

Ceasefires, negotiations and peace treaties

The deaths of Israeli citizens in their own homes at the hands of Hamas shocked the world. Now there are big concerns about the plight of civilians in Gaza as Israeli forces seek out Hamas fighters in crowded urban areas and close to hospitals. Meanwhile death and destruction rain down on the areas of Ukraine close to the battle lines. Neither side can gain an advantage sufficient to shift decisively the heavily defended positions along the frontier between two armies.

Most wars end with a negotiated ceasefire and a subsequent peace treaty. Some after huge damage and death end with unconditional surrender of the losers.

It looks as if NATO and the EU will stay out of these two ugly current wars. Nonetheless their financial and military support is essential to Ukraine and important to Israel. This means President Biden has some leverage over Israel and Ukraine and may well be considering using it to ponder options to negotiate. The President looks as if he would prefer war off the agenda. On Ukraine he is being harried to spend less by some Republicans and faces in Mr Trump an opponent who wants peace.

The EU is struggling to get agreement to all the money Ukraine needs. The EU was involved in the overthrow of the elected President of Ukraine in 2014 for being too pro Russian. The EU offer of future membership of the EU to Ukraine is a further provocation to Putin following the expansion of NATO.

Many call for a ceasefire in Gaza and think the US and NATO could require one. The truth is Hamas are not ready to return the hostages and stop rocket attacks on Israel, minimum requirements for a ceasefire. Nor is Israel willing to stop fighting Hamas in Gaza despite civilian casualty levels. Until both shift they will carry on fighting whatever others want.