

# RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE. POSSIBLE AND NECESSARY LESSONS TO LEARN FOR ROMANIA AND THE ROMANIAN ARMY

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**Abstract:** *The author believes that the subject of this article could be of some interest to Romanian politicians (if they had the strength to detach themselves from their personal interests) and to active military personnel of all ranks, as well as to those in reserve or retirement.*

*In the context of the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, through the Kremlin's use of the so-called "little green men", in fact GRU and FSB forces without insignia, an annexation through which the Russian Federation took full advantage of the acts of betrayal of some civilian and military officials from the Peninsula, it became increasingly clear to many Western analysts, politicians and career military personnel that Putin's Russia had taken a test, from which it understood that it could go further, perhaps as far as Lisbon (!?).*

*The US and European countries had a lukewarm reaction to the unprovoked aggression and calmly overlooked the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula.*

*It would have been necessary and useful for the West (NATO, EU) to wake up, but until 24.02.2022, they did nothing, passively watching how Putin's regime becomes more and more insolent and aggressive. But then came the cold shower administered, with cynicism, by the oligarch-silovik team from the Kremlin. It was already too late!*

*In this article I present some events and facts from the last year of the war (01.06.2024 - 05.06.2025) defined, mainly, by Russia's atrocious attacks on Ukraine's critical infrastructure and residential areas, by the deliberate destruction of apartment blocks, resulting in thousands of victims.*

**Keywords:** *war in Ukraine, Russian Federation, Ukraine, NATO, EU, Romania.*

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## INTRODUCTION

On the morning of 24.02.2025, three years have passed since the beginning of the brutal and unprovoked aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, an independent state recognized by the UN and

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by all states of the world, within the borders guaranteed in 1991, including by the current aggressor state.

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and his super-aggressive team in the Kremlin have been preparing the aggression since 2000, immediately after he obtained, through obscure maneuvers, specific to the FSB/KGB, the first mandate as President of the Russian Federation, a composite state entity, which, in addition to ethnic Russians, includes 160 other populations and diverse ethnic groups. Available data show that of the 144 million inhabitants of Russia (now probably 2-3 million fewer), 80% declare themselves Russian, and the remaining 20% other ethnic groups.

Despite the increasingly obvious signals that Russia is preparing politically, militarily, economically, informationally and propagandistically (the already famous MASKIROVKA) for the restoration of the Russian Empire in the form of USSR 2.0, Western decision-makers have treated superficially, even with sovereign indifference, the correct analyses and solid arguments of political-military analysts from several countries of the world, including Romania. There are thousands of materials published on various news sites, books and reports, in which it has been demonstrated that we are approaching a major aggression against Ukraine, and then other states that are historically and geographically unfortunate, in the so-called close neighborhood of the Russian Federation. which no one knows where it ends (Putin: "Russia has no borders, it only has horizons!").

Thus, in August 2021, in the **Policy Brief Magazine**<sup>1</sup> no. 124, a group of historians and political analysts from several Western countries have published, under the aegis of the prestigious British institute "Chatham Institute", a lucid analysis of the preconceptions and naiveties that affect the response to Russia's overt aggressive actions.

A more detailed presentation of the study was made in the articles in the Military Sciences Journal no. 4/2021<sup>2</sup> and No. 2/2022<sup>3</sup>.

With the exception of the US and UK intelligence services, no one wanted to believe that Putin would give the order to attack, despite the "firm" assurances of Kremlin officials that Russia had not attacked and would not attack anyone, although it had troops and weapons systems massed on the borders with Ukraine (about 200,000 soldiers). It seems that, once again, their MASKIROVKA worked.

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<sup>1</sup> Policy Brief Magazine, no. 124/2021, available at <https://expertforum.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Pol-Brief-124.pdf>, accessed on 09.06.2025.

<sup>2</sup> Mincu Constantin, „Politica actuală a Federației Ruse - un mister ascuns într-o enigmă”, *Revista de Științe Militare*, no. 4/2021.

<sup>3</sup> Mincu Constantin, „Posibile lecții de învățat din războiul declanșat de Federația Rusă împotriva Ucrainei”, *Revista de Științe Militare*, no. 2/2022.

This self-blinding of some European NATO and/or EU member countries is inexplicable, given that the signs were visible even to non-specialists.

I must mention that, without any embarrassment, on Romanian news sites, numerous Soviet-Russian trolls claimed that the Russians are convinced pacifists and will not attack. This anti-national behavior continues even now, given that Russia is dropping hundreds of drones, missiles and bombs on Ukraine, killing indiscriminately, especially civilians, including many children.

