

# **SUMMARY of the Article “World War III?” by Mahir Ali, Dawn, May 29th, 2024**

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The article delves into the complexities of the ongoing Ukraine-Russia conflict and the geopolitical maneuvers surrounding it. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is actively seeking international support for a peace conference scheduled in Switzerland, hoping to involve key global leaders like Joe Biden and Xi Jinping, although Russian President Vladimir Putin is excluded. Ukraine aims to convince the Global South to abandon neutrality and pressure Russia to end its war. However, swaying China, a major ally of Russia, remains a distant goal due to China's economic and political ties with Russia. Despite Western sanctions, Russia's economy, bolstered by support from China and India and a robust military industry, continues to grow, undermining the impact of these sanctions. Additionally, Russian elites still obtain Western goods through intermediaries like Dubai. A peace conference excluding Russia is deemed ineffective, especially given Putin's probable refusal to attend without immunity assurances due to an ICC warrant for war crimes. The article criticizes Western hypocrisy, highlighting the leniency towards Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu despite alleged war crimes. The article argues that Western 'rule of law' selectively targets Russia and China while ignoring violations by allies like Israel. It suggests that halting military aid to Israel could reduce violence in Gaza and the West Bank, though the Ukraine situation is more complicated. The article acknowledges Russia's initial invasion setbacks but notes recent successes, prompting US and NATO discussions on deploying military trainers in Ukraine, risking a potential third world war. Both Zelensky and Putin have conducted purges within their administrations, reflecting internal instability. Territorial concessions, such as ceding Crimea and Donbas to Russia, are proposed by figures like Xi Jinping and Pope Francis as a path to peace, though Ukrainians resist rewarding aggression. The article questions whether there is a viable alternative to prevent further

Ukrainian casualties.

## **Easy/Short SUMMARY:**

The article discusses the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia and the efforts to resolve it. Ukraine's President Zelensky wants a peace conference in Switzerland and hopes leaders like Joe Biden and Xi Jinping will attend, but Russia's President Putin is not invited. Ukraine wants to convince other countries to pressure Russia to end the war. Despite Western sanctions, Russia's economy is still strong due to support from China and India. The article criticizes the West for being strict with Russia but lenient with allies like Israel, which faces accusations of war crimes. It suggests that stopping military aid to Israel could reduce violence, but the Ukraine conflict is more complex. The war has seen ups and downs, with recent Russian successes leading the US and NATO to consider more involvement, risking a larger conflict. Both Ukrainian and Russian leaders have made changes in their governments, showing internal issues. Some suggest giving up regions like Crimea and Donbas to Russia for peace, but Ukrainians are against it. The article questions if there's a better way to stop the war and save lives.

## **SOLUTIONS of The Problem:**

### **Inclusion of Russia in Peace Talks**

For any peace conference to be effective, Russia's participation is crucial. Efforts should be made to negotiate terms that could bring Russia to the table, possibly through intermediaries who can offer guarantees of safety and fairness.

### **International Mediation and Guarantees**

International bodies like the United Nations or neutral countries like Switzerland can mediate between Ukraine and Russia, providing guarantees that any agreements will be respected and enforced.

## **Economic Incentives and Sanctions Relief**

Offering Russia economic incentives or phased relief from sanctions in exchange for concrete steps towards peace could provide a pathway to resolution. This approach should be carefully structured to ensure compliance.

## **Humanitarian Corridors and Ceasefires**

Establishing humanitarian corridors and temporary ceasefires can build trust between the warring parties and provide relief to civilians. These measures can serve as confidence-building steps towards a broader peace agreement.

## **Enhanced Diplomatic Pressure on Allies**

Countries with influence over Russia, such as China and India, should be engaged to exert diplomatic pressure on Russia to end the conflict. This can be achieved through high-level dialogues and leveraging economic ties.

## **Support for Internal Political Reforms in Ukraine**

Encouraging and supporting political reforms in Ukraine can strengthen its governance and resilience, reducing internal instability and making it a more credible partner in peace negotiations.

## **Balanced Accountability for War Crimes**

Establishing an impartial international tribunal to investigate and prosecute war crimes on all sides can ensure justice and reduce accusations of bias, enhancing the legitimacy of the peace process.

