



The full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war in Timothy Ash's expert commentary (2022-2026)

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Abstract. The purpose of the study was to reconstruct T. Ash's views on the causes, nature, and consequences of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, including Russia's genocidal policy and war crimes, as well as the war's prospects for Ukraine, Europe, Russia, and the world at large. The research methodology encompassed the principles of historicism, scholarly rigour, and authorial objectivity, alongside general scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, and generalisation) and specialised historical methods (historico-genetic, historico-systemic, historico-analytical, critical-interpretive, problem-chronological, and retrospective). The study found that T. Ash consistently rejects explanations of the war through the lens of a "NATO threat", interpreting it instead as a consequence of V. Putin's imperial obsession with Ukraine, the Kremlin's unwillingness to recognise Ukrainian statehood, and its fear of Ukraine's democratic choice. It was demonstrated that the commentator characterises the war as existential for Ukraine, colonial in Russia's intentions, and systemic in its international consequences. The study established that in T. Ash's writing, war crimes appear not as incidental excesses of war but as elements of a deliberate strategy of terror, coercion, and the destruction of Ukrainian society. It was further shown that the expert directly applies the concept of a "genocidal campaign" to Russia's actions, linking it to the denial of Ukraine's right to exist, strikes against the civilian population, and attempts to render the normal functioning of the state impossible. It was separately determined that in T. Ash's forecasts, the war will have long-term transformative consequences: for Ukraine – in the form of military and state consolidation; for Europe – in the form of a new security architecture; for Russia – in the form of strategic weakening; and for the world – as a test of democracies' capacity to resist revisionist autocracy

Keywords: war crimes; genocide; imperialism; expansion; historiography

Introduction

T. Ash's commentary, published on the platform The New Voice of Ukraine from the outset of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, constitutes a coherent body of texts within which a consistent authorial interpretive

model of the war's unfolding is constructed: its causes, nature, and possible consequences. Already in his early publications of 2022, T. Ash eschewed a neutral-descriptive approach and put forward a distinctly normative

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yet internally coherent reading of events: for him, Ukraine is the party defending not only itself but also the democratic political order of Europe, whilst Putin's Russia is a force of imperial revanchism seeking to destroy Ukrainian statehood and, more broadly, the principle of sovereign right to existence. T. Ash (2022a) explicitly emphasised that Ukrainians are in these circumstances "the good guys", who "standing up, fighting to defend our system of Western liberal market democracy". Contemporary historiography of the Russian Federation's full-scale war against Ukraine is taking shape under conditions of an ongoing conflict, which accounts for its dynamic, interdisciplinary, and substantially analytical-prognostic character. Researchers have focused on clarifying the causes, nature, and consequences of the war, combining historical, political, legal, and socio-cultural approaches.

One of the key directions is the conceptualisation of the war as a continuation of Russia's long-standing imperial practices. In this context, S. Plokhii (2023) interpreted the Russian-Ukrainian war as a stage in "the return of history", emphasising its deep roots in the contradiction between imperial and national models of development. A similar position was developed by O.Ye. Lysenko (2022), who examined the war as a phenomenon possessing historical continuity and reflecting the systemic character of Russia's expansionist policy. Also significant is the military-analytical direction, represented by the study of V. Hrytsiuk & O. Lysenko (2023). The authors conducted a comprehensive analysis of the war, defining it as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing military, geopolitical, and international-legal dimensions. Their work is distinguished by an aspiration to synthesise different levels of analysis – from the local-regional to the global. A distinct group consists of studies that interpret the war through the prism of hybridity. The conceptual foundations of this approach were laid in the work of M. Galeotti (2019), who demonstrated that contemporary Russian warfare is premised on a combination of military, informational, and political instruments. Building on these arguments, O. Bilchak & A. Huz (2024) showed that hybrid warfare is a systemic instrument of Russia's foreign policy, one that has evolved in the direction of open armed aggression. A significant contribution to the study of the humanitarian and legal dimensions of the war was made by Y. Ioffe (2022; 2023). The problems of the deportation of Ukrainian children and violations of international humanitarian law are examined, leading to the conclusion that there are indicators of Russia's genocidal policy. The author's findings considerably broaden the legal dimension of the war's interpretation. Working in the same vein is V. Bufacchi (2023), who examined the Russian-Ukrainian war in the categories of just war theory. The author emphasised the moral responsibility of the aggressor and argued for the qualification of Russia's actions as war crimes. In essence, his study integrated ethical and legal analysis.

