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## FRAMING THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR IN THE OFFICIAL AND PUBLIC SPACE OF POLAND

### *Abstract*

**Purpose and objectives.** The purpose of the article is a comprehensive analysis of the framing of the Russian-Ukrainian war in the official and public space of the Republic of Poland, in particular in the discourse of state institutions, political elites, intellectuals, and opinion leaders. The authors examine interpretative models of understanding the war as a historical, security, moral-value, and existential phenomenon that determines contemporary European political reality. **Research methodology.** The methodological basis is grounded in an interdisciplinary approach combining the tools of the history of international relations, political philosophy, intellectual history, and critical discourse analysis. General scientific methods (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction) as well as special methods (historical-comparative, content analysis, historical-political) are applied. **Scientific novelty.** Scientific novelty lies in the systematic generalization of the Polish official and intellectual discourse on the Russian-Ukrainian war through the prism of the category of “framing,” which makes it possible to identify key narratives, semantic emphases, and value orientations. It is demonstrated that the Polish discourse is characterized by a high level of consensus in interpreting Russia as a neo-imperial threat, and the war as an existential challenge for the whole of Central and Eastern Europe. Particular attention is paid to the role of historical memory, strategic culture, and the experience of confronting Russian imperialism in shaping these assessments. **Conclusions.** It is established that the Polish political and intellectual space forms a coherent and normatively defined framework for perceiving the war, which combines security realism with a moral-value imperative of supporting Ukraine. This approach contributes not only to the consolidation of Polish society but also influences the development of a broader European strategy toward Eastern Europe. The study opens prospects for further research on the transformation of Europe’s strategic culture, the role of intellectual networks, and

*interstate partnerships in shaping a new security architecture under conditions of global instability.*

**Keywords:** *Russian-Ukrainian war, framing, Poland, political discourse, Central and Eastern Europe, international security.*

## INTRODUCTION

**Problem statement and relevance.** The Russian–Ukrainian war began in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea and acquired a qualitatively new, full-scale dimension following the Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, 2022. It has become one of the principal challenges to the contemporary system of international relations, European security, and the normative and legal foundations of the global order. The war has not only profoundly transformed the security architecture of Europe but has also triggered significant ideological, value-based, and intellectual shifts within the member states of the European Union, particularly in the leading countries of Western and Central and Eastern Europe. Within this context, the Republic of Poland occupies a pivotal position as a state on the eastern flank of NATO and the EU, as well as a key ally of Ukraine.

In this context, the examination of assessments of the Russian–Ukrainian war articulated by representatives of official state institutions, intellectuals, policy experts, and opinion leaders in Poland acquires particular scholarly relevance. These actors play a decisive role in shaping public narratives, informing the frameworks of political decision-making, and delineating long-term perspectives on the place of Ukraine, Russia, and Eastern Europe within the broader European civilizational space.

An analysis of these assessments, as reflected in Polish political and intellectual discourse, enables a more nuanced understanding of the internal tensions and contradictions inherent in European policy, the evolution of security paradigms, and the prospects for the emergence of a renewed European strategy towards Eastern Europe, with particular emphasis on Ukraine.

**Recent research and publications.** First of all, it should be noted that the official position of Poland’s ruling elites regarding Russian aggression against Ukraine is quite widely represented through their public speeches, statements, debates in negotiations, and so forth. At the same time, the corresponding assessments of Polish intellectuals and opinion leaders in the aforementioned countries are reflected to a much lesser extent and are therefore only partially incorporated into the broader scholarly discourse. Among significant academic studies in Ukraine, particular attention should be paid to the works of S. Vidnianskyi and A. Martynov (Vidnianskyi, 2022, pp. 458–468; Vidnianskyi, 2024, pp. 25–64; Vidnianskyi & Martynov, 2023) – both individual and joint scholarly investigations carried out within the framework of the research program of the Department of the History of International Relations and Foreign Policy of Ukraine at the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy

