficient weapons.

"As a result, we have found ourselves in a state of protracted war. In my personal opinion, a way out of this protracted war seems almost impossible," said the Ukrainian ambassador to Britain.

From this we can say with confidence that since the summer of 2023 the US has been working to prolong the conflict in relation to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

After that, from December 2023 to the end of April 2024, a dispute began between the Democratic and Republican parties in both houses of the US Congress regarding the allocation of 60 billion dollars to Ukraine. Despite the existence of real disagreements between the two parties, it is nevertheless worth noting that all these disagreements fit organically into the US plan to prolong the conflict in Ukraine.

In general, it is worth noting that the United States has been creating the illusion of victory for Russia since the first days of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. We all remember the statements by American and British analysts in the first days of the war that Kyiv would fall within 48 hours.

Subsequently, the media, including Ukrainian ones, circulated information that Russia was capable of plunging Ukrainian cities into an energy blackout, which prompted Russian troops to use up their entire stock of missiles in the winter of 2022-2023.

After the failure of the Ukrainian counteroffensive in the summer of 2023, Russia was fed dreams that Ukraine was weak and about to collapse, that Western support, and especially that of the United States, was unstable, and that any day now Ukraine, under pressure from the United States, would be forced to sit down at the table of direct negotiations with Russia. This was the atmosphere that reigned in the media, including Ukrainian media, since the summer of 2024.

The Ukrainian side played along with this US policy. For example, Ukrainian President Zelensky made ambiguous statements from late spring 2024 until late summer about the need to end the active phase of the conflict, which was undoubtedly interpreted by the Russian side as Ukraine's desire to begin negotiations.

Apparently, some secret contacts between the Ukrainian and Russian sides were conducted during the early to mid-summer of 2024, in particular regarding the moratorium of the warring parties on attacks on infrastructure facilities.

This is why, when on August 6, 2024, Ukrainian troops captured significant territories of Russia in the Kursk region, Russian President Putin complained that after these actions by the Ukrainian side, there could be no talk of any negotiations.

This US policy is aimed at keeping Russia in a state of "victory illusion" in the Russian-Ukrainian war, which will keep the Russian leadership in a state of anticipation of negotiations, which in turn will push Russia to military action of maximum intensity, in order to strengthen its negotiating position. Undoubtedly, Russia understands that the more Ukrainian territory it can seize before the negotiations begin, the more of these territories will remain under its control, since negotiations will inevitably mean a freeze of the conflict along the line of contact.

This strategy leads to Russia throwing all its resources into the millstones of war, being in a constant offensive on the battlefield, believing that the war is about to end. In the US understanding, this will sooner or later lead to Russia being so weakened that it will be willing to submit to the will of the US both in the Ukrainian crisis and in other international affairs, and especially in the matter of jointly confronting China, whose growing power has particularly worried America over the past decade.

As for Ukraine, it has vast territories that allow it to exchange these territories in exchange for weakening the enemy, since it is known that losses in soldiers and resources during an offensive are many times greater than during a defensive one.

### **This is what the US plan for this conflict looks like in general terms**

Devoid of ideology, stupid, short-sighted Russia, accustomed to solving all its foreign policy problems solely by force of arms, is incapable of resisting such a skillful policy of America, therefore it is not expected that it will be able to escape from the trap into which it has fallen in Ukraine.

Thus, at the moment, no significant de-escalation is expected. Yes, it is possible that some kind of ceasefire will be declared for a short time, which will continue with further escalation, but even this is unlikely.

**\* Head of the Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir in Ukraine**