A number of authors have examined questions of identity and socio-cultural transformations as preconditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In particular, V. Masnenko *et al.* (2021), even prior to the full-scale invasion, outlined the problem of identity transformation in the Donbas, presenting it as one of the key factors of the conflict. This topic is developed by J. Sytnyk & O. Sytnyk (2021), who analyse the dynamics of Ukrainian national identity formation in the eastern regions. The ideological dimension of the war is thoroughly explored in the work of L. Yakubova (2023), who introduced the concept of "rashism" as a specific form of contemporary Russian ideology. The author demonstrated that the war possesses not only a geopolitical but also a world-view character. The historiographical dimension of hybrid warfare was specifically examined by B. Drogomyretskyi (2022), who drew attention to the transformation of scholarly approaches to the study of information confrontation. The author emphasised that the contemporary war is conducted to a considerable degree in the sphere of meanings and narratives, which demands new methodological instruments. Overall, an analytical survey of the contemporary historiography of the Russian-Ukrainian war has revealed a clear tendency towards its conceptualisation as a complex phenomenon combining elements of hybrid, conventional, and ideological warfare. Simultaneously, an evolution in scholarly approaches is observable – from the description of events towards their theoretical comprehension – which opens new perspectives for further research.

In this context, the diverse conclusions of experts regarding the causes, nature, and possible consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war merit attention, as they enable one to trace the transformation of their views and analytical constructs. Timothy Ash is considered one of the leading British experts and a specialist in Ukrainian-Russian relations, whose articles are widely disseminated in Ukraine. The purpose of the study was therefore to conduct a comprehensive analysis of T. Ash's publications concerning the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, with a focus on determining the causes of the war, its impact on international relations, and the forecasting of transformative consequences for Ukraine and the world. The research methodology was grounded in the principles of historicism, objectivity, and systematic analysis, employing general scientific (analysis, synthesis, and generalisation) and specialised historical (historico-genetic, historico-typological, historico-systemic, problem-chronological, and critical-interpretive) methods. Particular attention was paid to discourse analysis of journalistic texts, which enabled the reconstruction of T. Ash's interpretation of the origins, nature, and consequences of the war. The choice of The New Voice of Ukraine platform was conditioned by the fact that it is the primary venue for the systematic publication of T. Ash's analytical writing in 2022-2026, forming an integral body of texts for the study of his views.

The ideological and imperial motives of Russian aggression according to T. Ash

An important place in contemporary historiography is occupied by the collective monograph of O. Sytnyk & O. Zubkovych (2024), which systematised the key dimensions of the war – from the historical to the legal – whilst also tracing the historical origins of Russia's genocidal policy towards the Ukrainian people. At the same time, the studies of M. Haliv & V. Ilnytskyi (2023) and O.V. Medvid (2022) focused on internal historiographical discourse, demonstrating the evolution of scholarly approaches to understanding the war. The subsequent work of M. Haliv *et al.* (2024) broadened the analysis, concentrating on the problem of the genocide of Ukrainians in public discourse. Among other analytical studies, particular note should be made of the work of M. Domańska *et al.* (2023), who analysed Russia's policy in the occupied territories, underscoring the systemic character of integrative and repressive practices. By contrast, A. Wilk & M. Domańska (2022) examined the initial stage of the full-scale invasion, drawing attention to the strategic miscalculations of the Russian leadership. Separately worthy of note is the study by M. Jędrzyśiak (2024), which recorded international legal assessments of Russia's actions, including the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights concerning violations in Crimea. These findings substantially reinforce the evidentiary base confirming the responsibility of the aggressor state, providing substantive arguments that illuminate the systematic character of the aggression, the genocidal policy, and the war crimes committed in the course of the conflict.