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of Sciences of Ukraine, as well as the monograph by the team of authors from the I. F. Kuras Institute of Political and Ethno-National Studies (Interpretations of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict, 2020). Among Polish and Polish-Ukrainian studies in this field, an important place is occupied by collective and individual scholarly works, in particular the publication “Russia-Ukraine. Confrontation of Narratives,” as well as articles by B. Markowska-Marczak, R. Stobiecki, L. Adamski, P. Żurawski vel Grajewski and V. Rasevych (Russia-Ukraine, 2025; Markowska-Marczak, 2023, pp. 225–252; Stobiecki, 2024, pp. 477–491; Wokół historii, 2025; Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2025; Rasevych, 2024).

Therefore, in terms of the scholarly significance of the proposed study of the political and intellectual reaction in Poland to the contemporary Russian-Ukrainian war, two aspects should be distinguished. The first is the comprehensive and systemic conceptualization of the research problem in the context of its formulation, conclusions, and generalizations. The second is the representation of the scholarly discourse regarding the attitudes of Polish intellectuals and opinion leaders towards the Russian-Ukrainian war as a historical, social, international, and moral-value phenomenon, process, event, and occurrence of the present day.

**Research aim and objectives.** The aim of the study is a comprehensive analysis of the official position and interpretations of the contemporary Russian-Ukrainian war in the statements of statesmen, politicians, intellectuals, and opinion leaders in Poland. That is, it concerns framing, or discursive practices and interpretative frameworks for understanding the cause-and-effect paradigm, the main characteristics, lessons, and significance of the Russian-Ukrainian war. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are envisaged: to analyze Poland’s official position regarding Russia’s full-scale aggression against Ukraine; to examine the key narratives and interpretative models of understanding the war within the Polish intellectual milieu; to determine the role of collective memory, strategic culture, and value orientations in shaping the corresponding assessments.

**Methodological framework.** The methodological foundation of this study is grounded in an interdisciplinary approach that integrates the analytical instruments of intellectual history, the history and theory of international relations, political philosophy, and discourse analysis. The research draws upon general scientific methods, including analysis and synthesis, as well as induction and deduction, complemented by a range of specialized methodological approaches, notably the historical-political method, the historical-comparative method, content analysis, and critical discourse analysis, etc.

## **PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN RESEARCH MATERIAL**

### **The official Polish position on Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.**

Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, 2022 became a turning point for the entire system of European security and compelled the leading states of the European Union to reconsider their foreign policy strategies. In this context,

the position of Poland as a state on the eastern flank of NATO and the EU acquires particular significance. From the very first days of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Poland adopted a clear and unequivocal stance of full and comprehensive support for Ukraine. The Polish leadership regards Russia's war against Ukraine as an existential threat not only to Ukraine, but also to the whole of Central and Eastern Europe (Sichen, 2022). At the same time, President A. Duda emphasized that "if Ukraine falls, Poland or the Baltic states may become the next target" (Duda, 2025). Warsaw actively advocated for the maximum strengthening of sanctions against Russia, the rapid provision of heavy weaponry to Ukraine, and a clear prospect of membership in the EU and NATO. Poland also became one of the key logistical and political hubs of support for Ukraine, having received millions of Ukrainian refugees and initiated numerous international assistance formats.

The official Polish position is grounded in the historical experience of resistance to Russian imperialism, which determines a profound distrust of any compromises with the Kremlin. As noted by T. Kuzio (Kuzio, 2025), Polish political discourse articulates a clear understanding of the war as a continuation of Russia's imperial policy rather than as a regional conflict. However, it would be naïve not to recognize evident problems, in particular through the prism of Warsaw's official attitude towards Ukraine and Ukrainians, especially after the presidential elections in Poland (Olshevskiy, 2025). Nevertheless, for the sake not only of a free future for Ukraine, but also of a similar prospect for Poland and Europe, we are bound to overcome problems related to divergences in the interpretation of the shared past, the migration challenge, war fatigue, and so forth. In this context, the words of the Head of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Ukraine, P. Łukasiewicz, sounded rather optimistic and, it is to be hoped, prophetic in May 2025: "Poland is always threatened by war, but we do not believe in a Russian attack, because Ukraine will win" (Panchenko, 2025).

