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Fighting for NATO

Ukraine's NATO membership prospects

Policy Paper

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UKRAINE SHOULD BE INVITED TO JOIN NATO WITHOUT DELAY

For years the main obstacle to Ukraine's progress toward the NATO membership was a lack of political will from both sides. Ukraine's inconsistency could hardly strengthen trust among the Allies. On the other hand, the traditional security paradigm based on the premise of the exclusive partnership with Russia narrowed NATO's perception of Ukraine. The collapse of the Soviet Union lulled the West. The revival of Russian imperialism and fascism was overlooked.

Instead of accepting Ukraine – a historic step which could have ensured common security and halted Russia's growing geopolitical and military ambitions – many political leaders preferred to postpone and leave aside for an indefinite future. This turned out to be a tragic mistake.

The war has changed it all.

Ukraine's national resistance against Russia's aggression made a real breakthrough in the security vision of the Alliance.

Ukraine proved to be a stronghold of common security.

Nothing may substitute Ukraine's NATO membership now – neither special formats, nor temporary security arrangements. Ukraine has the potential to become one of the strongest NATO Members – strategically and militarily. By accepting Ukraine, NATO will bring long-lasting peace to the continent, defend fundamental international principles, and deter current and future external threats and aggression.

We need to move rapidly from words to action.

What is the best moment to invite Ukraine to NATO? What kind of security guarantees should be provided for Ukraine in the meantime? How to avoid putting on hold the membership issue for an indefinite period of time?

Without uncompromised clarity on Ukraine's accession, once again we would risk that the war in Europe never ends and Ukraine's NATO membership becomes a bargaining point in political talks instead of becoming a founding element of a new European security architecture.

For that, our answer is clear:

Ukraine should be invited to join NATO without delay.

Chapter 1

NATO-Ukraine Distinctive Relationship

The special relationship of Ukraine with NATO has a long history.

In 1991, immediately upon achieving independence following the break-up of the Soviet Union, Ukraine joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (later renamed into the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council). In 1994, Ukraine became one of the first participants of the Partnership for Peace Program.

Since the late 1990s Ukraine has promoted a more ambitious relationship with NATO. This reflected Ukraine's strategic importance for the European security. In 1997, Ukraine and NATO signed the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership¹. It provided a possibility to conduct regular meetings of the NATO-Ukraine Commission at different levels developing a more tailored bilateral political and military cooperation.

In 2002, for the first time ever Ukraine officially defined its desire to join the Alliance. This decision was taken during the second term of President Leonid Kuchma known for his multi-vector foreign policy. However, the Allies perceived the innovation of Ukraine's foreign policy with a certain level of skepticism.

Following the Orange Revolution, the Ukrainian authorities clearly manifested their intention to join the Alliance and receive the Membership Action Plan (MAP) as soon as possible. In 2005, the Allies agreed to launch an Intensified Dialogue with Kyiv on Ukraine's Aspirations for the NATO Membership and related reforms. The format supported Ukraine's will to become closer to NATO, however, provided no clear membership perspective.

On January 15, 2008, the official request to receive MAP at the NATO Bucharest Summit was signed by the Ukrainian leadership – President Viktor Yushchenko, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Arseniy Yatsenyuk, and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. In response, Russia immediately launched a full-fledged campaign to counter such a perspective by blackmailing the Allies and using its proxy political forces in Ukraine. The Kremlin has managed to block the awaited decision and overthrow Ukraine into a political crisis and parliamentary stalemate for several months.

In 2009, the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership was amended² reflecting onward Ukraine's ambitions toward the NATO membership. The amendments

¹ Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25457.htm

² Declaration to Complement the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Ukraine, as signed on 9 July 1997, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_57045.htm

reinforced the role of the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) in “underpinning Ukraine’s efforts to take forward its political, economic, and defense-related reforms pertaining to its Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO, with a focus on key democratic and institutional goals”.

To achieve these goals, the Annual National Programs started to be developed under the NUC. In addition, the amendments envisaged a possibility to convene the NUC following a request from Ukraine if Ukraine perceives a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence, or security. Again, in spite of some references to Ukraine’s membership aspirations and security concerns – the amendments failed to answer the legitimate questions of strategic importance. Neither clear membership prospects nor security guarantees were reflected in this document.

Since then, the goal of the membership used to have a number of ups and downs. With the pro-Russian Yanukovych’s advent to power, the idea of early accession to the MAP was postponed, and later rejected by the special legislation, turning Ukraine back to its non-alignment policy.