In analysing the causes and preconditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war – which began in 2014 but entered a new phase in February 2022 – T. Ash, first, refuted a number of Russian explanatory claims by which the Kremlin justified its war against Ukraine and, second, revealed the true origins of Russia's hybrid and armed aggression against Ukraine. Above all, he categorically rejected the explanation of the war as an allegedly defensive response by Russia to NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) enlargement. T. Ash (2022e) argued that NATO poses no threat to Russia, noting that as NATO passed through successive waves of enlargement, its conventional military capacity diminished and eroded. In the British expert's view, NATO members had long since redirected their efforts away from countering an attack by Russia towards addressing other threats, such as global terrorism or cyber-attacks. This had led the United Kingdom to reduce the size of its army to 78,000 personnel, according to the most recent defence review – the lowest figure since the Second World War. Germany had cut its number of main battle tanks from 2,000 in 1991 to fewer than 200 at present, whilst the United States had withdrawn its last main battle tanks from Europe only a few years prior. By contrast, Russia possesses 20,000 main battle tanks, over 30,000 armoured personnel carriers, several thousand aircraft,

and thousands of artillery pieces (Ash, 2022e). Russia therefore holds an advantage in conventional military forces in Europe, and the Russian leadership is well aware of this. Consequently, Russian claims of a "NATO threat" do not constitute the genuine motive for the war but serve the function of propagandistic cover. The real source of the conflict lies not in the European security system but in the Russian leadership itself and in its imperial worldview. In revealing the true causes of the war, T. Ash (2022e) emphasised that Putin seeks to seize Ukraine because he regards it as an inseparable part of Russian identity and its status as a great power. According to him, Putin is convinced of the existence of a historical Slavic brotherhood between Ukrainians and Russians, and that following the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as the events of the Orange Revolution and the Euromaidan, Ukraine chose a Western course – one that threatens the traditional bond with Russia. He believes he must act immediately to prevent the final rupture of these ties. In essence, the British expert stresses that Russia's war against Ukraine is not a separate territorial dispute or a partial border adjustment, but the realisation of an ideologically grounded imperial aspiration to subjugate a country which, in Putin's worldview, is not recognised as a fully distinct historical and political reality. It is for this reason that, in T. Ash's view, the full-scale invasion must be understood as the logical continuation of the Kremlin's long-standing revisionist policy aimed at the elimination of Ukrainian state sovereignty.

T. Ash (2022g) developed this line of argument further in March 2022, when he pointed to the psychological and obsessive motives of the Russian dictator. In his words, the war is driven by "Putin's obsession with Ukraine", given which the Kremlin's ruler "just cannot accept Ukraine's right to exist as an independent, sovereign state, able to make its own decisions and the ability of its peoples to live freely as they chose". T. Ash consistently maintains the view that the full-scale war began not because Russia is defending itself against something, but because its leadership cannot reconcile itself to the existence of an independent Ukraine as such. Accordingly, the precondition for the aggression is not external pressure but the internal ideology of the Russian regime. Importantly, T. Ash does not reduce the origins of the war solely to territorial imperialism. He holds that the Kremlin fears not only the loss of control over Ukraine but also the very example of Ukrainian development. T. Ash (2022e) emphasised that the issue concerns ideas, not troops or weapons. Putin fears the principal driving force of the Euromaidan – the aspiration of Ukrainians towards European and Western values such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. These values stand in complete opposition to Putin's model of governance, which combines sovereign democracy with kleptocracy. The expert thus identified the fear of the Russian elite towards Ukraine's democratic, European, and law-governed path, as such a path undermines the

foundations of Russian autocracy. The causes of the war therefore also possess an ideological character: Ukraine is dangerous to the Kremlin as a successful alternative to post-Soviet authoritarianism (Ash, 2022e). In June 2022, T. Ash (2022f) named the nature of Russian aggression in still more explicit terms, noting that V. Putin himself had in effect acknowledged it to be “a war of expansion and colonial ambition”. The expert drew attention to the fact that V. Putin, on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the birth of the Russian Tsar Peter the Great, declared Russia’s historical entitlement to the lands taken from Sweden during the Great Northern War. According to the Russian dictator, Tsar Peter was simply returning the lands to their rightful owners, emphasising that this was their obligation (Dickinson, 2022). In light of this, T. Ash pointed out that for the President of Russia, the struggle against Ukraine belongs to the category of classical imperial wars of conquest: its subject matter is not merely territory but the political and civilisational subjugation of another people, who have been declared in advance to be part of the Russian people. It is for this very reason that T. Ash refused a symmetrical treatment of the parties to the conflict: Ukraine is fighting for survival, whilst Russia is waging a colonial war.

