UKRAINE AT THE EPICENTER OF GLOBAL TURBULENCE: POLITICS, WAR, CIVILIZATIONAL CHALLENGES

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✓ THE WORLD ON THE BRINK OF A FRAGMENTED THIRD WORLD WAR

The world is increasingly sinking into a state of fragmented yet systemic warfare on a global scale. This is not a formally declared world war, but rather a multi-front armed confrontation that, in its entirety, has already acquired the character of a global military-political conflict.

➢ **Simultaneous military escalations:**

- full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine;
- armed confrontation between Israel and Iran and its proxy groups;
- growing tensions around Taiwan and in the South China Sea;
- regional wars in Africa (Sahel, Sudan, Ethiopia) and renewed flare-ups in the Balkans (ethnic tensions between Serbia and Kosovo, separatist trends in Bosnia and Herzegovina) —

all of these point to the emergence of a multipolar military-political clash between the key power centers of the modern world — on one side, the USA and NATO allies, the United Kingdom, Canada, the European Union, Israel; on the other — China, the Russian Federation, Iran, and their proxy structures and satellites.

✓ CRISIS OF POLITICAL UNITY AND LEADERSHIP IN THE WEST

Democratic Western states are increasingly demonstrating a loss of political coherence, strategic unity, and effective global leadership.

The United States, as the main guarantor of Western security, is engulfed in deep internal polarization, aging political elites, legal uncertainty, and growing populism. This internal tension increasingly affects Washington's strategic capacity externally.

The European Union displays fragmentation — primarily due to the destructive policies of certain Eastern European member states (notably Hungary, Slovakia, and partly Bulgaria), which, under cultural, informational, or political influence from the Russian Federation, block or weaken the EU's unified stance on Ukraine, security, and sanctions.

As a result, the EU is unable to take consistent and decisive strategic decisions, creating risks not only for European stability but also for the international legal order and a just resolution to the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Political will is being replaced with rhetoric, and collective strategic leadership is substituted by declarations.

The erosion of global leadership creates a power vacuum actively filled by authoritarian and revisionist states — primarily Russia, China, and Iran.

- ✓ **DECLINE OF THE GLOBAL POLITICUM: CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Current leaders of major powers — the USA, the Russian Federation, and China — represent the post-Soviet and post-Cold War generation. Their political thinking is largely shaped by the old geopolitical architecture, making them prone to personalism, authoritarianism, isolationism, and conservatism. In many cases, policy is determined not by institutions, but by individual will or a narrow circle of informal influences.

A dangerous global trend is taking hold — governance through anti-democratic mechanisms, without proper legal and institutional accountability.

This creates a precedent for states seeking their own model of development — notably Ukraine, which faces a choice: to become part of the democratic world or fall into a neo-authoritarian dynamic, especially under the pressure of war.

Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine is not only a manifestation of imperial revanchism, but also a symptom of a deep global crisis of political responsibility, where violators of international law go unchecked due to the weakness of deterrent mechanisms.

This is especially dangerous for young democracies and transitional states, where the temptation of the "strong hand" grows amid wartime conditions.

- ✓ **UKRAINE: WAR, GOVERNANCE CRISIS, AND SYSTEMIC THREATS**

Lack of War Strategy

The Russian-Ukrainian war has been ongoing for over a decade, but the state has yet to shift its economy, social policy, and governance system onto a full wartime footing.

The central issue is the absence of a coherent national doctrine of victory — a clearly defined goal, methodology, mobilization system, and postwar reconstruction plan.

Instead, there is chaos, manual control, performative reforms, and depletion of strategic reserves — human, military, and managerial.

Stalemate and Frontline Risks

Despite the heroism and sacrifice of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the army is being systematically exhausted.

Against the backdrop of a chronic shortage of ammunition, air defense, drones, equipment, and personnel reserves, the risks of local breakthroughs, territorial losses, societal fatigue, and rear demoralization are growing.

Imitation of State Governance

The political system is increasingly imitating activity rather than implementing it.

Forum performances, media self-promotion, and performative reforms distract the public from real challenges.

Decision-making is non-collegial, opaque, and concentrated in narrow groups, cultivating impunity and manipulation.

Corruption, Espionage, and Populism

A serious threat is posed by the deep infiltration of state structures by Russian agents and the influence of foreign actors advancing anti-Ukrainian agendas aligned with Moscow's interests.