## **Gradual Implementation of Territorial Concessions**

Exploring phased or conditional territorial concessions, where regions like Crimea and Donbas could gain autonomy under international supervision, might

offer a compromise acceptable to both parties.

## **Promoting Regional Security Frameworks**

Developing a regional security framework involving neighboring countries and major powers can provide long-term stability and prevent future conflicts. This framework should include mechanisms for conflict resolution and economic cooperation.

## **Public Communication and Transparency**

Ensuring transparency in peace negotiations and communicating progress to the public can build support for peace initiatives and reduce misinformation. This approach can help manage public expectations and foster a culture of peace.

## **IMPORTANT Facts and Figures Given in the Article:**

- Ukraine plans a peace conference in Switzerland in mid-June, seeking participation from Joe Biden and Xi Jinping.
- Russia's economy is predicted to grow by 3.2% despite Western sanctions.
- Putin has not been invited to the peace conference due to an ICC warrant against him.
- The Western rule of law is criticized for being selectively applied, particularly regarding Israel.
- US and NATO are considering deploying military trainers in Ukraine, risking escalation.
- There are suggestions of territorial concessions to Russia for peace, proposed by figures like Xi Jinping and Pope Francis.

## **MCQs from the Article:**



**1. Who has not been invited to the peace conference planned by Ukraine?**

- A. Joe Biden
- B. Xi Jinping
- C. Vladimir Putin**
- D. Pope Francis

**2. Which countries are mentioned as supporting Russia's economy despite Western sanctions?**

- A. The United States and Canada
- B. China and India**
- C. Germany and France
- D. Japan and South Korea

**3. What major event is scheduled to take place in Switzerland in mid-June?**

- A. A NATO summit
- B. A peace conference organized by Ukraine**
- C. A G7 meeting
- D. An EU economic forum

**4. What has the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued against Vladimir Putin?**

- A. A travel ban
- B. A financial sanction
- C. A warrant for war crimes**
- D. An invitation to a peace conference

**5. Which regions are suggested as possible territorial concessions to Russia for peace?**

- A. Crimea and Donbas**
- B. Lviv and Kyiv

- C. Odessa and Kharkiv
- D. Poltava and Zaporizhzhia

## VOCABULARY:

1. **Soliciting** (verb) (سأل سائلاً): Asking for or trying to obtain something from someone.
2. **Entrepôts** (noun) (مخازن تجارة): A port, city, or trading post where merchandise may be imported, stored, or traded.
3. **Impunity** (noun) (حصانة): Exemption from punishment or freedom from the injurious consequences of an action.
4. **Foibles** (noun) (نقاط ضعف): Minor weaknesses or eccentricities in someone's character.
5. **Attrition** (noun) (تآكل): The process of gradually reducing the strength or effectiveness of someone or something through sustained attack or pressure.
6. **Fortuitously** (adverb) (بالتصادف): Happening by accident or chance rather than design.
7. **Purge** (verb) (طرد): To remove people considered undesirable from an organization or place in an abrupt or violent manner.
8. **Concessions** (noun) (تسويات): Things that are granted in response to demands.
9. **Ballyhooed** (adjective) (متمجج): Praised or publicized extravagantly.
10. **Tinderbox** (noun) (مخزن متفجرات): A potentially explosive situation.
11. **Vengeful** (adjective) (انتقامي): Seeking to harm someone in return for a perceived injury.
12. **Hypocrisy** (noun) (تناقض): The practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform.
13. **Immunity** (noun) (حصانة): Protection or exemption from something, especially an obligation or penalty.
14. **Mediated** (verb) (وسط): Intervened in a dispute to bring about an agreement.
15. **Bolstered** (verb) (دعم): Supported or strengthened.
16. **Territorial** (adjective) (إقليمي): Relating to the ownership of an area of land or sea.
17. **Geopolitical** (adjective) (جيوستراتيجي): Relating to politics, especially international relations, as influenced by geographical factors.