T. Ash’s interpretation of the character of the Russian-Ukrainian war

The British scholar T. Ash devotes considerable attention to the character of the war. In his interpretation, the Russian-Ukrainian war very rapidly transcended the bounds of an ordinary inter-state conflict. Already in May 2022, T. Ash (2022i) wrote that once the fighting had ended, “a sustainable, independent Ukraine will exist. It has fought for and proven, through its spirit, the right to exist”. In this alone he revealed a clear understanding that the Russian-Ukrainian war is, for the Ukrainian nation, not merely a struggle for territory or borders, but a struggle for the right to exist – and that it therefore acquired a distinctly existential dimension. T. Ash consistently maintains that Ukraine is fighting against the threat of the destruction of its own statehood. In his publications, T. Ash frequently emphasised the failure of Russia’s original plan to subjugate Ukraine. The Russian campaign was largely catastrophic; the commentator characterised it as an epic defeat for Putin. T. Ash (2022i) also offered an aphoristic assessment of the situation, underscoring that for Putin this was a “now or never” moment, but that it had now become clear it was simply “never” for him. Thus, already in May 2022, the British expert stated unequivocally that the Kremlin’s strategic maximum – the destruction of the Ukrainian state and the rapid subjugation of the country – had been historically thwarted.

Reflecting on the character of the Russian-Ukrainian war, T. Ash (2023a) emphasised that this war is a battle for the survival of two systems: Western liberal market democracy and autocratic kleptocracy. In this thesis, the character of the war acquires the dimension of a

cultural-civilisational confrontation. It is no longer a matter solely of Ukraine and Russia, but of the collision of two models of political order. It is for this reason that Ukraine’s defeat, in T. Ash’s view, would be not a local catastrophe but proof of the democratic world’s incapacity to defend its own principles in the face of a revisionist force. Having situated Ukraine’s existential struggle within a civilisational framework, T. Ash followed this logic to the conclusion that Ukrainians are fighting not only for themselves. As early as June 2022, T. Ash (2022f) stressed that Ukrainians are fighting not only for their country but also for Western values against the brutal dictator V. Putin, who has declared war on the West – noting that Ukraine is “fighting this war on our behalf”. Such emphases clearly indicate an interpretation of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war as a frontier conflict in which Ukraine serves as the front line of defence of the European and, more broadly, Western order. This is one of T. Ash’s most significant conclusions – Ukrainian resistance carries civilisational meaning and therefore cannot be assessed solely in the categories of regional security or inter-state conflict. Given this conviction, T. Ash has repeatedly engaged in criticism of the limited Western support for Ukraine. T. Ash (2023c) stressed that the West is displaying fatigue and indecision in a situation he regards as an existential threat to the system of order. In this context, he calls for a political awakening, emphasising that leaders must wake up. He is particularly sharp in his assessment of the West’s strategic approach, noting that it is characterised by tardiness, caution, and fragmentation: support for Ukraine is provided too slowly, too cautiously, in the form of incremental, belated decisions. He emphasises that the problem lies not in an absence of resources but in an absence of political will and strategic vision, since the West does not fully appreciate the scale of the threat and the consequences of a possible Russian success. In the financial dimension, he draws attention to a fundamental contradiction: despite Ukraine being acknowledged as a key strategic project of the West, there is no clear decision regarding the sources of financing for its victory and reconstruction – which leads him to conclude that the use of frozen Russian assets is effectively the only realistic instrument available (Ash, 2023c). In T. Ash’s interpretation, therefore, the slow delivery of aid to Ukraine is not a technical or bureaucratic problem but a manifestation of a deeper crisis of strategic thinking in the West, which underestimates both the scale of the war and its long-term consequences.