- **Examples include:**

- Hungary (under Viktor Orbán) — systematic blocking of EU decisions on Ukraine, political pressure under the guise of "protecting the Hungarian minority" in Zakarpattia, support for pro-Russian and Ruthenian separatist initiatives, and control over regional authorities via ethnic-based parties like "KMKS – Party of Hungarians of Ukraine" and "Democratic Party of Hungarians of Ukraine", which violate Article 36 of the Constitution and Article 3, part 2 of the Law on Political Parties in Ukraine, prohibiting the creation of parties on an ethnic basis;
- Slovakia (under Robert Fico) — open pro-Russian rhetoric and undermining support for Ukraine;
- Partly Bulgaria — pro-Russian political factions blocking military aid to Ukraine.

- **Absence of State Ideology and Ukrainian National Idea**

Ukraine has yet to formulate and implement a comprehensive state ideology — a Ukrainian National Idea — that could become the spiritual and value-based foundation for national unity, modernization, and civilizational revival.

This ideological vacuum poses a systemic threat to unity, especially amid war, cultural pressure, and hybrid aggression.

Without such an idea, it is difficult to form a consolidated political Ukrainian nation, inclusive of all citizens regardless of ethnicity, based on shared memory, values, language, and the will to preserve a sovereign national state.

This also blocks the realization of Ukraine's natural and internationally recognized right to national self-determination and cultural-civilizational identity.

- ✓ **GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SYSTEMIC CRISIS**

Taken together, all of the above factors form a deep systemic political crisis of public governance.

This crisis is accompanied by entrenched, hereditary corruption, clan-based interests, populism, unprofessionalism, intolerance toward dissent, and the absence of rule of law.

Added to this is a profound ideological void — the lack of a clear state ideology and Ukrainian National Idea capable of uniting the nation.

In its place, a closed-loop system of “ours for ours” dominates — instead of meritocracy, legal accountability, and professional management in staffing and institutional development.

- ✓ **THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR AS AN INSTRUMENT OF MANIPULATION AND DIVISION IN UKRAINIAN SOCIETY**

Religion in Ukraine remains one of the key domains in the struggle for mass consciousness, spiritual independence, and identity.

Rather than serving as a space of unity and moral resistance to Russian aggression, it is increasingly weaponized as a tool of hybrid warfare, disorientation, and spiritual fragmentation.

Above all, structures of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine continue to operate as a systematically organized ideological apparatus of influence for the Russian Federation and its intelligence services, preserving hierarchical subordination and tools of information-psychological control.

Under the cover of slogans such as “canonicity,” “peace,” and “spirituality,” they promote pro-Russian narratives, encourage capitulation, and discredit Ukrainian statehood, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

More and more, religion — especially through the so-called “Ukrainian Orthodox Church” of the Moscow Patriarchate — is used as a tool of emotional and psychological pressure on the population, aiming to disorient, demoralize, and suppress critical thinking, particularly during war and social instability.

Meanwhile, domestic political and oligarchic structures also use church institutions as instruments of control, manipulation, and preservation of the status quo, thereby blocking spiritual renewal in society.

The church, which should be a moral authority and spiritual leader, often degenerates into a tool of protecting corrupt and clan-based systems.

At the same time, Ukraine lacks a state policy of ideological de-russification of the spiritual domain and a clear program to support the Orthodox Church of Ukraine as the spiritual foundation of national unity.

There is also no comprehensive strategy for spiritual security, which would counteract religious manipulation, information attacks, and the subversive activities of the Russian Orthodox Church — particularly under the guise of the so-called “church mission” of the UOC-MP in Ukraine.

As a result, a significant portion of Ukrainian society remains unprotected from religious and psychological influence exerted by the aggressor state — the Russian Federation and its ideological satellites, who disguise the dissemination of pseudo-Christian narratives and a misanthropic imperial doctrine — the so-called “Russian world”, which forms the spiritual core of modern rashism.

- ✓ **OTHER UNDERESTIMATED THREATS**

Beyond the visible threats — military, political, economic, or geopolitical — Ukraine is facing a growing body of internal, structurally dangerous processes that are gradually undermining the viability of the state, society, and national unity.