At the same time, the continuity and consolidation of Poland's pro-Ukrainian course have been reaffirmed at the highest level of state leadership (Tusk, 2023; Żurawski vel Grajewski P., 2025, ss. 125–241). Presidents A. Duda and K. Nawrocki have repeatedly stressed that support for Ukraine is not only an expression of solidarity, but also a strategic necessity stemming from Poland's own security interests. In their public statements, they have unequivocally condemned Russian aggression as a gross violation of international law and the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, emphasizing that any form of appeasement will only fuel further expansionist ambitions. Within this framework, Ukraine is perceived as a frontline state whose resistance contributes directly to the defense of the entire European order.

Prime Minister D. Tusk, for his part, has articulated a consistent position centered on the inseparability of European security and Ukraine's victory. He has underlined that the outcome of the war will determine not only the future of

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Ukraine, but also the credibility of the European Union as a geopolitical actor. Advocating for sustained military, financial, and political assistance, Tusk has argued that supporting Ukraine constitutes both a moral obligation and a rational strategic choice aimed at preventing the destabilization of Central and Eastern Europe. His government has also emphasized the importance of strengthening transatlantic unity and maintaining a firm sanctions regime against the Russian Federation.

In a similar vein, Minister of Foreign Affairs R. Sikorski has framed the war as a defining test for the rules-based international order. He has consistently highlighted the global implications of Russian aggression, warning that its normalization would undermine international norms far beyond Europe. Sikorski has stressed the necessity of long-term support for Ukraine, including its Euro-Atlantic integration, as well as the need to counter Russian disinformation and hybrid threats. Taken together, these positions demonstrate a high degree of coherence within the Polish political leadership, reinforcing the perception of Ukraine's struggle as both a moral cause and a strategic imperative for Poland, Europe, and the wider international community.

Overall, Poland's official stance and broader intellectual discourse reveal a coherent and strategically grounded response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Rooted in historical experience and an acute perception of existential threat, Polish political leadership and public thought consistently frame support for Ukraine as both a moral duty and a core national interest. Across governmental, academic, and cultural dimensions, there is a shared understanding that Ukraine's resistance is integral to the security of Central and Eastern Europe and the preservation of the European order. This convergence underscores Poland's role as a key advocate for a firm, long-term European and transatlantic response to Russian aggression.

**The Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict in the assessments of Polish intellectuals and opinion leaders: historical memory and the existential perception of war.** Polish intellectual and political discourse on the Russian-Ukrainian war is characterized by a high degree of consensus in the assessment of the Russian Federation as an imperial, revisionist, and existentially threatening power. For Polish intellectuals, Russia's war against Ukraine is not perceived as a "distant conflict"; rather, it is understood as a continuation of a broader historical sequence of aggressions directed against the states of Central and Eastern Europe (Usatenko, 2025). This perception is conditioned by the historical experience of the partitions of Poland, Soviet occupation, Katyn, the suppression of post-war resistance movements, and the political and ideological dependence on Moscow throughout the twentieth century. Collectively, these experiences have engendered a specific historical sensitivity to manifestations of Russian imperial policy and practice.