In the context of analysing the character of the Russian-Ukrainian war, T. Ash also addressed the questions of genocide and the war crimes of the Russian occupiers in Ukraine. In the British expert’s commentary, this theme flows from his thesis concerning the Russian authorities’ denial of the existence of Ukrainians as a distinct nation. According to T. Ash (2022g), if V. Putin rejects the right of Ukrainians to exist separately from Russians, then the

very violence perpetrated against Ukrainians acquires in his logic not an incidental but a logical character. In other words, war crimes appear as the practical consequence of an ideology which already denies the victim the right to a separate historical existence. T. Ash therefore does not regard Russian brutality as a by-product of war. T. Ash (2022i) argued that the Russian leadership has no respect for human life and is prepared to employ cruelty as part of its military strategy. Particularly significant here is precisely the characterisation of cruelty as a Russian “tactic”, which provides grounds for the contention that T. Ash interprets violence against civilians as an instrument through which the Kremlin achieves its political and military objectives. This is not a matter of disciplinary aberrations or localised crimes committed by individual Russian units, but of a mechanism of violence and coercion against Ukrainians that is organic to them.

T. Ash (2022h) drew attention to a further circumstance which exposed the mendacity of Putin’s propaganda and revealed the Kremlin’s true intentions: the Russian army “bombs civilians in cities such as Kharkiv, Sumy, and Mariupol” – that is, in cities which Russian propaganda presented as supposedly “their own” or “protected”. Hence his conclusion that this war is not the “protection of Russian-speaking people” but a war against Ukrainian society as such. It is precisely for this reason that the civilian population becomes the object of deliberate pressure. It is particularly important that T. Ash, unlike many Western experts and intellectuals,

does not shy away from the very concept of genocide. T. Ash (2022j) wrote about V. Putin’s rhetoric, which seeks to “wipe Ukrainians off the land where they live”. He rightly observed that Ukrainians have perceived Russia’s actions as genocide and now understand clearly who they are (Ukrainians) and who they do not wish to be (Russians). In September 2022, T. Ash (2022l) was scathing about the rhetoric of the Russians, who call Ukrainians brothers whilst simultaneously killing, torturing, raping, and “otherwise commit genocide against Ukrainians”. In October 2022, T. Ash (2022k) spoke of Russia’s “genocidal campaign against Ukraine”. Such formulations demonstrate that T. Ash regards Russian violence not as a collection of individual crimes but as an integral campaign directed against the right of Ukrainians to live as a distinct political and national community. In his writing, the term “genocide” appears infrequently, but rests on the identification of a series of facts regarding Russia’s actions: the denial of Ukrainian identity, systematic terror against civilians, and attempts to render normal life in Ukraine impossible.

The prospects and possible consequences of the war

T. Ash’s views on the prospects and possible consequences of the war for Ukraine and neighbouring states are of considerable significance. The expert’s views on the war’s prospects flow organically from his assessment of its nature (Table 1).

Table 1. The principal consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war according to Timothy Ash’s views

Subject / Sphere	Principal consequences	Key details
Ukraine	Historical self-assertion, consolidation of the state and nation, post-war prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ukraine will not disappear but will exist and undergo significant development ✓ The war has given rise to “a militarised and successful Ukraine” ✓ An “Israel moment” for Ukraine: high mobilisation, a strong army, a clear identity, a sense of existential threat ✓ An analogy with South Korea: a free, Western-integrated, modernised state against the backdrop of an isolated Russia ✓ Acceleration of de-Russification, the complete loss of Russian influence, reorientation towards a Western-style liberal market democracy
Europe	Irreversible structural changes, consolidation of the security architecture, the destruction of the post-Cold War order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Putin “has united NATO and given it a new purpose” ✓ Ukraine has become “the front line of the West’s defence” ✓ Strengthening of NATO’s role, rearmament of European states, reassessment of the Russian threat ✓ Profound changes: the abandonment of illusions regarding “stable coexistence” with the Putin regime ✓ A systemic crisis of the world order; Europe must increase defence spending and prepare for a prolonged confrontation with Russia
Russia	Strategic weakening, international isolation, political and economic exhaustion of the regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Russia and Putin have become “international pariahs” ✓ “Putin is losing the war”, “time is not on Putin’s side” ✓ The war does not restore greatness but destroys long-term positions, status, and the regime ✓ The complete and permanent loss of Ukraine “for ever” ✓ “10 failures of the Kremlin master” in the war
General risks and conditions for success	The outcome is not automatic; depends on the quality of Western support and peace guarantees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Insufficient Western support leads to a prolongation of the conflict, the exhaustion of Ukraine, and partial destabilisation ✓ A flawed settlement model may result in “state failure in Ukraine” ✓ Peace without reliable security guarantees – “a deferred repetition of war”

