АКТУАЛЬНІ ПИТАННЯ ІСТОРІЇ

UDC 327(73)(470+560)
DOI https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-5984.2025/2.43

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US GLOBAL INTERESTS THROUGH THE PRISM OF SYRIAN AND UKRAINIAN POLITICS

The article explores the interconnection between the experience of the Syrian conflict and the current policy of the United States toward Ukraine within the broader framework of Washington's global strategy. It has been proven that the experience of the Syrian conflict has taught the US some very valuable lessons that directly shape its policy towards Ukraine, and these lessons can be traced in several key aspects.. The Syrian case is shown to have functioned as an important testing ground where the United States refined new approaches to ensuring international security and containing geopolitical rivals. The research argues that the lessons learned in Syria have had a direct impact on U.S. strategic choices regarding Ukraine. Five key dimensions are analyzed in detail. First, the principle of multilateralism and reliance on international coalitions are highlighted. The Syrian campaign demonstrated the limits of unilateral actions, while in Ukraine Washington actively leverages NATO, the EU, and other alliances to secure both effectiveness and legitimacy. Second, the article stresses the preference for indirect instruments – such as arms deliveries, financial assistance, intelligence sharing, and training – over direct military engagement, which reduces risks while maintaining strategic gains. Third, the importance of taking regional contexts and the positions of local partners into account is emphasized as a critical factor for predictability and stability. Fourth, the analysis shows that military efforts alone are insufficient without a comprehensive combination with diplomacy, sanctions, and legal mechanisms. Fifth, strategic flexibility and the ability to adapt quickly to dynamic changes on the battlefield and in global politics are identified as core elements of U.S. effectiveness. The article concludes that U.S. policies in Syria and Ukraine should not be regarded as isolated but as integral parts of a consistent global strategy aimed at preserving strategic primacy, deterring rivals, and sustaining a rules-based international order. Accordingly, the Syrian experience serves as a methodological background that shapes American approaches to Ukraine, making them more complex, coalition-based, and adaptive to changing geopolitical realities.

Key words: *U.S. policy, syrian experience, war in Ukraine, global strategy, international coalitions.*

Statement of the problem. The policy of the United States of America in the 21st century is determined by the desire to maintain and strengthen its status as a leading global actor. To achieve this goal, Washington is consistently building a strategy that combines military-political, economic, diplomatic and informational instruments of influence. Regions characterised by a high level of conflict and strategic importance for global security and international relations occupy a special place in this strategy. Among such regions, the Middle East and Eastern Europe have become central to the US foreign policy discourse. The Syrian conflict, which has been ongoing since 2011, has become an arena for the clash of geopolitical interests not only of regional players but also of leading world powers. US policy towards Syria combines elements of the fight against terrorism, containment of Russian and Iranian influence, and protection of its own energy and security interests.

At the same time, Ukraine has become exceptionally important for Washington's global strategy since 2014. Russia's annexation of Crimea, the outbreak of war in Donbas, and subsequently the full-scale aggression of 2022 have significantly transformed the system of international relations and brought the issue of Euro-Atlantic security to the fore. US policy towards Ukraine has become one of the key instruments in shaping the new architecture of the global order, where confrontation with Russia determines the main contours of the future international balance of power.

A comparative analysis of US policy in Syria and Ukraine allows us to trace the common and distinctive features of Washington's strategic approaches to regions that are critical to its global interests. In the first case, the focus is primarily on maintaining the balance of power and preventing the strengthening of geopolitical opponents, while in the second, it is on directly supporting an ally integrated into the European security space. The relevance of the study is determined by the need for a comprehensive understanding of the logic of US foreign policy in different geopolitical contexts, which allows us to assess both the effectiveness and the controversy of Washington's global strategy. The scientific novelty lies in the attempt to analyse US policy simultaneously in two regions that are in different dimensions of international security but are at the same time components of a single American geostrategy.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Recent publications demonstrate a wide range of research that provides a deeper understanding of how the Syrian experience influences US policy towards Ukraine. Reports from the US State Department and think tanks such as CSIS outline institutional instruments of support, ranging from military-diplomatic coalitions to sanctions and aid. Academic articles provide a strategic framework, highlighting the logistical aspects of conflicts, the role of regional context, and the challenges of autonomous technologies and information operations. Analytics on the Crisis Group, CFR, and Think-tank Institute Global platforms clarify the economic and security aspects of support, including the financial dimensions of long-term stabilisation. Comparative studies, such as those at MEI or the Carnegie Endowment, clearly show which lessons from Syria are relevant to aid to Ukraine. Media resources (The Guardian) and political analysis complement the picture of the practical application of strategies. Thus, these sources not only complement each other, but also create an interdisciplinary narrative – political, military, economic and normative – that reflects the multidimensional nature of American strategy.