**The moral-political imperative: L. Wałęsa, A. Kwaśniewski, W. Bartoszewski.** Former President of Poland and symbol of “Solidarity,” Lech Wałęsa, who believes that “Poland and Ukraine are destined to be together” (Shevchenko, 2021), consistently interprets Russia’s war against Ukraine as a struggle between freedom and neo-imperial authoritarianism. Appealing to the experience of the Munich Agreement and the post-war fate of Poland, he emphasizes that concessions to an aggressor only encourage further violence (Volosatska, 2023). Former President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, who directly participated in the democratic transformations of post-communist Europe, stated on 5 July, 2022 that “Putin made a historic mistake, the cost of which for Russia will be enormous” (Banakhevych, 2022). He defined Russian aggression as a challenge to the entire architecture of European security, emphasizing that Ukraine’s defeat would mean a strategic defeat for Europe (Banakhevych, 2022). A special place in the Polish intellectual canon is occupied by Władysław Bartoszewski – a former prisoner of the Auschwitz concentration camp and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland. Although he witnessed the hybrid phase, he did not live to see the hot phase of Russian aggression against Ukraine. His legacy is actively employed in contemporary discourse as a moral reference point: W. Bartoszewski insisted that indifference to aggression constitutes a form of complicity, and that historical memory obliges one to act rather than to observe (Bartoszewski, 2001; Kaczyński, 2010; Pavlina, 2022).

**The historical-existential strategic context: Ł. Adamski, J. Malicki, W. Baluk and others.** Polish academic and expert-analytical circles have adopted a clear position condemning Russian aggression against Ukraine. This has been expressed both in speeches, interviews, and expert-analytical materials produced by relevant institutions and centers, as well as in strictly academic Polish and Polish–Ukrainian publications. Thus, Łukasz Adamski, a Polish historian and expert, Vice-Director of the Juliusz Mieroszewski Centre for Dialogue (Centrum Mieroszewskiego, 2026), analyzes Russian aggression as a long-term war, initially hybrid and subsequently full-scale, which includes the active dissemination of disinformation aimed at inciting hostility, including within Poland. He emphasizes the need to strengthen societal resilience, criticizes insufficient preparedness for war, and points to complex issues of historical memory that require dialogue (Adamski & Vihrov, 2023; Pakosz, 2024; Wokół historii, 2025). In general, Ł. Adamski actively supports Ukraine across various academic, informational, media, and volunteer platforms and advocates constructive Ukrainian–Polish interaction at the strategic level, while at the same time offering critical assessments of historical debates and political decisions. In this sense, addressing the question “what should Ukraine be for Poland in 25 years?”, the Vice-Director of the Mieroszewski Centre responded: “A country friendly to Poland, but also a state with a similar level of the rule of law and democracy, which will support Poland in its international activities and share a similar vision of security and

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European integration. These may be general provisions, but they are decisive. Poland should have a long-term strategic program regarding Ukraine. After more than ten years of participation in Polish-Ukrainian debates, including analyses of our relations, I see a deficit of long-term strategic planning – not only for a few years, but approximately for a decade” (Dr Ł. Adamski, 2019).

A vivid example of the development and articulation of a joint Ukrainian-Polish position on Russian aggression has been the traditional meetings of scholars, experts, and journalists in Yaremche, initiated and organized by Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, the Centre for East European Studies of the University of Warsaw, and the I. F. Kuras Institute of Political and Ethno-National Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The partners traditionally include the Representation of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kyiv, the NGO “Kurier Galicyjski,” the “Freedom and Democracy” Foundation, and the Polish Institute in Kyiv. On the Polish side, a special role belongs to the Director of the Centre for East European Studies, Jan Malicki, and the Vice-Rector of the University of Warsaw, Andrzej Szeptycki. In particular, on 21–24 September 2023, the XVI Ukrainian-Polish Meeting “Ukrainian-Polish Strategic Partnership during the War and Prospects for Interstate Dialogue” was held (Participation of the Consul General of Ukraine in Kraków, 2023). Both sides of the meeting expressed strong support for Ukrainian-Polish unity in the struggle against Russian aggression, which poses a threat not only to Ukrainians, but also to Poles and other nations.