Source: developed by the author on the basis of T. Ash (2022c; 2022b; 2022d)

For Ukraine, the expert forecasts not disappearance but, on the contrary, consolidation. T. Ash (2022d) wrote that Ukraine will likely prosper after the war ends. He added that the Russian invasion had given rise to a militarised and successful Ukraine. T. Ash pointed out that the Ukrainian people had understood that Russia can offer only cruelty and therefore aspire to something different. Ukrainians wish to live in a Western-style liberal market democracy, with the rule of law and fundamental human rights, rather than in a police state or fascist dictatorship such as contemporary Russia. He also noted that Putin defined this war as an attempt to return Ukraine to the Russian sphere of influence, but that in practice his actions had in all likelihood lost Ukraine for ever. In his words, there is no scenario in which Russia will have influence over the situation and the process of de-Russification in Ukraine; rather than halting, it will accelerate. Ukrainians will no longer wish to identify themselves with Russia or its elements; instead, they will increasingly turn towards their own distinct Ukrainian and European identity (Ash, 2022d). Thus, in his view, the principal consequence of the war for Ukraine itself is historical self-assertion: the war that was intended to break Ukrainian statehood ultimately consolidated it politically and militarily, and consolidated the nation. T. Ash envisages post-war Ukraine not merely as a state that has survived but as a new security actor in Europe. He described this as "an Israel moment for Ukraine", by which he meant the formation of a state with a high level of mobilisation, a strong army, a clear political identity, and a persistent sense of existential threat (Ash, 2022d). In his publications, T. Ash (2022b; 2022c) also drew an analogy with South Korea, suggesting that a free, Western-integrated, and modernised Ukraine may emerge against the backdrop of an increasingly isolated and deteriorating Russia. This means that the prospect for Ukraine in his analysis is closely bound up with the victory of the model of a modern, security-capable, and Western-oriented state.

For Europe, the expert describes the consequences of the war as already irreversible. T. Ash (2022j) emphasised that V. Putin, through his aggression against Ukraine, had contributed to the unification and strengthening of NATO, "giving it a new purpose". Thus, an aggression conceived as an instrument for weakening the West produced the opposite result: the European security architecture is being rebuilt on the foundations of greater resolve, a heightened role for defence, and a reassessment of the Russian threat. T. Ash developed this argument in subsequent publications. In particular, T. Ash (2022d) stressed that the war had already brought about profound structural changes in Europe, including the strengthening of NATO's role, the rearmament of states, and the reassessment of threats: Ukraine, in his words, had effectively become "a key defensive bulwark for the West against future and inevitable aggression by Putin". In this context, he points directly to the fact that

Russian aggression has compelled European countries to abandon their illusions regarding the possibility of stable coexistence with the Putin regime through economic interdependence or diplomatic compromise. Overall, T. Ash interprets the Russian-Ukrainian war as the moment of final destruction of the post-Cold War order in Europe. T. Ash (2022k) connects Russian aggression with a "systemic crisis" of the world order, emphasising that what is at stake is not merely a regional conflict but a challenge to the very principles of the international system. For Europe, this means the necessity of reconsidering its role in the world, increasing defence spending, and preparing for a prolonged confrontation with Russia.

For Russia, he forecasts strategic weakening, international isolation, and political exhaustion. Already in March 2022, T. Ash (2022h) noted that Russia in general and V. Putin personally had become international pariahs, and in subsequent texts repeatedly maintained that Putin is "losing the war". In the publication T. Ash (2023a) this is formulated even more explicitly: "time is not on Putin's side". This assessment encompasses not only the military front but also the economic, diplomatic, and domestic political dimensions. T. Ash's conclusions are consistent with the positions of other scholars. In particular, A. Prohorovs (2022) analysed the consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine for the European economy, focusing on trade restrictions, sanctions, and long-term structural changes in the relationships between the West and Russia – pointing towards the deepening of its economic and political isolation. At the same time, the findings of J. Lu *et al.* (2025) and P. Dou *et al.* (2025) also confirmed Russia's substantial economic and structural weakening as a significant global trading partner. For T. Ash, the war signifies for Russia not a restoration of greatness but the destruction of its long-term positions, the loss of international standing, and the weakening of the regime itself – even if this process does not always manifest in rapid external signs. He outlined the pessimistic prospects for Russia with particular clarity. At the same time, T. Ash does not regard a positive outcome for Ukraine as automatic. It is for precisely this reason that the motif of insufficient Western support recurs so insistently in his texts of 2023-2026 (Ash, 2023b). If Ukraine is not given the opportunity to wage the war without artificial constraints, then even a strategically weakened Russia will be able to impose a prolongation of the conflict, exhaustion, and partial destabilisation. In December 2024, Ash warned that a flawed settlement model could result in "political failure in Ukraine" (Ash, 2024). One of the key future consequences of the war he also considers to be the quality of the peace. For him, peace without security guarantees is not a resolution but a deferred repetition of war.

