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## Political Conflicts and Global Political Problems as a Factor of Destabilization of Socio-Economic Development of Ukraine: The Role of Political Elites

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### Abstract

*The aim of the research is to analyze the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war (political conflict) and global political problems on the socio-economic development of the state. The Russian-Ukrainian war leads to an economic crisis, a drop in incomes and welfare, and an increase in unemployment. In addition, environmental problems caused by war crimes lead to an increase in the number of diseases and slow down socio-economic development. The study was conducted in Ukraine from the start of a full-scale Russian invasion (February 2022) to April 2023. The following scientific approaches were used: political, conflict, and typological. As well as general scientific methods: analysis and synthesis, systematic method, induction and deduction, generalization. The results emphasize that one of the reasons for the Russian-Ukrainian war is the different political and socio-economic interests that lead to the war. This study's findings underscore the global ramifications of a full-scale conflict within Ukraine's borders. Moreover, it highlights the substantial impact of political conflicts and global political challenges as destabilizing factors, casting a detrimental influence on the socio-economic progress of the nation. The scientific novelty of the study consists in a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the socio-economic development of Ukraine.*

**Keywords:** Ukraine, Russian Aggression, Elites, Socio-Economic Development

## INTRODUCTION

### Research Problem

A full-scale war is a global political conflict of geopolitical significance. As a result of hostilities, crimes against humanity, destruction of physical infrastructure, and an increase in environmental disasters are recorded. In May, 21 cases of missile attacks were recorded, which constitutes a crime against humanity because they were systematic, i.e., the attack tactics had one scheme [1]. According to current statistics, the total cost of the destroyed infrastructure is more than \$62 million, which has a negative impact on the development of the country's socio-economic life. At the same time, the effectiveness of socio-economic development is measured by assessing the well-being of the population. As of February-March 2023, 35% of the population was at a low level of well-being [2]. Accordingly, the problem of the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war (as a global problem of our time) on the development of destabilizing socio-economic changes in Ukraine is important.

### Research Focus

In times of war, the economic and social level of the state is reflected in the destabilization of the material and spiritual development of society. Accordingly, the main focus of the study is on analyzing the key consequences of global political problems that are destabilizing for the development of Ukraine's socio-economic policy. In particular, the main attention is paid to the analysis of the main economic problems and their impact on the development of other (environmental, material, demographic, social, food). Separately, the research focus is on

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characterizing the importance of political elites, because they play significant roles in political conflicts and global political problems, both as drivers of these issues and as potential agents for resolving them.

### **Research Aim and Research Questions**

The purpose of the study is to analyze the political conflict and global political issues that destabilize the socio-economic development of Ukraine.

The study will focus on the following research questions:

- 1) definition of the concept of “political conflict”;
- 2) analysis of the Russian-Ukrainian war in the system of global military challenges;
- 3) characterization of important political issues and their consequences for the socio-economic development of the state (against the background of the spread of the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation).

The paper structure: have the Theoretical framework Section II, Methodology in Section III, Results and discussion in Section IV, the conclusion in section V.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Contemporary researchers have repeatedly addressed the main problems that influence the formation of destabilization of social and economic development. However, the issue of characterizing the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the socio-economic situation of the state is not fully explored. For this reason, it is important to review the main literature that characterizes certain manifestations of this complex problem. In particular, O. Hrynevych, M. Canto, and N. García [3] studied the socio-environmental and economic situation in Ukraine after the military invasion. The study found that Ukraine's economic system is unstable due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, energy and raw material shortages, logistics problems, and Russian aggression. It is worth agreeing with the researchers' thesis that in order to stabilize the economic situation, it is necessary to reform the economic system, which will be aimed at establishing international relations in the field of economic greening. The study by E. Rochmiatun, M. Maryam, and N. Gusela [4] analyzes the impact of the Palembang War against the Netherlands in the XIX-XX centuries on socio-economic development. The essence of this war was that the Sultan of Palembang fought against the Dutch colonial system and did not negotiate to establish a monopoly. However, the results of the study show that under the colonial system of domination, socio-economic development made significant progress. I. Mironyuk et al. [5] compiled a table of 25 consequences of medical and demographic problems; 38 - socio-economic; 16 consequences of behavioral and biological problems as a result of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