A significant scholarly contribution to the understanding of the Russian-Ukrainian war as an existential phenomenon, as well as to the role of strategic partnership between Poland and Ukraine, is the joint Ukrainian-Polish collective monograph (Pietraś & Baluk & Perepełycia, 2024). Historians and political scientists have substantiated that the aggression of the Russian Federation is motivated by the desire to rebuild an empire and has led to an intensification of global geopolitical competition, thereby limiting the effectiveness of the rules-based world order. Under such conditions, the geopolitical realities of many states, NATO, and the European Union are changing, as is the rationality of perceptions of Central and Eastern Europe, including Ukraine, as an integral part of the European and Euro-Atlantic security community. Changes in the space of global politics and the current geopolitical configuration have created the preconditions for a new formula of strategic partnership between Poland and Ukraine. This formula should combine good-neighborly relations based on comprehensive and effective interaction with mechanisms for resolving complex issues and contribute to the geostrategic stabilization of Central and Eastern Europe and the eastern flank of NATO and the EU.

**Culture and literature as a space of solidarity: A. Wajda, O. Tokarczuk, D. Masłowska.** The Polish cultural elite has also taken a clear position on the war. Film director Andrzej Wajda, long before the full-scale invasion, in his films

shaped an image of Soviet and Russian totalitarianism as a system of violence and the devaluation of human dignity. His legacy is being actualized as an artistic warning against historical revisionism (Lubkivskyi, 2025). Nobel Prize laureate Olga Tokarczuk has repeatedly emphasized that the war in Ukraine is a “moment of truth” for Europe, exposing the illusions of a post-historical world. She regards support for Ukraine as a moral obligation stemming from the universalist values of humanism, stating already on the first day of Russia’s full-scale aggression: “An attack on a free Ukraine is an attack on Europe” (Wobec agresji, 2022; Światowe media cytują słowa Olgi Tokarczuk o Rosji, 2022). Writer Dorota Masłowska, analyzing the language of Russian propaganda, underscores its dehumanizing character and the danger of the normalization of violence through cultural codes, which directly resonates with the experience of Central and Eastern Europe (Poland in the information war against the Russian Federation, 2022).

**Information warfare and the analytical dimension: A. Mierzynska, W. Jurasz, Z. Gluza, P. Reszka.** Publicist Anna Mierzynska focuses on Russian disinformation in Poland, demonstrating that information warfare is an integral component of military aggression. She shows how narratives of “war fatigue” and the “Ukrainian burden” are deliberately imported into the Polish media space (Vorozhbyt, 2025). Journalist Witold Jurasz analyzes Polish-Ukrainian relations through the prism of strategic partnership and, despite emphasizing serious and less significant problems in bilateral relations, nevertheless clearly stresses that support for Ukraine corresponds to Poland’s fundamental national interests, as it restrains Russian expansion westward (“We have fallen so much in love with Ukraine, 2024). Historian Zbigniew Gluza and journalist Paweł Reszka complement this discourse with historical and reportage perspectives (Siiak, 2023; Hladka, 2025). They emphasize the continuity of Russian practices of violence and imperial thinking, which makes it possible to interpret the war not as an anomaly, but as a regularity.

In sum, Polish intellectual and public discourse on the Russian-Ukrainian war demonstrates a high degree of normative coherence, grounded in historical memory and an existential perception of the Russian threat. The war is interpreted not as an isolated conflict, but as a continuation of imperial practices, which generates a strong moral-political imperative to support Ukraine. This consensus is reinforced across political, academic, cultural, and media spheres, where the themes of solidarity, responsibility, and resistance to aggression prevail. At the same time, the discourse reflects a strategic vision of Ukrainian-Polish partnership as a key factor in ensuring regional stability and strengthening the European and Euro-Atlantic security architecture.