It is already known that Putin registered the order to attack on 21.02.2022, and the Kremlin liars claimed even after this date that the Red Army was only doing routine maneuvers to prepare its soldiers for battle. It is a clear signal even for the most gullible individuals that Russia should never be believed again, one thing is said and another is done.

For a more complete documentation, those interested could read the book "Russia's War with the World", by Keir Giles, also published in Romanian, by Niculescu Publishing House, in 2023<sup>4</sup>. I presented some ideas and arguments in the article "Maskirovka - a complex activity of the Kremlin and its propagandists, perfected from 1917 to the present day"<sup>5</sup>.

From the information available so far, it follows that in the period 2000-2025, the main vector of Maskirovka is the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

## **2. Recent Developments on the World Geopolitical Stage (June 2024-June 2025)**

Since the summer of 2024, the war in Ukraine has become much more destructive, with huge losses of military and civilian lives suffered by both sides. Russia has carried out combined attacks (missiles, cluster bombs, drones) on critical Ukrainian infrastructure and many residential areas in Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa and other large cities.

Several analysts and military specialists have written extensively in the international press and on various active websites on the Internet about the daily developments of this major conflict, a conflict that shows no signs of ending soon, despite the unsubstantiated boasting of President Donald Trump. As for Putin, it can be said with certainty that he does not want any kind of peace until he achieves his maximum goals, namely the capitulation of Ukraine and the taking of all the territories of this country, along with massive disarmament and a completely captured state status from a political, economic, military and informational point of view.

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<sup>4</sup> Keir Giles, *Războiul Rusiei cu Lumea*, Niculescu Publishing House, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Mincu Constantin, „Maskirovka - o activitate complexă a Kremlinului și a propagandiștilor săi, perfecționată din 1917 și până astăzi”, *Revista de Științe Militare* no. 3/2024.

In Revista de Științe Militare no. 1/2023<sup>6</sup> I published an article about the first year of the war, and now, three years and three months later, we find that the war has become even more intense and cruel, without the Kremlin leader, cold and impassive as everyone knows him, sketching even a single gesture of goodwill and balance in the negotiations.

In Revista de Științe Militare no. 1/2025<sup>7</sup> I have made a brief analysis of the US actions on the Ukraine issue, after the installation of the new Trump administration on January 21, 2025.

The mandate began stormily, with decisions taken quickly, most often for emotional reasons. It is enough to review the events that took place in just ten days (February 12-February 21, 2025) to understand the US rupture with Europe, the de facto abandonment of Ukraine and the threats of huge customs duties on all countries of the world.

Here are some opinions and analyses in the press in Romania and in other countries regarding the “RUSSO-AMERICAN HURRICANE OVER EUROPE”:

- **Title:** “The target is not only Ukraine, but the weakening or even destruction of Europe”. Fears (not justified) that Trump's America is breaking away from the EU and aligning with Putin's Russia<sup>8</sup>, author Adrian Cochino;

- **Title:** “Hysteria in Munich”. A Russian official praises J.D. Vance's speech and gives Romania an example. The statements belong to Viacheslav Volodin, the chairman of the Russian State Duma<sup>9</sup> (Sunday, February 11, 2025).

There are dozens of other analyses and comments on the strange behavior of Donald Trump and his Administration, almost all of them criticized, including by some politicians and media vectors in the US. But it didn't matter, Donald is moving forward with Putin by the hand.

**I present, in brief,** an analysis by political scientist Dan Dungaciu<sup>10</sup> (which we may agree with or not!):

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<sup>6</sup> Mincu Constantin, „Concluzii și învățăminte desprinse după un an de război în Ucraina”, *Revista de Științe Militare* no. 1/2023.

<sup>7</sup> Mincu Constantin, „Haos geopolitic global II - Uragan ruso-ucrainean asupra Europei”, *Revista de Științe Militare* no. 1/2025.

<sup>8</sup> Cochino Adrian, „Ținta nu e doar Ucraina, ci slăbirea sau chiar distrugerea Europei”, available at <https://hotnews.ro/tinta-nu-e-doar-ucraina-ci-slabirea-deliberata-sau-chiar-distrugerea-europei-temeri-ca-america-lui-trump-se-desparte-de-ue-si-se-aliniaza-rusiei-lui-putin-1902781>, accessed on 09.06.2025.

<sup>9</sup> Coșlea Alexandra, „Isterie la Munchen”. Un oficial rus laudă discursul lui JD Vance și dă exemplul României, available at <https://hotnews.ro/isterie-la-munchen-un-oficial-rus-lauda-discursul-lui-jd-vance-si-da-exemplul-romaniei-1902764>, accessed on 09.06.2025.