O. Nikoliuk et al. [6] highlights the pressing need for an efficient state management system, including a coordinating body, state policy support for the hotel and restaurant business, and the engagement of qualified specialists, as essential for enhancing industry efficiency and its socio-economic contributions. Thus, the largest group of negative consequences is socio-economic. The authors identified the problems of this group based on an analysis of the economic, social, and humanitarian environment. I. Semenets-Orlova et al. [7] researched key aspects of development of information exchange in the modern public sector. At the same time, I. Semenets-Orlova et al. [8] described modern approaches to improvement of human potential in public administration. The research conducted by A. Yadav and A. Kumar [9] addresses the complex interplay between sovereignty and supranationalism concepts in international law, highlighting the importance of understanding this dynamic in today's globally interdependent world. In the study of the long-term impact of war on African society, S. Musisi and E. Kinyanda [10] concluded that negative psycho-emotional state, post-traumatic disorders, and emotional exhaustion lead to a slowdown in the socio-economic development of the state. Scientists have identified a number of policy recommendations to improve the psycho-emotional state of society, developed with the support of the World Health Organization [10].

The article by A. Abdullaieva et al. [11] analyzed the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on EU food security. The study found a food crisis that arose as a result of large-scale military aggression and affected food security in the EU). The authors noted that countries with low socio-economic levels provoke the development of food

crises. L. Vaolevska et al. [12] analyzed the importance of reforming tax policy to increase the level of socio-economic development. According to them, it is necessary to reduce the tax burden on business entities, improve the investment climate and increase the production of Ukrainian products, and create new jobs [12]. On the other hand, D. Ciftci [13] identified five conceptual foundations for the spread of civil war in Africa. In particular, the author highlighted the lack of national identity, weak governance structure, corruption and the activities of oligarchic politicians, ethnic tensions, and lumpen culture [13]. During a full-scale war on the territory of Ukraine, we can observe similar signs, but national identity is at a high level. M. Bida and I. Ruda [14] analyzed the level of Ukraine's economy within 100 days after the start of large-scale armed aggression. According to their results, we can observe a decline in GDP and an increase in public debt. At the same time, Ukraine is also currently experiencing inflation and depreciation of the national currency, a reduction in foreign exchange reserves, and a decrease in foreign direct investment due to the instability of the domestic market [3, 15]. This, in turn, negatively affects the long-term development of the state and tourism. An effective foreign policy tool in the socio-economic development of a state is aid, the principle of subsidiarity, and cooperation, which are used to combine mutually beneficial relations between states or elite representatives [16]. These areas have become relevant especially during a full-scale war, as the protection of Ukraine's national security requires European assistance.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodological field of the study is based on the use of universal (philosophical), general scientific, empirical, and special methods, approaches of cognition that comprehensively reveal the phenomenon of political conflict and global political problems. The study was conducted in compliance with the principles of objectivity, impartiality, academic integrity, and systematicity.

The concepts of “conflict” and “political conflict” were defined by means of analysis and synthesis. Using the systemic method and cause-and-effect relationship, the author traced the dependence of political conflict on the type of political system. The method of induction was used to identify the causes of political conflict.

The method of classification was used to determine the type of political conflict to which the Russian-Ukrainian war can be attributed. The typological method was used to analyze the types of political conflicts and to distinguish from this system one type that characterizes Russia's large-scale military aggression against Ukraine. The method of deduction was used to identify global political issues related to peacekeeping, international terrorism, and regional conflicts. The hermeneutic method was used to analyze news texts and provide examples of the implementation of global political problems in Ukraine. The method of generalization was used to highlight the important theses of the study. The study also used the graphical method, the method of ranking.

At the same time, using a conflictological approach, the full-scale war was analyzed in terms of classifying political conflicts by values, interests, and identifications of their actors.

The theoretical and empirical basis of the study is based on the works of Ukrainian (conceptually important are the works of I. Mironyuk et al. [5]; A. Abdullaieva et al. [11]; L. Vaolevska et al. [12]; O. Semenets-Orlova et al. [7]) and foreign (S. Musisi and E. Kinyanda, [10]; Rochmiatun, Maryam and Gusela, [4]) by scientists published in Ukrainian professional journals or international databases indexed in Scopus and Web of Sciences. The results of a sociological survey of Razumkov Center [2] on the socio-economic well-being of Ukrainian society during large-scale military aggression were also used. The study used statistical data from open web sources with a mandatory reference, for example Glavkom [1]; Slovo I Dilo [17; 18]; UkrInform [19]; Unian [20] National Institute for Strategic Studies [21] which are verified and reliable.