- **Demographic Decline**

Ukraine is experiencing critical demographic trends: mass emigration of the working-age population, declining birth rates, the outflow of children, adolescents, and youth abroad, and the depopulation of strategically vital areas — especially frontline and rural regions.

This leads to a loss of social capital, labor resources, and the foundations for postwar recovery.

- **Decline of Intellectual Potential**

The education system is degrading under pressure from bureaucracy, formalism, devaluation of quality in higher and pre-higher education, overcomplicated licensing and accreditation procedures, and violations of academic autonomy in educational institutions.

The professional expert community is being marginalized or replaced by decorative structures, while public discourse is dominated by "click culture" and reactive responses instead of analysis, professionalism, and strategic thinking.

- **Moral Demobilization of the Nation**

There is a growing sense of apathy, disillusionment, and distrust, especially among youth, who increasingly do not associate their future with Ukraine.

Even among formerly active and resilient social groups, moral burnout and fatigue are on the rise.

- **Intra-elite Conflicts**

Oligarchic and clan-based groups are engaged in tiring battles for influence, budgetary resources, and control of the state apparatus.

Mutual discrediting, infowars among “insiders,” and backroom deals corrode the political system from within, undermining stability and fracturing public trust.

- **Paralysis of Institutional Democracy**

Political life is increasingly reduced to the simulation of democratic procedures.

Monopolization of power, suppression of parliamentary autonomy, and tokenistic public participation create the illusion of democracy under conditions of de facto authoritarian governance, contradicting both the spirit of the Constitution and public expectations.

- ✓ **FORECASTS AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Forecast**

Without profound, multidimensional changes, the situation in Ukraine may develop along a catastrophic trajectory. Real threats include:

- frontline breakthroughs and new territorial losses;
- political chaos, internal confrontation, and mass social unrest;
- gradual transformation of Ukraine into an object of external manipulation, lacking sovereign subjectivity;
- loss of trust from international partners and donors.

➢ **Recommendations**

1. **Introduction of a new state ideology — the Ukrainian National Idea**

The formation of a coherent system of national values and a spiritual-philosophical core capable of consolidating the people and the state during war and in the postwar period.

2. **Full mobilization of internal resources for wartime reality**

This includes the economy, education, science, governance, and civil society institutions.

Ukraine must shift to a mobilization-type policy, replacing passive, reactive governance.

3. **Unconditional support for the Armed Forces and development of the defense-industrial complex**

Comprehensive modernization of Ukraine's military-industrial sector: development and production of high-tech weapons, air defense systems, ballistic missiles, drones, etc., with full engagement of national scientific and technical potential.

4. **Strengthening professional international diplomacy**

Professionalization of the diplomatic corps, strengthening Ukraine's strategic presence in international initiatives and formats, and reinforcing its substantive international subjectivity.

5. **Reform of the spiritual sphere**

Purging the religious domain of the Moscow Patriarchate's infrastructure, implementing a state spiritual security policy, and providing systemic support for the Orthodox Church of Ukraine as a central institution of national identity, unity, and spiritual revival — based on truth, freedom, and justice.

6. **Restoration of institutional democracy**

Reform of the parliament, reinforcement of genuine parliamentary authority, expansion of local self-government, and a return to the principles of professional and responsible public administration.

Formation of a new administrative elite based on competence, integrity, and accountability.

7. **Cadre revolution**

Removal of unqualified individuals, agents, corrupt officials, and political impostors from power.

Creation of a transparent and merit-based personnel policy built on experience, responsibility, and moral legitimacy.

- ✓ **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Ukraine is at the epicenter of global civilizational turbulence and simultaneously — on the edge of profound internal state challenges and crises.

However, we still have a chance — to preserve ourselves as an independent, capable, and sovereign national state, and to develop a consolidated political Ukrainian nation, able not only to withstand the Russian-Ukrainian war, but also to become a source of renewal for its people, the region, and Europe as a whole.

Achieving this demands not superficial repairs, but a fundamental internal transformation — political, spiritual, ideological, moral, managerial, and institutional.

This transformation must be grounded in the rule of law, truth, justice, national and spiritual unity, and an unbreakable will to victory.

This path requires honesty with ourselves, the nation, and the state, courage to face the truth, and boldness to enact change.

Otherwise — history will make its choice without us.