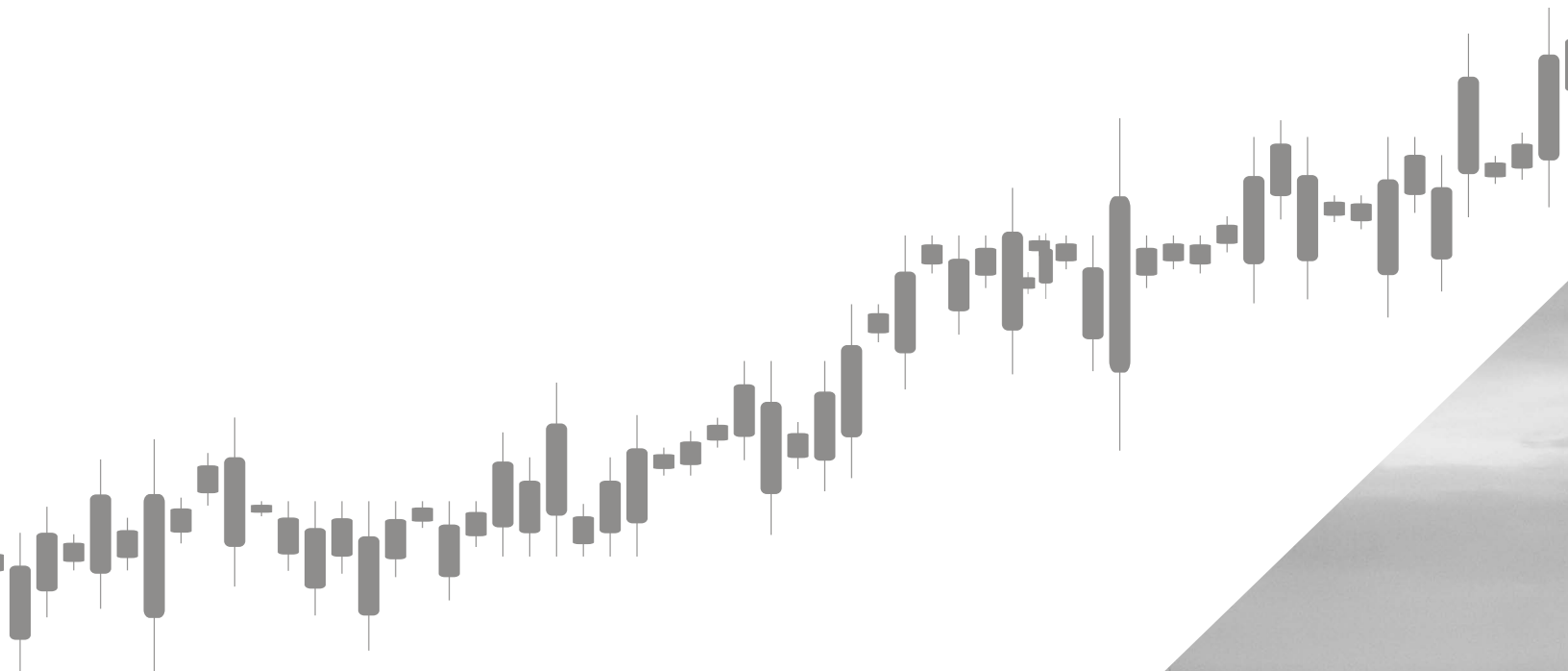


FAIRMONT
CONSULTING GROUP

THE WAR IN UKRAINE

**TEN OBSERVATIONS FROM TEN
WEEKS OF CONFLICT**

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THE WAR IN UKRAINE – TEN OBSERVATIONS FROM TEN WEEKS OF CONFLICT



1. THE WILL TO FIGHT

No commentary regarding the War in Ukraine can begin without first acknowledging the tremendous strength and determination of the Ukrainian people. United under democratically elected President Volodymyr Zelensky, soldiers, sailors, airmen and citizens are putting forth fierce resistance, holding off Russian forces to a degree few anticipated. No revolutionary weapon system, no grand strategy, no battlefield tactics can replace the will to fight as demonstrated by the people of Ukraine as they defend their homes and their country.