The materials in the Scopus database were searched using keywords with certain filters: open access, subject area (social sciences and economics), document type (article), language (English), year (2018-2023). In the Web of Sciences database, the search for material to form the theoretical framework was carried out using similar criteria, but with the use of the logical operators “and” and “or”. The principles of academic integrity were followed in the course of the literature research. The opinions and results of other scholars cited in this article are quoted in the text and have a corresponding reference in the list of references.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The global political problem is the issue of war and peace, which affects the socio-economic level of development of the state. The fact that Russia possesses nuclear weapons makes it impossible to engage in hostilities at the local level makes it global. Russia's political system is an empire state that seeks to keep power in one hand. A state with weapons will always provoke political conflict. Accordingly, we can trace the chronology of historical events of Russia's attacks on other states: Transnistrian war, Abkhazian war (1992-1993), Russian-Chechen war (1994-1996; 1999-2009), Russian-Georgian war (2008), Russian invasion of Syria (2015-2022), Russian-Ukrainian war (since 2014), and since 2022 - a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The key problem with war is that it requires a lot of financial support and physical and intellectual human resources.

According to the Kyiv School of Economics, the total cost of the destroyed infrastructure is about \$62,889 million [22]. The environmental situation has deteriorated significantly throughout Ukraine. About 2303 war crimes have been committed, posing a serious threat to the environment. The State Environmental Inspectorate estimates that the total amount of environmental damage caused by Russian aggression is about UAH 2 trillion [17; 18]. Accordingly, the economic and social level of the state is reflected in the destabilization of the material and spiritual development of society. According to a survey of Razumkov Center 55% of respondents consider Ukraine's economic situation to be poor, while the rest remain neutral [2].

The effectiveness of socio-economic development is measured by assessing the well-being of the population. As of February-March 2023, the level of well-being of the population was at medium (49%) and low levels (35%) [2]. This situation is due to the fact that small, medium, and large businesses continued to operate and keep jobs. However, in order to stay in the market, entrepreneurs began to cut wage costs. As a result, 53% of respondents saw their incomes decrease significantly, while the rest of them saw no change or a slight increase. In addition to the decrease in wages, there is a reduction in the number of staff and vacancies [2]. According to the National Institute for Strategic Studies, 4.2-4.8 million people are unemployed [21]. However, we do not exclude the fact of unofficial employment. Accordingly, the material support is only enough to buy food and necessary inexpensive items.

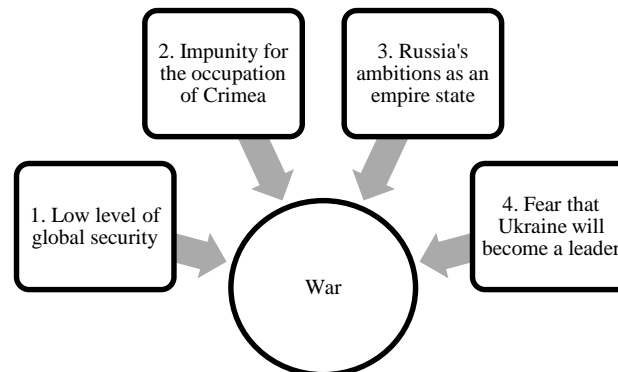
In addition to the economic situation of the state, which affects the level of well-being and social development, a favorable humanitarian situation is an important component of socio-economic policy. During the large-scale military aggression against Ukraine, we can observe a large number of wounded and killed military and civilians, emigration abroad as a result of hostilities, problems with obtaining all types of utilities, and a low level of humanitarian aid (60.1% of respondents have never received it as a result [2]). All this indicates a negative humanitarian environment. Medical facilities play a special role during martial law. Currently, there is a problem with the availability of medicines and the high price of medicines, which is difficult for people with low incomes to purchase.

