



HUBERT VÉDRINE

Founder of Hubert Védrine Conseil, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of France

Ali Aslan, International TV Presenter and Journalist

Hubert Védrine, are you concerned about war fatigue? We are sitting here and talking about this war, which has been raging since February 24 and has claimed so many lives, but it is now feeling more and more real to European citizens because of the economic ramifications. I think on an ideological and emotional level everybody in Europe, or at least predominantly, would express their support but do you sense a certain war fatigue in France and beyond?

Hubert Védrine

I agree with Zaki Laïdi, who just recalled the considerable effort of the Europeans, contrary to what is generally stated. About the future, I think Westerners, and Europeans, will stand their ground, and therefore, Putin cannot win. However, I do not think the Americans will help the Ukrainians attack Crimea, although I may be wrong about that of course. I believe that after various twists and turns there will be a stalemate. As I underscored earlier, beyond immediate concerns, everything will depend on the balance of power on the ground, within NATO and in fine the position of the Americans, and therefore Biden, whose order of priorities is 1) domestic policy; 2) China; 3) European issues. They will neither let Putin win, nor allow the Ukrainians and Poles to drag them into a direct confrontation. In the meantime, I do not think Europe will crack and so the Ukrainians will be able to hold on. For me, most of the questions are about what comes afterwards—various hypotheses—and the foreseeable and already visible cracks within the NATO alliance. Public opinion has been on the same page since the beginning: Putin cannot be allowed to win, but war with Russia must be averted. This may seem contradictory, but the opinion is the same across Europe. I do not think it will change. I am not especially worried today about the Europeans' resolve.