2. AIR POWER

After ten weeks of fighting Russia has still failed to achieve air superiority. Ukraine's air force has been reduced in strength but is still flying, bolstered by delivery of critical parts required for aircraft maintenance. Meanwhile Russia has lost 179 fixed-wing aircraft and 154 helicopters through April 25 per reporting from the General Staff of Ukraine. Russia's vast numerical superiority has not created unilateral control of the skies. Ukrainian forces – equipped with a variety of surface-to-air missiles from allies – have held their own to devastating effect.



3. SEA POWER

Ukraine reports elimination of eight Russian naval vessels, including most notably the Saratov Alligator-class landing ship and the Moskva Slava-class cruiser. Russian Black Sea littoral operations are now severely constrained as their Navy finds itself at risk from Ukrainian Neptune anti-ship missiles and other long and extended range munitions. Relatively low-cost mobile anti-ship missiles are now holding the Russian Navy at bay and limiting its effectiveness.



4. GROUND FORCES

The damage to Russian ground forces is staggering, particularly considering the perceived mismatch between the Russian and Ukrainian militaries. Ukraine reports that approximately 22,000 Russian soldiers have been killed in action over the ten weeks since Russia invaded. By comparison, the United States lost 16,899 personnel in combat over a twelve-month period during the worst year of the Vietnam War, 1968. Russia has lost 2,308 armored combat vehicles, 918 tanks, 416 artillery pieces, 149 multiple rocket launchers, and 69 air defense systems. The destruction wreaked on Russian ground forces has been enabled to a significant degree by the influx of powerful anti-tank weapon systems from allied nations, creating a remarkable asymmetric warfighting capability.



5. MISSILES & MUNITIONS

As noted above, the role of missiles and munitions in the War in Ukraine has been paramount, for better and for worse. Precision munitions deployed by Ukraine have ripped through Russian aircraft, tanks, ground systems, and naval vessels to great effect. Dwindling supplies of precision weapons among Russian forces have led to increasingly indiscriminate use of “dumb bombs” and massed artillery against Ukrainian forces, cities, and citizens. Counter-battery weapons – coming soon in the form of loitering munitions and other technologies – will hopefully begin to limit Russia’s ability to utilize fixed and mobile artillery across the battlefield.



6. C2

Russian command and control capabilities offer lessons in “what not to do” as underequipped forces have resorted to a range of unencrypted and even commercial communication lines to sustain connectivity. Top-down command structures, limited autonomy for units in the field, and increasingly degraded military communication systems have allowed Ukraine to seize tactical opportunities that would not exist versus a more sophisticated, better-networked adversary.



7. ISR

Ukraine’s intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities – aided to a significant degree by allied ISR assets – have provided a clear view of enemy forces and have enabled precision strikes to devastating effect versus Russian materiel and troops. Of note, Ukraine’s organic capabilities, particularly the Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drone, have demonstrated that resilient, low-cost unmanned ISR / strike platforms can create disproportionate tactical advantages.



8. LOGISTICS & SUSTAINMENT

Russian forces are experiencing first-hand the implications of failing to heed Admiral Rickover’s famous admonition “The art of war is the art of the logistically feasible.” Reports abound of Russian vehicles outrunning their fuel convoys and being abandoned place; Russian soldiers running out of food and looting civilian stores to survive; and Russian weapon systems running out of munitions and being left for Ukrainian tractors to salvage. The remarkable failure of Russian forces to address logistical requirements, particularly during the first month of the war, has undoubtedly given the Ukrainians an advantage that would not have otherwise existed.



9. TRAINING

Allied training of Ukrainian forces on Western weapon systems in advance of the conflict has served as a force multiplier. The mobilization of Ukrainian civilians to support the war effort and the accompanying training in weapons, tactics, field medicine, and other critical skills has further enabled Ukraine to surge forces quickly and effectively. In the long-run, continuous training of Ukrainian forces will help to ensure that Russian forces, once pushed back to Russia, do not attempt another invasion of Ukraine's sovereign territory.