Due to Russia's large-scale military aggression against Ukraine, government spending on the military and defense sector has increased, which has had a negative impact on GDP. In 2021, defense spending accounted for 9% of Ukraine's military budget [18], and in 2022 it was 37.6% [19]. This led to a decline in Ukraine's GDP in 2022 to 29.2% [20], while in 2021 there was a 3.4% increase in GDP [23]. The largest decrease in public spending from UAH 293.6 billion in 2021 to UAH 156.4 billion in 2022 occurred in the economic sphere. The decline in the economic level directly affects the social development of the country and business entities. In 2021, Ukraine's public expenditures on social protection and social security amounted to 23.6% [17; 18], and in 2022 - 15% [19].

During a full-scale war, the focus is on the national security of the state. And national security includes the protection of political, economic, military, state, information, educational, economic, financial, food, environmental, and cultural security. Accordingly, changes in one of these spheres lead to the renewal of all others. The socio-economic development of Ukraine depends on the social, economic, and environmental spheres. Today, at the social level, we can observe the deterioration of social and psychological conditions, the unstable state of the country's development, forced emigration, high crime rates, social stratification, etc. On the economic level, there is unemployment, rising prices, low wages and pensions, and high utility bills. The main environmental problems are an increase in radiation, the release of toxic substances due to the shelling of

nuclear power plants and strategically important enterprises; mining and air pollution, pollution and destruction of water bodies; fires, and destruction of ecosystems. In particular, on February 24-25, 2022, the radiation background increased by up to 7.6 times [21]. Currently, the destruction of nature reserves is underway: the aggressor is conducting military operations on the territory of 900 nature reserve sites. Currently, 8 Ukrainian nature reserves and more than 10 national parks remain under occupation. The damage caused by missile strikes is not only the destruction of infrastructure and human casualties. Toxic, poisonous emissions into the air can affect anyone who is near the impact site. In particular, during a large fire in a shopping center in Kremenchuk (deliberately targeted by the Russian military, July 2022), plastic and synthetic materials burned, resulting in poor air quality. Similarly, in January 2022, chemicals were released in occupied Horlivka as a result of hostilities. Unfortunately, there are many such examples. In addition, hostilities cause a large number of forest fires due to ignition from missile debris [21]. This not only affects air pollution, but also leads to the destruction of many species of animals, vegetation, and increased wind and water erosion.

Political conflict is a struggle between different socio-political forces due to inconsistencies in political interests, culture, goals, and methods. The emergence of a political conflict mostly depends on the type of political system and legal regime. Accordingly, the Russian-Ukrainian war is a clash between two states with different political views. Russia is a world-empire with an authoritarian regime, with a formal rule of law, which uses brute force to maintain its monopoly of power. Ukraine is a world economy with a democratic regime that uses the tools of diplomacy and soft power. As a result, contradictions arise that are reflected in the specifics of political cultures, types of leadership, the goal of solely governing the state, different expectations between what is desired and what is real, opposing systems of collective and individual values, social inequality of ethnic groups, the spread of propaganda, and the lack of verified information. Let's look at the reasons for the large-scale military aggression against Ukraine in Figure 1.



**Fig. 1.** Causes of a full-scale war  
Source: authors' development

However, when a large-scale invasion of Ukraine took place on February 24, 2022, the Russian leadership called it a special operation. According to the criterion of scale and level of manifestation, the Russian-Ukrainian war is a large-scale war that destabilizes the international situation not only on the territory of the conflicting party but also throughout the world. This, in turn, may threaten the development of World War III. By the nature of the contradictions, we can observe an antagonistic conflict, the essence of which is the desire of each of the conflicting parties to win the Russian-Ukrainian war, which can last for a very long time. If we look at the classification of political conflicts by values, identities, and interests, large-scale military aggression belongs to the latter group. Conflict of interests is associated with the emergence of contradictions between existing political and socio-economic interests. By its very nature, the Russian-Ukrainian war is a global political conflict caused by internal factors of the Russian Federation's development (also called an endogenous political conflict) and President Putin's personal beliefs. Thus, for the development of a political conflict, a conflict situation, participants in the conflict, and a reason are necessary. The conflict situation in the Russian-Ukrainian war is a systemic crisis of the Russian Federation caused by the struggle of the Russian political elite to restore the

Russian empire, expand control over parts of the world and preserve global hegemony, which was lost after the economic crisis and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The subjects of the conflict are the organizer (Russia) and the counterparty (Ukraine). The reason for the outbreak of a full-scale war was the shelling of a kindergarten in Stanytsia Luhanska on February 17, 2022.