18. **Incitement** (noun) (□□□□□□): The action of provoking unlawful behavior or urging someone to behave unlawfully.
  19. **Predicament** (noun) (□□□□): A difficult, unpleasant, or embarrassing situation.
  20. **Milieu** (noun) (□□□□□□): A person's social environment.
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**World War III?**  
**Mahir Ali**

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THE president of Ukraine has lately devoted a great deal of his energy to soliciting international attendance at a supposed peace conference scheduled to be held in Switzerland in mid-June. He is particularly keen on the participation of Joe Biden and Xi Jinping. Vladimir Putin has not been invited.

Kyiv's idea is to persuade the Global South to ditch its purported neutrality and help persuade Moscow to end the war it launched more than two years ago. Convincing China to reassess its alignment with Russia would be the biggest prize, but that is almost certainly out of reach for now — the same could probably be said about the bulk of nations economically (or politically) reliant on China or Russia.

Thanks largely to China and India, among others, as well as a stepped-up military industry, the Russian economy has not tanked because of Western sanctions: earlier this year, the IMF predicted a 3.2 per cent growth rate, higher than what lies in store for Britain, France and Germany. What's more, many of the Western imports coveted by the Russian elite that helps to sustain Putin flow in via Dubai and other such entrepôts. It is unlikely that recent Western initiatives to deploy frozen Russian assets in the aid of Ukraine will make much difference.

Nor can a peace conference that excludes Russia produce a meaningful result. Putin would not anyhow have accepted an invitation without an embarrassing Swiss assurance of immunity for the duration of the conference, given the

International Criminal Court's warrant against him from last year for the war crime of transferring Ukrainian children to Russia. It could even be argued that he has committed far worse crimes both within Russia and on its periphery. What stands out, however, is the Western hypocrisy in hailing Putin's indictment while placing Benjamin Netanyahu — whose regime has slaughtered children, rather than transporting them to Israel — on a pedestal of impunity, and hence immunity in the face of an ICC warrant.

Ukraine remains the key global tinderbox.

It would appear that the Western-designed 'rule of law' applies chiefly to Russia and China. The US and its close allies are exempt from this much-ballyhooed standard of civilisation. A vengeful killing spree by Israel apparently does not violate those norms. An International Court of Justice injunction against deadly operations in Rafah cannot be supported, even though it echoes similar suggestions by the US and many of its allies — perhaps because they had factored in the unlikelihood of the Netanyahu administration heeding their pleas.

Were the West so inclined, switching off military supplies to Israel would help to stem the hostilities in Gaza and the West Bank. Ukraine is a far trickier proposition. For all its foibles, Kyiv isn't the aggressor. Russia's historical paranoia about influence, infiltration or aggression from the West, even when combined with EU and US efforts to woo Kyiv, cannot even begin to justify its military assault and the subsequent war of attrition.

Fortuitously, the attempted invasion initially went badly for Russia, but lately the tide appears to have turned — to the extent that the US and Nato are considering openly deploying 'military trainers' within Ukraine, and Washington is debating whether to allow US-supplied weapons to target Russian territory. That seems like a potent recipe for facilitating a third world war, regardless of who lobs the first missile.

Putin has lately purged his defence hierarchy, ostensibly on grounds of corruption (and incompetence). Volodymyr Zelensky has done the same now and then, recently purging his personal bodyguard amid suspicions of a plot to assassinate him as a gift to Putin on the eve of the latter's umpteenth inauguration as president. Such indications serve as a reminder that both countries have much in common, beyond the historical connections absurdly



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exaggerated by Putin and crudely under-emphasised by Kyiv's rulers.

There have been indications that some territorial concessions — Crimea and the Donbas region, for instance — would quench Putin's thirst for expansion. Back when the Soviet Union was intact, which region belonged to which constituent republic did not matter much. Potential geographical disputes ought to have been settled before the USSR split up in 1991, but the Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian architects of its demise were in too much of a hurry to worry about such niceties.

Among others, Xi Jinping and Pope Francis both reckon that reasonable territorial concessions would be an acceptable price to pay for peace. Reports suggest that Donald Trump — once and, appallingly, possibly the future US president — does not disagree. Zelensky and most other Ukrainians would understandably question the idea of rewarding aggression. But is there a feasible alternative for ensuring more Ukrainians don't perish?

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