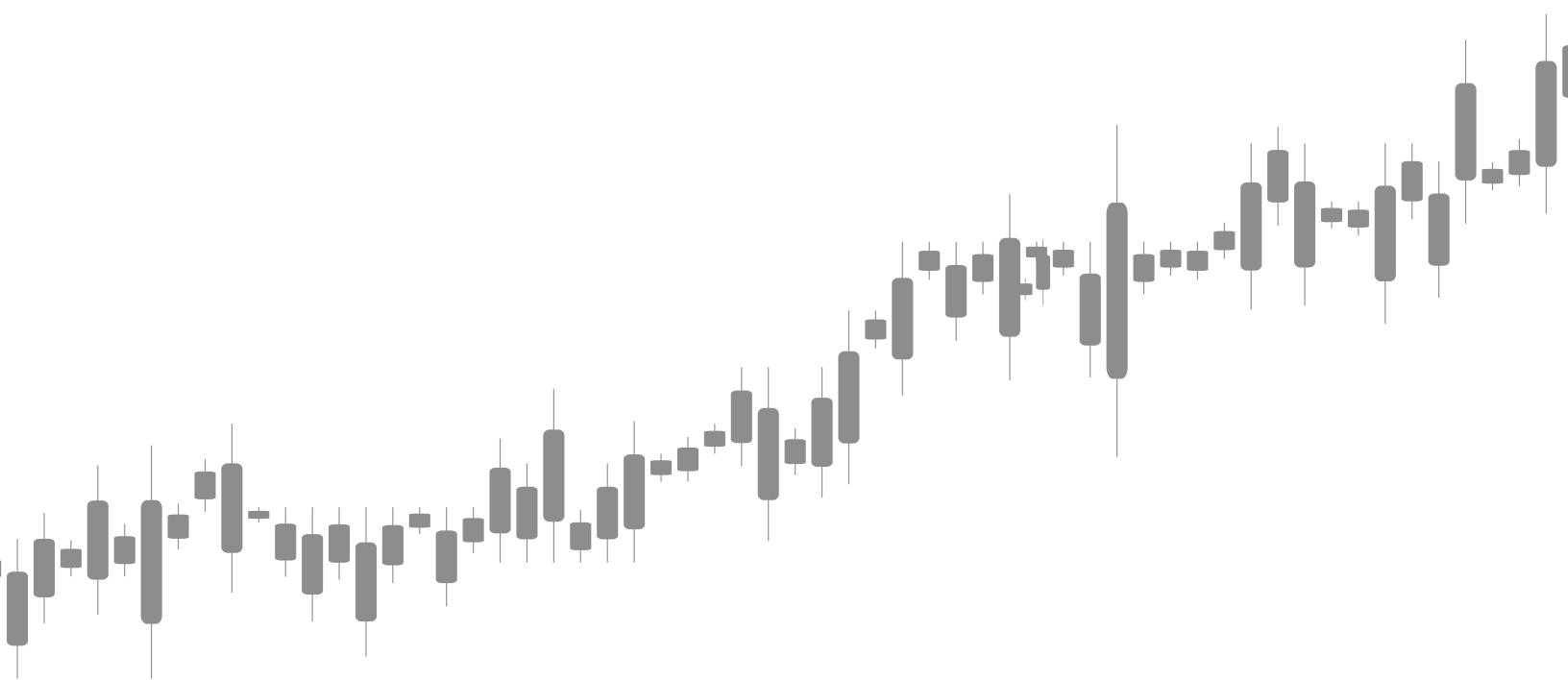
10. RAPID INNOVATION

The War in Ukraine is beginning to reshape Donald Rumsfeld's famous dictum: "You go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you might want or wish you had at a later time." In a matter of weeks, Ukrainian forces – supported robustly by an allied coalition – have rapidly adapted their weapon systems and their tactics to pronounced effect against Russian targets. Ukraine has managed to hold at bay a vastly larger and (arguably) more sophisticated military aggressor through a range of innovations, including rapidly evolving use of commercial satellite imagery; targeted application of loitering munitions; tactical application of low-cost UAVs to meet ISR requirements and other innovative solutions. Necessity has truly been the mother of invention for Ukraine.

COLLABORATION, DETERRENCE, AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

As the United States and its allies consider the long-term implications of Russian aggression in Ukraine, certain strategic observations are emerging from this terrible war. The idea of "Peer State Conflict" is no longer theoretical. NATO resolve has been visibly strengthened, and NATO may expand even further as European nations contemplate the best path toward shared security. Growing collaboration between NATO countries (hopefully) will create an increasingly powerful deterrent to Russian forays beyond Ukraine. And the critical question in the Asia-Pacific – whither Taiwan? – looms even larger now than ever before.

Fairmont will examine the industrial and capital allocation implications of these topics and the preceding "Ten Observations From Ten Weeks of Conflict" in a forthcoming white paper.



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