<sup>10</sup> Dungaciu Dan, „E vremea deciziilor, nu a lășității strategice”, available at <https://adevarul.ro/blogurile-adevarul/dan-dungaciu-e-vremea-deciziilor-nu-a-lasitatii-2424494.html>, accessed on 09.06.2025.

- **Global scene**

In the United States there is a major, acute change, unseen since Ronald Reagan. The only appropriate word for what is happening there is revolution.

- **And last but not least**, foreign policy. The worldview is changing. First of all, America is no longer an “indispensable nation” - it no longer modifies the world “in its own image and likeness, it no longer transforms it”, it does not make it “better” (n.a. after the alliance against nature with Putin’s Russia - it makes it much worse!), but lets it function as it is (n.a. if the countries of the world give up their resources). With one condition - it does not affect the interests of the USA and, possibly, brings it advantages (n.a. as in Ukraine in the issue of rare minerals!).

- **Secondly**, we are in the era of “great power competition”. Marc Rubio, the American Secretary of State, said it in his first speech. Attention: without ever mentioning the phrase “European Union”! Brussels is not there, it is not in the picture, it is probably neither “great” nor “power”. And assuming this reality requires a change of vision, a change of concepts.

- **NATO will be put to the test**, and this explains many of those that are unfolding before our eyes, despite some sighs or gasps that haunt the corridors of power in European capitals.

- **Thirdly**, Trump's major goal is to become the most important president in the last 100 years (at least)! To do this, he will put into motion his two instincts that work flawlessly: no war and, at the same time, control of nuclear weapons.

### **3. Europe/EU**

What will Europe do? Ukraine and Russia are security problems for it, hence the incomparably greater pressure on Brussels than on Washington.

As has been seen in the last six months in Washington, Brussels has no solutions, it does not even have the courage to openly retaliate against Trump! (n.a. it is a bit difficult for Europe to oppose the evil Putin-Trump alliance, an alliance in which Putin is in command).

Paradoxically, it seems that the Americans would not mind at all if the Europeans' words turned into deeds. That is, they would militarily take on the issue of Ukraine, compensate for America's withdrawal from the file and fight Russia, for their own emancipation, putting an end to European defeats (one French by Napoleon, another German by Hitler), on the endless and merciless steppes of Russia. **But like everyone else, despite some zealots who have never smelled a military uniform, let alone a war**, the Trump administration (a reliable friend of Putin) knows that this is not possible. In reality, Europe “does not count one ounce in the security issue”. It is neither “great” nor “power”. In the medium term, however, Europe will come out of this file badly crumpled, with its political-strategic “roof”

seriously damaged (especially since there are several Russian Trojan horses and far-left and far-right political forces sponsored by the Kremlin in the EU).

#### **4. Romania in the complicated equation of world geopolitics**

**As for Romania**, it missed the US elections because it kept its eyes on the mainstream media. The election of Donald Trump - which it had no way of understanding from there - stunned it and paralyzed its movements. It had put its eggs in one basket: the Biden administration! The problem is that, still keeping its eyes on the same media (practically of little relevance if you want to truly understand America today), it risks missing the post-electoral revolution that Trump (Putin's man) brings. In fact, Bucharest is improvising and, at best, maintaining the lower limit of this concept. When Cotroceni communicated and continues to do so (07.06.2025) differently from the Victoria Palace (populated by interims uninterested in the fate of the country), on fundamental issues, the essential question is not "who sells you and to whom", but: Who are you Romania, what vision do you have and what is your plan for the country? If you cannot define yourself strategically, you cannot ask others to do it for you. Before entering - supposedly - the sphere of influence of some or the other, Romania must urgently exit the sphere of influence of its own incompetence and strategic indecision.

**In conclusion, difficult times are ahead for Europe and Romania!**

#### **5. Let's go back to the last six months of the war in Ukraine.**

Unfortunately, instead of calming down, the war in Ukraine intensified even more after January 21, 2025, the date on which Donald Trump was sworn in as the 47th President of the United States. From the beginning, public opinion around the world and most political and military analysts noted that Trump and his entourage became hostile towards the aggressor country - Ukraine. Let's recall some episodes, often embarrassing:

- **the ambush in the Oval Office** organized by Trump with the aggressive contribution of J.D. Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth also watched with boredom;

- **the continuation of attacks on the Donbas front**, resulting in small advances by Russian forces;

- **the intensification of mutual attacks** with dozens and even hundreds of drones, on military installations and civilian residential areas;

