The proverb about splitting up the skin on the bear takes on an additional rhetorical gloss in the context of Russia's war with Ukraine. We are aware that the shape of political-economic relations after the war will be determined by the military outcome and then by the position of the major states. Therefore, Poland, whose stance together with the US was decisive for Ukraine's survival in February and March 2022, should already be preparing a refined concept of solutions to ensure damage compensation and lasting peace.

Immediately after a war, differences in the interests of states will become apparent, and the loser will reinforce and exploit them. Let's mentally prepare ourselves for a lot of heated scenes and false arguments. There will be arguments critical of Ukraine pointing out the country's weaknesses. Differences of interest are not only about achieving a specific goal, e.g., the amount of compensation, but for the state, the goal worth courting is to increase its own room for manoeuvre, to prevent another from taking a decisive position. Therefore, the maximum and concrete scope of decisions should be sought immediately after the end of the war, important matters should not be left to subsequent protocols and annexes, and an effective mechanism for enforcing the arrangements should be ensured.

Below I will outline the maximum programme that should be Poland's goal in the current conflict. I take it for granted that Poland, as the country that has made the most significant contribution to supporting Ukraine after the US, will participate in any peace talks.

- Russia leaves all post-2014 occupied Ukrainian territories, Ukrainian citizens deported to Russia are given the opportunity to return. Ukraine is given the freedom to decide whether to join NATO and the EU;
- Russia's international position is reduced – it leaves the G20, its seat on the UN Security Council is undermined (a very good move by Ukraine);
- Russian troops leave Belarus, which becomes a neutral state, with guarantees of independence and borders given by the US, Poland, Ukraine, the UK and France;
- Russia's frozen foreign exchange reserves, i.e., according to various sources USD 300-350 billion, are being earmarked to finance the reconstruction of Ukraine after the destruction of the war. A fund is being set up for this purpose, which will transparently transfer further tranches of support to Ukraine in instalments;
- As Ukraine's war damage and other countries' losses exceed the amount of

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frozen reserves, a reparations system is adopted under the aegis of the UN. For the exported hydrocarbons, Russia receives a portion of the price corresponding to the equilibrium price set in the Russian Federation's budget (for example, in 2021, it was USD 45 per barrel of oil and USD 156 per 1,000 cubic metres of gas), the surplus is transferred to the reparation fund. The fund covers the remaining costs of rebuilding Ukraine and the losses of other countries or entities, e.g., the losses of leasing companies of USD 4 billion for passenger aircraft appropriated by Russia, the costs of defence against the hybrid attack from Belarusian territory incurred by Lithuania and Poland, the care of refugees, the costs of removing the consequences of the Ukrainian blockade of transport infrastructure incurred by Romania, Turkey, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland;

- Russia is obliged to compensate developing countries (food importers) for the threat of famine it has caused. Compensation may take the form of supplying a certain amount of food at prices below current market prices;
- Sanctions are maintained until reparations are paid, after which period the sanctioning states are free to shape their relations with Russia, i.e. there is no commitment to return to pre-war status;
- Russia's constitution is amended, provisions guaranteeing the sovereignty and inviolability of the territory of the former Soviet republics are introduced. The Head of State can be elected for one long term, e.g., 7 years, and after being in power, the international community guarantees him/her a safe retirement in exile;
- An amnesty is introduced for active and passive opponents of Putin's policies, which includes both demonstrators and draft evaders. Russia guarantees media pluralism and reveals service archives from the USSR era (a return to early 1990s policy) and service archives created after 1991.

Poland should prepare itself intellectually to strive for its own goals, keeping in mind the experience of history. Alliances are fickle; after the First World War, Poland's interests were aligned with the French, while we were undercut by the UK with little interest from the US. As a result, Poland was not entitled to reparations under the Treaty of Versailles, as it was considered that since it did not exist before the war, it was not a victim of aggression as a subject of international law. The invaders drafted some 3.5 million Poles under arms, of whom 400,000 died. The former Russian and Austrian partitions were destroyed during the warfare of 1914-1915, and then the Russian-only partition was plundered during the three years of occupation. The plundering was systematic and deliberate: 2.5 billion hectares of

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forest were cleared, 2.7 million cows and 1.7 million horses were slaughtered, 500,000 residential buildings and 390 bridges were demolished, and so on. Losses are estimated at 10 billion Swiss francs (Janicki et al. “Pre-war Poland in Figures”). Nonetheless, Germany was not obliged to make reparations, which gave it a strong basis for continuing to sneer at the Polnische Wirtschaft in the following decades. After all, they had plundered a country that was already economically underdeveloped and could still point to its poverty and backwardness.

There is now a greater convergence of Warsaw’s objectives with London and Washington, while Paris will be helping the Kremlin to avoid the consequences of Putin’s unreasonableness. There will be counterparts to John Maynard Keynes, who argued in 1919 that Germany could not bear the consequences of the war it had caused, as it would distort markets and bring poverty. For this reason, a Polish-Ukrainian team of experts should already be set up, for example, attached to the central banks of both countries, to prepare a refined argumentation of the countries that will demand that the aggressor should bear the consequences of its mistake.



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