Task statement. The purpose of this article is to identify and analyse key lessons learned by the United States from the Syrian conflict, as well as to examine how these lessons have been transformed into current US policy towards Ukraine in the context of Washington's global strategy. Achieving this goal involves comparing the characteristics of American strategy in the two regions, identifying common and distinct approaches to the use of military, diplomatic and economic instruments of influence, and assessing the importance of multilateral coalitions and strategic flexibility in ensuring international security.

Outline of the main material of the study. The experience of the Syrian conflict has taught the United States valuable lessons that directly shape its policy towards Ukraine, and these lessons can be traced in several key aspects. One of the most important conclusions was the need for multilateral coalition work to achieve strategic goals. In Syria, the US saw that unilateral actions are limited in both their effectiveness and legitimacy. For example, attempts by the US to influence the course of the conflict without close coordination with regional allies or international organisations often met with resistance or failed to produce the expected results. The US took this lesson into account in the war in Ukraine, actively cooperating with NATO, the EU and other international partners. Arms supplies, financial support and sanctions against Russia are being coordinated closely with allies, which not only increases the effectiveness of the assistance but also strengthens the legitimacy of US decisions in the international arena [8].

The second important lesson was the advantage of indirect action over direct military intervention. In Syria, American troops rarely participated in ground operations, preferring instead to conduct air strikes, training missions and support local partners such as Kurdish forces or opposition groups fighting against ISIS. This experience showed that indirect actions allow goals to be achieved with less cost and risk to one's own personnel. In the case of Ukraine, this means that US assistance is provided primarily through the supply of modern weapons, funding, intelligence and training of Ukrainian troops. American soldiers do not participate in combat operations on the front lines, which reduces the political and strategic risks of direct intervention.

The third lesson was the critical importance of taking into account the regional context and the positions of local partners. The Syrian war clearly demonstrated how Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and other regional players could radically change the course of the conflict by supporting different sides or conducting military operations on their own. For Ukraine, this means that the US carefully analyses the positions of neighbouring states, the EU and even neutral countries to avoid unpredictable escalation and maintain strategic predictability. For example, heavy weapons support is provided in parallel with diplomatic consultations with neighbouring countries and NATO allies to avoid the risk of the conflict spreading beyond Ukraine.

The experience of Syria has also shown that military means alone do not ensure the achievement of strategic goals if they are not supported by diplomacy and international law. American actions in Syria without the support of the UN, regional agreements or diplomatic channels had limited effect and often led to protracted instability. In Ukraine, the US is pursuing a combined strategy: arms supplies and financial support are combined with sanctions against Russia, initiatives in international organisations and the creation of legal mechanisms to restore Ukraine's territorial integrity. This allows for a balance between military effectiveness and political stability [5].

Finally, the Syrian case clearly demonstrated that strategic plans must be flexible and adaptive. The situation on the battlefield and international politics changed rapidly: the consolidation of ISIS forces, Russia's intervention, and Turkey's actions often forced the United States to urgently adjust its plans. For Ukraine, this means constantly adapting the level, scope and type of assistance depending on developments on the front line, changes in the reactions of allies and the dynamics of international politics. For example, deliveries of HIMARS, anti-tank systems or combat drones are made after analysing the specific needs of Ukrainian units and changes in the tactical situation on the front line, which demonstrates the high flexibility of the American strategy.

All these lessons together shape the US approach to Ukraine, which combines multilateralism, restraint, strategic flexibility and adaptability. US policy is based on the use of international coalitions, indirect means of influence, consideration of the regional context, a combination of military and diplomatic instruments, and a willingness to quickly adjust strategy in response to changes on the front lines and in the global political environment. This allows for maximum effective support for Ukraine, minimising the risks of unpredictable escalation and maintaining strategic stability in the region [9].