Russian political elites have repeatedly resorted to imperial rhetoric to cover up failures in the domestic arena. First of all, we are talking about rather modest successes in financial and economic activities, which for a long time were aimed at bringing nominal GDP per capita closer to European standards. The failure of these attempts required an explanation, which the elites decided to formulate using old Soviet concepts about the treachery of European democracies and the United States, which had their own interests in Ukraine and, accordingly, directly interfered with Russia. Perhaps the most important concept was the idea of a "small victorious war", which had already been used by Russian rulers in imperial times. This helped to reinforce the idea of the political power of the Kremlin regime and, importantly, demonstrate leadership in the former post-Soviet space. Most of the elite was poisoned by such imperial myths: few expected the war to last long, and not to end with the capture of Kyiv in a few days. It is worth noting that the Russian elite found the proposed methods of resolving foreign policy issues quite acceptable, which demonstrates the priority of state ideology over humane views. In all subsequent contacts with its representatives, this fact should be taken into account and the idea of a rapid change of views should be rejected (even representatives of the Russian opposition, who consider themselves liberals, have certain prejudices against Ukrainians). "Infection" with imperial consciousness among Russians is becoming an important destabilising factor not only in Central and Eastern Europe, but also in the whole world.

Global political issues in the 21st century include international peace, terrorism, and regional wars. All these factors destabilize the socio-economic development of the state at different levels (Table 1).

**Table 1**

Consequences of global political problems that are destabilizing for the development of socio-economic policy

<b>Area</b>	<b>Problem</b>
Demographics	Fig. 1. low birth rate Fig. 2. reduced life expectancy Fig. 3. outflow of intellectual and physical capital abroad
Social	Fig. 4. high level of crime and war crimes Fig. 5. lack of access to education and all utilities to ensure the educational process Fig. 6. improper functioning of medical care facilities, which is manifested in the lack of necessary equipment, high prices for medicines
Economic	Fig. 7. decrease in GDP level Fig. 8. high unemployment rate Fig. 9. development of the shadow economy Fig. 10. problems with the production and supply of raw materials Fig. 11. energy problem Fig. 12. socio-economic backwardness compared to the EU countries
Food industry	Fig. 13. unstable logistics Fig. 14. high food prices Fig. 15. a drop in food exports from Ukraine due to the low level of grain export opportunities Fig. 16. reduction in crop production due to field mining Fig. 17. lower yields due to limited access to water, fertilizers, etc.
Environmental	Fig. 18. an increase in the level of radiation background. The normal radiation level is 0.3-1.2 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$ (Independent Forensic examination of Ukraine, 2022). On February 24-25, 2022, it increased up to 7.6 times (Institute of World History of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2022) Fig. 19. destruction of nature reserves. Pollution of water bodies and soil Fig. 20. destruction of roads due to the movement of heavy military equipment Fig. 21. destruction of vegetation, increased wind and water erosion Fig. 22. a large number of forest fires and fires caused by missile debris Fig. 23. air pollution by chemical emissions

Table 1 provides a non-exhaustive list of the negative consequences of destabilization as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Thus, global political problems are inseparable from political conflicts. The establishment of peace and national security is possible only if the political conflict is won. At the same time, Ukraine must take precautionary measures to minimize negative consequences in many areas of life. First of all, in order to stabilize socio-economic development, the state needs to develop measures to increase the level of social protection and improve the welfare of people in the areas close to the hostilities. Next, it is necessary to revise the information policy and expand the information influence of Ukrainian media in the territories under the occupation of Russian troops in order to reintegrate society. It is also necessary to introduce practical cases, taking into account the national security of the state, on the way to combating Russian aggression and resolving the political conflict.

The study examines the impact of external factors (large-scale military aggression and global political problems) as key factors in the destabilization of socio-economic development. In further research, the results of this work can be used to formulate an effective socio-economic policy and develop recommendations and approaches to increase GDP, attract foreign investment and stabilize the national economy. To achieve these goals, it is important to reform the legal system of Ukraine in a holistic, not abrupt manner. This opinion is shared by many modern scholars [24; 25].