- during this time, with the tacit and sometimes direct agreement of Trump, the farce of the peace negotiations in Istanbul continued, without any positive result (Russia is adding new and new demands, considered

unacceptable by Ukraine. It is the best proof that the Russians want to continue the war);

- **Kiev and Odessa** were attacked with dozens of drones and missiles, and some Patriot systems of Ukraine were targeted by the Russians, without the result being known so far;

- the Russians hit a Ukrainian training camp somewhere in Dnepropetrovsk, near the city of Zoryan with an Iskander missile, causing dozens of deaths and injuries;

- the Russian offensives **continued with even more fury** in the direction of the cities of Sumy, Kupiansk, Pokrovsk and Konstantinovka, in the last week of May the Russian forces occupied 18 localities and over 200 square kilometers;

- **Ukrainian sabotage groups** blew up two railway bridges in the Bryansk and Kursk regions, 50 kilometers behind the front, attacks resulting in deaths and injuries among the civilian population;

- **in an ingenious and completely surprising operation** for the Russians prepared by the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU), Kiev managed to attack five strategic Russian air bases: Belaia (Irkutsk Region), Diaghilev (Reezan Region), Olenia (Murmansk Region), Severny (Ivanovo Region), Voskrezensk (Moscow Region) - on two of them, Belaia and Olenia, causing massive losses to the Russian aviation, part of the nuclear triad. The losses are estimated (according to various sources), somewhere between 20 and 41 aircraft destroyed or damaged (representing 20-34% of Russia's total available). This strike, codenamed "Operation Spider Web", is spectacular, both in terms of the destruction caused and the novelty of its preparation and implementation.

The operation took place on Sunday, 01.06.2025, the day before the planned negotiations in Istanbul;

- **of course, some questions will be asked** as to how this "**Spider Web**" operation could have been carried out, without possible foreign help (!?);

- **Russia's retaliation is expected**, as Putin declared to Trump in the phone call on Wednesday, 04/06/2025. However, foreign analysts consider the event very dangerous;

- **however, the negotiations in Istanbul** are on hold, with or without this incident, with Russia coming up with new demands for Ukraine, unacceptable to the aggressed state;

- **in the coming days we will see** what happens after the **Trump-Putin** and **Rubio-Lavrov** phone calls. We hope for calm waters!

## **6. Some conclusions and lessons for Romania and the Romanian Army.**

- **Russia's aggressiveness, demonstrated again** by the invasion of Ukraine, but also by other gestures and direct threats against some NATO and/or EU member states, should determine rapid and firm reactions, measurable by remedying real shortcomings in the equipment and training of troops;

- **reviewing the size of the military forces** in peacetime, a reasonable figure would be approximately 120,000 people, as established in 1999, and in 2000 it was reduced, without explanation, to 75,000 soldiers (probably now there are only 65,000);

- **a closer look by the political factor** (President, Parliament, CSAT, Government, Ministry of Defense) as well as the military factor (Defense General Staff) at the available forces, the training of troops, looking at new weapons systems, efficient and secure communications;

- **an honest critical analysis** of the size of defense budgets and highlighting the blatant discrepancies between the figures on paper and the real ones (even though we are now in a situation of economic crisis);

- **the rapid restoration** of the domestic defense industrial base. The process seems to have started, but is proceeding too slowly and with many bureaucratic obstacles;

- **the review** of the military apparatus throughout the country, some areas being devoid of any military presence (!?);

- **the involvement of authorities** and citizens for the immediate cessation of attacks and insults against active, reserve and retired military personnel committed in total bad faith by some politicians and media representatives. You can't defend the country with soldiers who swear every day!;

- **careful study of the latest events** on the Ukrainian front (Operation Spider Web, the underwater attack on the Kerch port, the intensive use of drones and how the personnel were selected and trained for the efficient operation of high-performance combat means.

**In conclusion**, I believe that other problems and solutions can be identified in order to be able to face a conflict in the face of **any aggressor**.

Let us note that recently, Presidential Advisor Cristian Diaconescu declared<sup>11</sup>: *"The Russians told me directly that they want the Danube Mouths. If Ukraine falls, Moldova and Romania will follow."*

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<sup>11</sup> Presidential advisor Cristian Diaconescu, incendiary revelations: „Rușii mi-au spus direct că vor Gurile Dunării. Dacă Ucraina cade, urmează Moldova și România”, available at <https://adevarul.ro/stiri-interne/evenimente/cosilierul-prezidential-cristian-diaconescu-2448858.html>, accessed on 10.06.2025.





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