The conclusion from the Syrian experience for US policy towards Ukraine can be summarised as follows: the Syrian case has shown that unilateral actions without the support of allies and international structures are limited and often ineffective, and therefore the US adheres to the principle of multilateralism in the war in Ukraine, actively involving NATO, the EU and other international coalitions. This not only increases the effectiveness of support, but also gives it international legitimacy. The experience of Syria has also highlighted the importance of indirect actions, where support is provided through the supply of weapons, funding, training and intelligence, rather than direct military intervention, which minimises risks to American personnel and political costs.

US policy in Syria and Ukraine should be seen as part of Washington's broader global strategy aimed at maintaining strategic advantage, deterring competitors and supporting a rules-based international order. In Syria, US actions took place in an extremely complex regional environment, where the interests of Russia, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other local and global players intersected. The US sought to combine direct military operations, coalition actions with partners, diplomatic initiatives and sanctions mechanisms, while containing the influence of Russia and Iran in the Middle East. The experience in Syria clearly demonstrates that the effectiveness of American policy depends on the ability to combine multilateral approaches, indirect actions, and strategic flexibility – key elements of the US global strategy [1].

In the context of Ukraine, these principles take on specific characteristics due to the Euro-Atlantic space and the direct threat from Russia. The US is actively engaging NATO, the EU and other international partners, forming a coalition to consolidate support, legitimise its actions and increase the effectiveness of strategic decisions. The Syrian case has demonstrated the limitations of direct military intervention and the high political risks involved, so in the case of Ukraine, the US is mainly using indirect instruments: supplying modern weapons, training Ukrainian military personnel, providing intelligence support and imposing sanctions against Russia. This set of measures allows strategic goals to be achieved without involving American troops in direct combat, reducing the risks for Washington.

The US global strategy in Syria and Ukraine involves managing the regional balance of power, deterring competitors and supporting allies, while maintaining flexibility and the ability to respond quickly to political and military changes. The Syrian case has highlighted the need for an integrated approach, where diplomacy, military means and economic instruments work together to achieve long-term goals. In Ukraine, this approach is implemented through the comprehensive use of sanctions, diplomatic initiatives, military assistance, and coordination with allies, which allows the US to deter Russia, support Ukrainian statehood, and ensure stability in the Euro-Atlantic region.

Thus, US policy in Syria and Ukraine is not isolated or random, but part of a global strategy based on multilateralism, restraint in direct military intervention, flexibility, and the integration of diplomatic, economic, and military instruments.

This strategy ensures the preservation of US strategic advantage, effective response to competitors' actions, and support for stability in key regions of the world, while minimising risks for Washington and its allies.

US policy in Syria and Ukraine is part of Washington's global strategy aimed at maintaining strategic advantage, deterring competitors and supporting a rules-based international order. The experience in Syria has shown that direct military intervention carries significant political and military risks, and that the effectiveness of the American strategy is determined by its ability to combine multilateral approaches, coalition action, diplomacy, and economic instruments.

In Syria, the US tried to balance direct military operations with indirect actions, working with regional and international partners while containing the influence of Russia and Iran. This case demonstrated that an integrated approach and strategic flexibility are key to achieving long-term goals and minimising risks for Washington.

In the context of Ukraine, these principles take on a specific dimension. The US is actively engaging NATO, the EU and other partners to form a coalition to support and legitimise its actions. Given the immediate threat from Russia, the US is primarily using indirect instruments: supplying modern weapons, training Ukrainian military personnel, providing intelligence support and imposing sanctions. This approach allows it to deter the aggressor, support Ukrainian statehood and ensure stability in the region, while reducing political and military risks for the US.

Thus, the American strategy in Syria and Ukraine demonstrates consistency and adaptability: the combination of diplomatic, economic, and military instruments allows for an effective response to the actions of competitors, support for allies, and control of the balance of power in key regions of the world. The Syrian experience serves as a lesson for Ukraine, confirming the need for a comprehensive, flexible and multilateral approach to the implementation of US strategic goals.

