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Four Corners Reporter Mark Willacy

In terms of the importance of continuing to cover the war after four years:

The war in Ukraine is the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War Two. There are credible estimates that Russia has lost 325,000 soldiers, while reports suggest that between 100,000 and 140,000 Ukrainian troops have died. These horrific statistics alone make this ongoing war a newsworthy subject. But there are so many other factors that make the war in Ukraine, even after four gruesome years, something that newsrooms, including the ABC, need to keep covering. There's the conflict's potential to further de-stabilise Europe and to fragment the most powerful military alliance in the world in NATO. Then there are Donald Trump's often contradictory proposals about how to end the war, some of which have heavily favoured the aggressor - Russia. And to me, there's an even more frightening reason to keep covering this war, and that's because what we are seeing on the plains, in the villages, the cities, and the forests of Ukraine is chilling even by modern standards of warfare. AI-controlled weapons, swarms of killer drones (aerial, terrestrial, and sea-going), hypersonic missiles, and long-range sabotage operations on critical civilian infrastructure. This, to me, is a full throttle demonstration of the rapidly evolving and horrifying future of conflict.

On drones:

The war in Ukraine has shown how war can be waged remotely, impersonally, and with hyper efficiency. I've been an underground bunker near the frontline as elite Ukrainian drone team has hunted Russian troops one by one. It's chilling to watch soldiers out on the battlefield try to run or try to hide, only for the drone to strike with lethal precision. In that bunker it's like a computer game for the hunters - joysticks, monitors, virtual reality headsets. Except what's beamed through those headsets is real, including the human targets. When we left that bunker in the middle of the night we became the target, and our military escort had to drive us over the muddy roads at breakneck speeds to try to avoid the Russian drones. Thankfully we did. Unfortunately, a few months after we were there one of the four-member Ukrainian drone team, Yuriy Felipenko, was killed just outside the bunker by a Russian drone.