■ Conclusions

An analysis of the commentary of the British expert Timothy Ash provides grounds for asserting that his vision

of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war is conceptually coherent and internally consistent. He locates the causes of the war not in NATO or in a "security dilemma" for Russia, but in V. Putin's imperial obsession with Ukraine, in the Russian authorities' denial of Ukrainian national-political subjecthood, and in the Kremlin's fear of a democratic, European Ukraine. He defines the character of the war as existential for Ukraine, colonial in Russia's intent, and systemic in its international consequences. The war crimes and genocidal policy of the Russian occupiers in Ukraine he interprets not as a peripheral aspect of the war but as the logical consequence of Russian fascist ideology, which denies Ukrainians the right to a separate existence. It is determined that in T. Ash's forecasts the war possesses not only a destructive but also a transformative character. An analysis of the theoretical framework demonstrated that for Ukraine the war has become a struggle for existence, one that has consolidated its political and military independence and intensified the sense of existential threat. For Europe, this war has become a factor of irreversible structural changes in the security architecture, a strengthening of NATO's role, and a reassessment of the threat posed by Russia. Russia, according to Ash's forecasts, is undergoing strategic weakening and international isolation, which deepens the political and economic exhaustion of its regime. The prospects for further research lie in broadening the

source base available to historian-scholars through the incorporation of commentary by other Western and Ukrainian experts, with a view to a comparative analysis of interpretations of the Russian-Ukrainian war. It would also be worthwhile to deepen the study through the application of quantitative methods of discourse analysis, which would enable one to trace the evolution of war narratives over time. A distinct and promising direction is the study of the influence of expert commentary on the formation of public opinion and political decision-making in Western countries.

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■ Conflict of Interest

None.

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Анотація. Мета роботи полягала у реконструкції поглядів Т. Еша на причини, характер та наслідки повномасштабної російсько-української війни, зокрема на геноцидну політику та воєнні злочини Росії, а також на перспективи війни для України, Європи, Росії та світу загалом. Методологія дослідження включала принципи історизму, науковості, авторської об'єктивності, а також загальнонаукові (аналіз, синтез, узагальнення) та спеціально-історичні (історико-генетичний, історико-системний, історико-аналітичний, критично-інтерпретаційний, проблемно-хронологічний, ретроспективний) методи. У результаті дослідження з'ясовано, що Т. Еш послідовно відкидає пояснення війни через «загрозу Організації Північноатлантичного договору» і трактує її як наслідок імперської одержимості В. Путіна Україною, небажання Кремля визнавати українську державність і страху перед українським демократичним вибором. Показано, що публіцист характеризує війну як екзистенційну для України, колоніальну за намірами Росії та системну за міжнародними наслідками. Доведено, що у текстах Т. Еша воєнні злочини постають не як випадкові ексцеси війни, а як елемент цілеспрямованої стратегії терору, примусу й руйнування українського суспільства. Простежено, що експерт прямо застосовує до російських дій поняття «геноцидна кампанія», пов'язуючи його із запереченням права України на існування, ударами по цивільному населенню та намаганням зруйнувати нормальне функціонування держави. Окремо встановлено, що у прогнозах Т. Еша війна матиме довготермінові трансформаційні наслідки: для України – у вигляді військового й державного зміцнення; для Європи – у вигляді нової безпекової архітектури; для Росії – у вигляді стратегічного ослаблення; для світу – як перевірка здатності демократій протистояти ревізійній автократії

Ключові слова: воєнні злочини; геноцид; імперіалізм; експансія; історіографія