Conclusions. Analysing US policy in Syria and Ukraine, it can be argued that both cases are integral elements of Washington's global strategy aimed at maintaining world leadership, containing geopolitical competitors and upholding a rules-based international order. The experience of the Syrian conflict has become a kind of «laboratory» for testing new approaches that are now being actively applied in the war in Ukraine. First, the Syrian case demonstrated the limitations of unilateral US action and highlighted the need to build broad coalitions. Washington has taken this lesson to heart in the war in Ukraine, actively involving NATO, the EU and other international partners. Such multilateralism ensures not only the effectiveness but also the high legitimacy of American decisions. Second, an important consequence has been a shift from direct military intervention to indirect instruments of influence. In both Syria and Ukraine, the US has opted for tactics involving the supply of weapons, financial support, the transfer of intelligence and the training of troops, minimising the risks of involving its own armed forces in combat operations. This allows it to maintain strategic control while avoiding significant political and social costs. Thirdly, US policy demonstrates an understanding of the importance of the regional context and the positions of local and international partners. The Syrian experience has shown how much the influence of Turkey, Iran or Saudi Arabia could change the course of events. In the case of Ukraine, taking into account the positions of neighbouring states, neutral countries and European allies has become a key condition for the predictability and stability of American strategy. Fourthly, the experience of Syria has convinced Washington that military action does not produce long-term results without parallel diplomacy, sanctions pressure and international legal mechanisms. That is why, in the war against Russia, the US combines arms supplies with sanctions, activity in the UN, participation in international courts and support for initiatives to restore Ukraine's territorial integrity. Fifth, an important factor for success is strategic flexibility and the ability to adapt to changing conditions. In Syria, the US faced unpredictable intervention by Russia and Turkey, which forced it to quickly rethink its own steps. In Ukraine, this flexibility is manifested in the gradual expansion of the range of military aid, the adaptation of sanctions policy, and the coordination of actions with allies depending on the situation on the front lines and the global political context.

Thus, US policy in Ukraine is a direct continuation and, at the same time, a transformation of the experience gained in Syria. It combines multilateralism, restraint in the use of direct military means, attention to regional characteristics, a comprehensive set of instruments of influence, and high adaptability. This approach allows Washington to effectively support Ukraine while minimising the risks of uncontrolled escalation and, at the same time, strengthening its own position as a leading global actor. Thus, the American strategy in Syria and Ukraine reflects the unified logic of US global policy, where each regional case is considered as part of a broader system of supporting international stability and asserting geopolitical leadership.

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Черкес І. В. ГЛОБАЛЬНІ ІНТЕРЕСИ США КРІЗЬ ПРИЗМУ СИРІЙСЬКОЇ ТА УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ПОЛІТИКИ.

У статті досліджується взаємозв'язок між досвідом сирійського конфлікту та сучасною політикою Сполучених Штатів Америки щодо України в рамках глобальної стратегії Вашингтона. Доведено, що досвід сирійського конфлікту дав США дуже цінні уроки, які безпосередньо формують їхню політику щодо України, і ці уроки можна простежити у кількох ключових аспектах. Показано, що сирійський кейс став важливим випробувальним майданчиком для США, на якому відпрацьовувалися нові підходи до забезпечення міжнародної безпеки та стримування геополітичних опонентів. Доведено, що ключові уроки сирійської кампанії безпосередньо вплинули на американські стратегії щодо України. Зокрема, аналізуються п'ять основних аспектів, які формують сучасну зовнішньополітичну практику США. По-перше, підкреслюється значення багатосторонності й опори на міжнародні коаліції. Досвід Сирії показав обмеженість односторонніх дій, тоді як у випадку України Вашингтон активно використовує НАТО, ЄС та інші міжнародні формати для легітимізації своїх кроків. По-друге, розглядається пріоритет непрямих інструментів над прямим військовим втручанням, що дозволяє мінімізувати ризики й водночас зберігати стратегічну ефективність. По-третє, простежується залежність результативності американської політики від урахування регіонального контексту та позицій ключових партнерів. По-четверте, доводиться необхідність комплексного поєднання військових дій, дипломатії та санкційного тиску для досягнення стабільних результатів. По-п'яте, показано, що гнучкість і здатність оперативно адаптувати стратегію відповідно до змін ситуації є важливою умовою ефективності американської політики. Висновується, що політика США в Сирії та Україні не є відокремленими явищами, а виступає органічною частиною глобальної стратегії Вашингтона, спрямованої на підтримання міжнародного порядку, стримування конкурентів та збереження лідерських позицій у світовій політиці. Таким чином, досвід Сирії виступає своєрідним методологічним тлом, яке визначає підходи США до української проблематики, роблячи їх більш комплексними, багатосторонніми та адаптивними.

Ключові слова: політика США, сирійський досвід, війна в Україні, глобальна стратегія, міжнародні коаліції.