## CONCLUSIONS

In general, the official position of Poland’s ruling elites and the Polish intellectual discourse on the Russian-Ukrainian war are characterized by normative clarity and historical depth. The Polish position is grounded in an

existential awareness of the Russian neo-imperial threat, which derives from its own historical experience. Poland insists that peace without justice is an illusion, and that concessions to an aggressor inevitably lead to new wars. It is precisely this experience that renders the Polish intellectual voice particularly important for shaping the European response to Russian aggression.

The conducted study may form part of a broader reflection on the corresponding positions of ruling elites and opinion leaders within other states or formal and situational international groupings, groups, and coalitions (the Lublin Triangle, the Visegrád Group, Benelux, etc.). Of particular interest is the study of the impact of the Ukrainian experience of war on the transformation of European strategic culture, as well as the role of intellectual networks in shaping a new concept of Europe's responsibility for regional and global security.

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**Троян С., Киридон А. ФРЕЙМІНГ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ В  
ОФІЦІЙНОМУ ТА ПУБЛІЧНОМУ ПРОСТОРИ ПОЛЬЩІ****Анотація**

**Мета.** Комплексний аналіз фреймінгу російсько-української війни в дискурсі державних інституцій, політичних еліт та інтелектуалів Польщі як чинника, що визначає сучасну європейську політичну реальність. **Методологія.** Застосовано міждисциплінарний підхід, що поєднує інструментарій історії міжнародних відносин, політичної філософії та критичного дискурс-аналізу. Використано історико-порівняльний, контент-аналіз та загальнонаукові методи. **Наукова новизна.** Системно узагальнено польський офіційний та інтелектуальний дискурс крізь призму категорії «фреймінгу». Доведено наявність консенсусу щодо трактування РФ як неоімперської загрози, а війни — як екзистенційного виклику для Центрально-Східної Європи. Висвітлено роль історичної пам'яті та стратегічної культури у формуванні цих оцінок. **Висновки.** Встановлено, що польська рамка сприйняття війни поєднує безпековий реалізм із моральним імперативом підтримки України. Ця модель сприяє консолідації суспільства та впливає на формування загальноєвропейської стратегії безпеки. Дослідження окреслює перспективи вивчення трансформації стратегічної культури Європи в умовах глобальної нестабільності.

**Ключові слова:** російсько-українська війна, фреймінг, Польща, політичний дискурс, Центрально-Східна Європа, міжнародна безпека.

**Troyan S., Kyrydon A. UJĘCIE WOJNY ROSYJSKO-UKRAIŃSKIEJ W  
OFICJALNEJ I PUBLICZNEJ PRZESTRZENI POLSKI****Streszczenie**

**Cel.** Kompleksowa analiza framingu wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej w dyskursie instytucji państwowych, elit politycznych i intelektualnych Polski jako zjawiska determinującego współczesną rzeczywistość polityczną Europy. **Metodologia.** Zastosowano podejście interdyscyplinarne, łączące instrumentarium historii stosunków międzynarodowych, filozofii politycznej oraz krytycznej analizy dyskursu. Wykorzystano metody historyczno-porównawczą, analizę treści oraz metody ogólnonaukowe. **Nowatorstwo naukowe.** Systemowo uogólniono polski dyskurs oficjalny i intelektualny przez pryzmat kategorii „framingu”. Wykazano konsensus w postrzeganiu Rosji jako zagrożenia neoimperialnego, a wojny — jako egzystencjalnego wyzwania dla Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej. Podkreślono rolę pamięci historycznej i kultury strategicznej w kształtowaniu tych narracji. **Wnioski.** Ustalono, że polska rama postrzegania wojny łączy realizm bezpieczeństwa z moralnym imperatywem wsparcia Ukrainy. Podejście to sprzyja konsolidacji społeczeństwa i wpływa na kształtowanie europejskiej strategii wobec Wschodu. Badanie otwiera perspektywy analizy transformacji kultury strategicznej i nowej architektury bezpieczeństwa w warunkach globalnej niestabilności.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wojna rosyjsko-ukraińska, framing, Polska, dyskurs polityczny, Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia, bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe.

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