Trump wins the elections in the USA. What changes in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, for Europe and NATO.

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The recent victory of Donald Trump in the 2024 United States presidential elections opens new scenarios for the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The newly elected president has clearly expressed the desire to resolve the crisis quickly, putting the option of direct negotiations and a review of military support to Ukraine on the table. This change in leadership in Washington could alter the Western approach, influencing not only Kiev's strategy but also the role of Europe and NATO in this conflict and beyond, with implications that could profoundly alter the balance in the region.

Sanctions on Russia (almost) useless

Despite international sanctions, the Russian economy has shown surprising resilience and in some sectors has even grown.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine in 2022, the international community has imposed a series of sanctions on Russia aimed at targeting various strategic sectors of the country. These measures, mainly adopted by the European Union, the United States, and other Western allies, aimed to exert economic and political pressure on Moscow.

Let's take a closer look:

1. **Energy sector:**
    - Ban on the import of Russian oil and petroleum products by the EU, with some temporary exceptions for specific member states.
    - Restrictions on the export of advanced technologies for the Russian energy industry, limiting Moscow's ability to develop new deposits.
2. **Financial sector:**
    - Exclusion of several Russian banks from the SWIFT system, hindering international transactions.
    - Freezing of the Russian Central Bank's assets held abroad, limiting access to foreign reserves.
    - Ban for Western financial institutions on conducting transactions with sanctioned Russian banks and institutions.
3. **Industrial and technological sector:**

- Restrictions on the export of dual-use (civilian and military) goods and advanced technologies, including semiconductors and electronic components.
- Ban on the export of goods and services related to the aerospace and space industry.

4. **Transport sector:**
   - Closure of EU and other Western countries' airspace to Russian air carriers.
   - Ban on access to Western ports for ships flying the Russian flag or operated by Russian operators.
5. **Individual sanctions:**
   - Freezing of assets and travel bans for numerous government officials, oligarchs, and individuals linked to the Kremlin.
   - Restrictive measures against Russian propagandists and media accused of spreading disinformation.
6. **Cultural and sports sector:**
   - Exclusion of Russia from international sports competitions and suspension of participation in global cultural events.

The effectiveness of these measures is subject to continuous monitoring, with the possibility of further tightening or modifications based on the evolution of the conflict and geopolitical dynamics. However, it remains a subject of debate, as they have not produced the desired effects. Although the sanctions have exerted significant pressure on the Russian economy, several factors have limited their effectiveness in achieving the set goals.

Here are some of the main reasons for the ineffectiveness:

1. **Adaptability of the Russian economy:** Russia has shown remarkable adaptability, redirecting its energy exports to alternative markets, such as China and India, partially compensating for the loss of Western markets.
2. **Sanctions evasion:** Moscow has found ways to circumvent the restrictions, using third countries as intermediaries for the import of sanctioned goods and exploiting loopholes in sanction regimes.

3. **Support from non-aligned countries:** Some countries, including China and India, have not adhered to Western sanctions, continuing to trade with Russia and providing indirect economic support.
4. **Internal resilience:** Russian authorities have implemented measures to stabilize the internal economy, such as capital controls and support for national industries, mitigating the impact of the sanctions.
5. **Limitations in sanctions:** Some sanctions have been implemented inconsistently or with exceptions, reducing their overall effectiveness.

How much aid has Ukraine received to date?

Since the beginning of the conflict, Ukraine has received aid amounting to nearly 200 billion euros.

Since the beginning of the conflict with Russia in 2022, Ukraine has received significant support from both the United States and European countries, including military, financial, and humanitarian aid.

United States:

- **Total assistance:** Until November 2024, the United States has provided Ukraine with approximately **113 billion dollars** in overall aid.
- **Military assistance:** Of this total, about **64 billion dollars** have been allocated to military assistance, including supplies of weapons, ammunition, training, and logistical support.
- **Economic and humanitarian assistance:** The remaining **49 billion dollars** have been used for direct economic aid, support for the Ukrainian budget, and humanitarian assistance

to address the refugee crisis and civilian needs.

European Union and European Countries:

- **Total assistance:** The countries of the European Union, together with the United Kingdom, have contributed approximately **80 billion euros** in aid to Ukraine.
- **Military assistance:** About **30 billion euros** have been allocated to military assistance, including the supply of weapons, equipment, and training for the Ukrainian armed forces.
- **Economic and humanitarian assistance:** The remaining **50 billion euros** have been used for economic aid, state budget support, and humanitarian assistance to support the civilian population affected by the conflict.

These contributions highlight the international community's commitment to supporting Ukraine through various forms of assistance, responding to the country's immediate and long-term needs, but the hoped-for results, as mentioned, have not been achieved.

Why can't Ukraine take control of the conflict?

Ukrainian soldier equipped with a Javelin anti-tank weapon system provided by the United States - Photo credits: Ukrainian Armed Forces

Despite the significant military, financial, and humanitarian support received by Ukraine from Western allies, the conflict with Russia still presents numerous challenges that prevent Kyiv from gaining decisive control over the situation.

The main reasons are:

1. Russian numerical and logistical superiority: Russia has larger military resources, both in terms of personnel and equipment. This allows it to sustain prolonged operations and resupply its troops more effectively than Ukraine. Moreover, Moscow has demonstrated the ability to circumvent some Western sanctions, thus maintaining the flow of arms and resources necessary for the war effort.

2. Limitations in Western aid: Although allies have provided considerable support, there are restrictions regarding the type and quantity of weapons sent. For example, Ukraine has requested long-range missiles to strike strategic targets in Russian territory, but such requests have not been fully met. These limitations reduce Kyiv's ability to conduct effective offensive operations.

