

Russia in War: Will Putin Use Nuclear Weapons?

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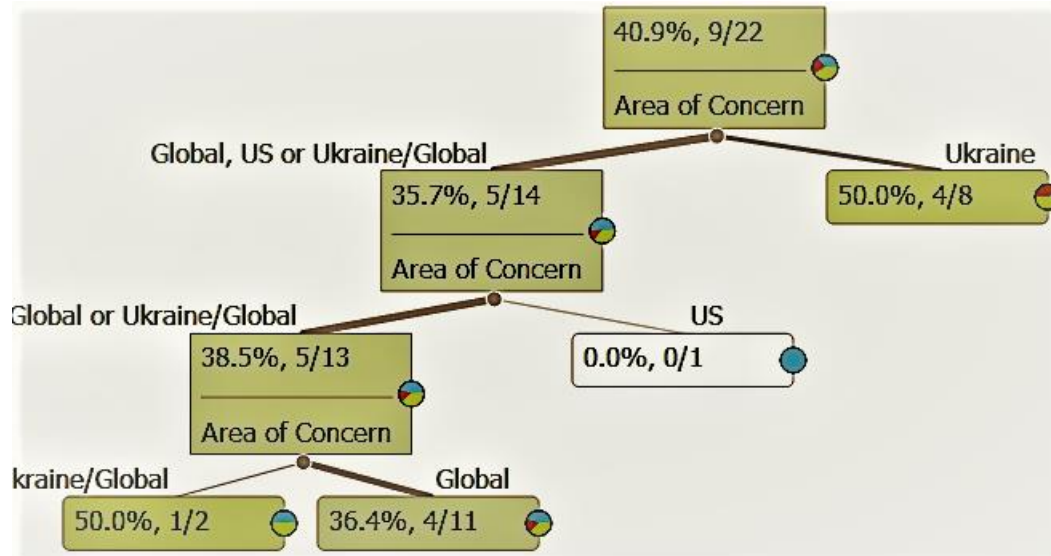
“I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. But perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest.” — Winston S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm

Since the start of Russia’s war on Ukraine, Russia has consistently threatened the use of nuclear weapons. Russia's threat of using such weaponry can be seen as far back as 2018 in an interview when Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed that he would use nuclear weapons if Russia felt threatened. In this interview, Putin proclaimed, *“For humanity, it will be a global catastrophe. For the world, it will be a global catastrophe. But still, as a citizen of Russia and the head of the Russian state”, I ask, “why do we need such a world if there is no Russia there?”* (Bostock, 2022)

Russia has threatened any country willing to provide aid to Ukraine, stating that such aid would undoubtedly lead to Russia’s use and detonation of bombing in unstated, untouched territory. (Train, 2022) This threat was substantiated by the bombing of Kyiv after the U.S. supplied long-range missiles to Ukraine. (Slayton, 2022)

Attempting an analysis of Russia and its use of nuclear weapons requires analyzing the mind and decisions of its leader, Vladimir Putin. This Divergent phenomenon cannot undoubtedly be predicted. (Clark, 2013) Because of the unpredictable nature of a single person, the use of probability theory is most appropriate for forming an analysis. After compiling all the available intelligence, the analysis states that Russia's use of nuclear weapons against Ukraine is at 50%.

Because Putin has made threats of bombing, and he has followed through with these threats, as we have witnessed, this potentially places Russia's use of nuclear weapons higher than we may have suspected.



50% Chance Russia Will Use Nuclear Weapons in Ukraine

So, what are the chances that Putin will decide to cause such massive destruction? By analyzing the available data, the determination is that the likelihood of Russia using nuclear weapons against any entity is estimated at 40.9%. The chance that Russia will use cataclysmic nuclear weapons in Ukraine is 50%. There are specific scenarios that would increase this risk.

Scenarios That Could Increase Risk

- *Other countries supply weapons to Ukraine.*
- *Russia suddenly and drastically lost the war.*
- *Ukraine is taking back the territories that Russia has taken over.*
- *Putin feels there is an incredible threat to Russia.*

The analysis determined that Russia's use of nuclear weapons outside of Ukraine, "Globally," as indicated in the chart, is at 35.7%. The analysis also indicated that any use of nuclear weapons could expect to result in a 36.4% chance of it turning into a Global war.

Current Situation

Russia is currently using missiles to attack Ukraine. The missiles that Russia is using are highly inaccurate and cause mass casualties. Putin has potentially chosen to use such missiles because they have begun to run low on their precision missiles. (Keyton & Leicester, 2022) Putin's destructive and reckless use of these missiles shows that their main goal is to obtain all land from Ukraine, no matter the consequences or people harmed in the process.

On February 24, 2022, Putin gave a speech. In this speech, he asserted, "*No matter who tries to stand in our way or ... create threats for our country and our people, they must know that Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history*". (Mohammed & Emmott, 2022) While this could be merely a threat to deter nations from intervening, one must take these threats seriously, as it is impossible to truly determine what happens inside another man's mind and what has the potential to set him off, along with his arsenal of nuclear weapons.

Conclusion

The United States and the rest of the world should prepare themselves for the possibility of Russia raising the bar on this war. It is unlikely that Putin would end this war without his own favorable outcome, and in the case where he does not see that happening, large-scale destruction is a real possibility. While the numbers hover around 50%, that number should be high enough to take notice and begin any necessary preparations.



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