The establishment of law and order is a key task of the state. Today, it is necessary to overcome the consequences of legal nihilism, which hinder the legal development of Ukraine and civil society [26]. The negative consequences of nihilism also include violations of the law and dynamic development under the influence of state, political, spiritual, economic, and religious changes [27]. The legal system can be an effective means of protecting the rights and interests of citizens. I.Paryzkyi [25], studying the theory of the common law of the future, noted that the legal system should be based on the transformation of the legal field and the introduction of innovative tools. At the foreign policy level, the scholar identified innovative transformation at the socio-political, information technology, worldview, and ideological levels. The internal political level includes adaptation of the legal system to socio-cultural changes and integration of the legal system into the global system of civilizational development.

However, the authors of this article believe that the process of transformation of the legal system is long-term and should be based on the renewal of state institutions. At the same time, O. Kaplina [26] noted that during large-scale military aggression, coordinated cooperation of state institutions, especially in the field of criminal procedure law, is important. Today, law enforcement agencies and judicial institutions face the important task of establishing norms and rules for investigating war crimes and crimes against humanity, which have a weak evidence base. An important condition for reforming the legal system is the harmonization of law in accordance with international humanitarian law. Given the active hostilities in the territory of Ukraine, some Russian servicemen are already criminally liable for war crimes.

In the context of updating the legal system of Ukraine, innovative development, and artificial intelligence, the idea of developing the concept of transhumanism is important. The key concepts of the transhumanist trend are the idea of eternal life, the development of technology, changing one's own body, improving the personality, the belief that modern civilization is not the end point of evolution, the development of the concept of freedom and personal autonomy [28]. The development of the philosophical concept in legal science is a relevant area, as there is scientific and technological progress, artificial intelligence, which is constantly improving. In the future, this will change the approach to the formation of competencies and determine the prerequisites for the emergence of new professions.

As a result, the article considers approaches to reforming the legal system of Ukraine in the context of large-scale armed aggression, which will have a positive impact on the socio-economic level of the state. The main areas that need to be updated in legal regulation are: reforms in social policy and labor, business regulation, medicine, the financial system, the environment, anti-corruption, etc. When updating the legal system, it is important to realize that its main subject is the citizen of Ukraine. Accordingly, in the process of implementing reforms, it is necessary to analyze the legal status of a citizen during martial law.

## CONCLUSIONS

Political conflict and global political problems are destabilizing factors that negatively affect the socio-economic development of the state. The study considers Russia's large-scale military aggression against Ukraine in the system of political conflict. The outbreak of war requires the involvement of a large amount of financial, human, and technological resources, which is reflected in the decline in GDP. This, in turn, also affects the low level of well-being of the state's citizens. Today, in the context of the global political problem of war and peacekeeping, national, economic, and environmental security is of great strategic importance for Ukraine. The definitions of "conflict" and "political conflict" were analyzed in the course of the topic. Six reasons for the emergence of political conflict were identified on the example of a full-scale war on the territory of Ukraine. The author emphasizes that the emergence of political conflicts is determined by the type of political system. Accordingly, an empire state with an authoritarian regime uses a form of hard power (war) to maintain power. The study presents eight periods when Russia initiated political conflicts. The author classifies the phenomenon of the Russian-Ukrainian war by the criterion of scale and levels of manifestation; the nature of contradictions; values, interests, and identifications of their subjects. By their nature, there are eight types of political conflicts. As demonstrated in the results, the full-scale war on the territory of Ukraine belongs to global conflicts. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is primarily caused by endogenous (internal) factors of President V. Putin. The key global political challenges in Ukraine that destabilize the socio-economic development of the state are peacekeeping, international terrorism, and regional conflicts. The author analyzes examples of the implementation of global political problems on the territory of Ukraine, which function in the texts of political discourse. The consequences of political conflict and global political problems as factors of destabilization of socio-economic development are determined.

A promising area of research is the development of effective tools to counter the global political challenges identified in this study. Accordingly, the objectives of the study should be to develop recommendations for updating the external, internal, information, and educational strategies aimed primarily at increasing the socio-economic development of the state, the level of welfare, eradicating corruption, and reducing unemployment.

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