3. Difficulties in Ukrainian counteroffensives: Ukrainian military operations, such as the summer 2023 counteroffensive, have not achieved the desired objectives. Factors such as Russian resistance, the complexity of the terrain, and the need to coordinate heterogeneous forces have hindered Kyiv's progress. Additionally, Russia has strengthened its defenses and launched effective counterattacks, further complicating Ukrainian operations.

4. Erosion of international support: As the conflict drags on, some Western countries show signs of fatigue in maintaining constant support for Ukraine. Internal pressures, economic concerns, and other global crises can influence the political will to continue providing large-scale aid. This decrease in support could limit Ukraine's operational capabilities in the long term.

5. Impact of weather conditions: The approach of winter represents a significant challenge for military operations. Adverse weather conditions can slow maneuvers, complicate logistics, and affect troop morale. Historically, winter has favored defensive forces, offering Russia a strategic advantage.

In summary, despite the significant aid received, Ukraine faces a complex combination

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believe that time, combined with the human factor, represents a crucial element that

The limited time to train Ukrainian troops has certainly been a critical factor and has impacted the capability of the Ukrainian armed forces. Preparing an army for a large-scale and intense war like the one with Russia in just two years, and doing so with a wide range of modern and advanced weapons, has been an enormous challenge. There are some specific aspects that explain why this factor may have hindered the effectiveness of the Ukrainian

forces:

1. **Complex transition to advanced NATO weapons:**
   Ukrainian forces have traditionally been trained and equipped with Soviet and post-Soviet manufactured weapons, many of which rely on very different technology compared to the weapons provided by NATO, such as Leopard tanks, HIMARS systems, and Javelin missiles. Transitioning from one system to another requires time and intensive training. Managing these complex weapons is not immediate, especially in a war context, where training is forcibly accelerated.
2. **Limited training and field conditions:**
   Many Ukrainian soldiers have received only basic training on the use of new weapons, often in short periods abroad, and then were immediately sent to the front. This can lead to suboptimal use of equipment and greater difficulty in coordinating forces, especially in complex operations and counteroffensives. Optimal training requires realistic simulations and prolonged familiarity with the weapons, something that is difficult to achieve during an active conflict.
3. **Inhomogeneity in force training:**
   Not all Ukrainian soldiers have had access to the same level of training or the same types of weapons, which can create an inhomogeneous force on the field. Some groups are more skilled and equipped, while others may have only basic training. This inhomogeneity makes coordinated and strategic management of operations complex.
4. **Psychological stress and time pressure:**
   The pressure of being trained and then immediately sent into battle against a well-prepared opposing force can negatively affect soldiers' morale and performance. Even highly trained armies need time to adapt and recover between operations, something particularly difficult in such an intense conflict.
5. **Command and control systems:**
   The command and control system must also quickly adapt to new equipment and tactics. Ukrainian forces forced to integrate NATO communication and logistics systems would require an infrastructure not present in Ukraine before the conflict and which is difficult to implement quickly.

The short period of time to train Ukrainian troops and introduce new advanced weapons and equipment in a war context has created significant challenges. While NATO's help has been impressive, the full effectiveness of the new equipment and tactics requires time and continuous training, especially in a conflict of such vast scope and complexity.

The role of Trump: will he be the "peace" man?

Trump wins the elections in the USA. Will he be the man of peace in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict?

The recent **victory of Donald Trump in the 2024 United States presidential elections** could lead to significant changes in U.S. foreign policy, with potential repercussions on the conflict in Ukraine and relations with Europe.

During the election campaign, Trump expressed his intention to quickly end the war in Ukraine, **declaring he could resolve the conflict "in 24 hours"**. However, his statements have raised concerns in Kyiv regarding the possibility of a reduction in military and financial support from the United States. **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky expressed hope that Trump's approach could lead to a "just peace" for Ukraine.**

The tycoon's victory has also generated fears among European leaders regarding possibl

It should be noted that **the Kremlin welcomed the election, expressing hope for an improvement in U.S.-Russia relations**, but emphasized that it will be necessary to wait to assess any concrete changes.

Meanwhile, European leaders have expressed their willingness to collaborate with the new administration, while expressing concerns about possible changes in U.S. policies. In summary,

Donald Trump's victory could lead to a revision of U.S. strategies in Ukraine and relations with Europe, also with significant implications for regional security and stability.

An Opportunity for Europe Towards a Common Defense Path

The possible change in US policies could represent an opportunity for Europe to enhance shared military capabilities.

We are convinced, however, that such behavior by the new American administration will serve as a wake-up call for European countries, pushing them to reflect on their strategic role and the need to assume a more independent and strong position. The possible change in US policies could indeed encourage NATO member states to finally achieve the much-discussed goal of **2% of GDP** allocated to defense, a commitment that many have not yet met. This could not only improve the defensive capabilities of each country but also strengthen Europe's overall contribution to the security of the Atlantic Alliance.

In parallel, Europe could thus seize the opportunity to work on the creation of a **continental army** or at least to enhance shared military capabilities, promoting greater integration th **PESCO** (Permanent Structured Cooperation), allowing it to develop a unified military commanc

Increased investment in defense would also mean a significant boost to **military research and technological development** in the old continent, with the aim of promoting the integrated European defense industry. Such a step could include improving cyber defense capabilities, building independent air defense systems, and developing advanced means for combat and

space defense.

Finally, this situation could stimulate greater cohesion among European countries, with the integration of intelligence and the coordination of military commands, creating a defense network capable of responding quickly and autonomously to threats. Trump's victory could thus prove to be a catalyst for Europe, accelerating the path towards a common defense and making the continent more capable of protecting its security and stability independently, while continuing to collaborate with NATO allies.