After the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, the new democratic leadership restored Ukraine’s course to join the Alliance. In 2019, this strategic aim was enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine. In 2020, the North Atlantic Council recognized Ukraine as an Enhanced Opportunities Partner, alongside Australia, Finland, Georgia, Jordan, and Sweden. However, the new status, as it has already happened before, avoided tackling such important aspects as security guarantees and membership perspective.

At the same time, the years of reaching NATO standards in the build-up of Ukraine’s Armed Forces resulted in many important accomplishments, replacing inefficient post-Soviet legacy. The army was severely downsized. Many enthusiasts introduced innovations and new practices into the Army. Though the transition process appeared to be difficult and slow in many cases.

Under Yanukovych, severely reduced Ukraine’s Armed Forces were massively infiltrated by the Russian agents and proxies. The military potential was undermined, decreased and diminished.

Ukraine met 2014 being weak and unable to withstand the Russian aggression.

Chapter 2

Lessons of Russia's War against Ukraine

For years the West showed no intention to make serious conclusions from Russia's destructive international behavior. Moscow's desire to ensure its dominance in the post-Soviet area was severely underestimated, as well as the Kremlin's ambitions to renew its international role by all possible means, including purely illegal.

Russia has clearly demonstrated its genuine aspirations since the very beginning of the 1990s. Having provoked almost all conflicts around its borders, Moscow used to pretend to be a peacemaker and a reliable international actor. Its customary know-how combined military interventions, indefinite political talks, and useless international formats instead of the withdrawal of the troops.

In a number of protracted conflicts Russia's role was openly aimed at destabilizing the situation: in *Nagorny Karabakh* – to complicate the independent development of Azerbaijan and to keep Armenia under control, in *Abkhazia* and *North Ossetia* – to influence Georgia, in *Transnistria* – to keep a hand on Moldova.

Moscow has constantly interfered into the domestic affairs of the neighboring countries, financed separatist movements and political groups, undermined democratic freedoms and information security. On a permanent basis, it literally used economic ties and energy resources as a weapon.

Russia has tried to consolidate the regional powers in order to strengthen its means of global pressure. For that, the Kremlin has strongly invested into the establishment and maintenance of the Tashkent Collective Security Treaty and Eurasian Economic Union – stillborn projects that never became efficient.

Abuse of the veto right in the United Nations Security Council and the OSCE, withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), suspension of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), nuclear blackmail – these are further examples of Russia's efforts to undermine the international order.

With regard to the West, Russia tried not just to harm, but to subvert the Western nations from within. Moscow's well-documented interference in the elections, referenda, and internal political processes in the US³, the UK⁴, and beyond represent the same methods that were broadly used against Ukraine

³ <https://www.4freeRussia.org/the-kremlin-s-malign-influence-inside-the-us/>

⁴ https://isc.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CCS207_CCS0221966010-001_Russia-Report-v02-Web_Accessible.pdf

back in 2005 and in 2014. Today the Kremlin continues to use these methods all across the globe: from the Balkans to the Middle East and Central Asia, and from Africa to South America.

Contrary to that, the Western security paradigm was based on the premise of strategic political and economic cooperation with Russia. It was argued that such an approach will foster democratic tendencies in Russia and keep its behavior within the civilized limits.

The war against *Georgia* in 2008 crushed the illusions. It became a clear signal that Russia had considered itself ready to expand its “spheres of influence”. The West has missed the signal. Re-setting relations with Russia instead of severe sanctions and failing to solve the problem of occupied Georgian territories was read by Moscow as a sort of silent consent.

The war against *Ukraine* in 2014 became a logical step at the backdrop of such inconsistency. Hesitant international reaction on the situation in Crimea immediately led to a much bloodier aggression in Donbas. Artificial Minsk arrangements signed by Ukraine under strong military pressure from Russia led to nowhere, though gave a chance to rebuild Ukrainian military forces. For a number of years, the West was calling on Ukraine to implement something that was impossible to implement, time and again in order to contain and not provoke Russia.

On February 24, 2022, the strategy based on Russia’s appeasement failed.

The aggressor should be inevitably brought to justice and severely punished.

The future of the European security system should be based on a strong and common commitment to deter and halt any potential aggressor at the very start of its ambitions.

Ukraine’s membership in NATO should become a cornerstone of future collective security. It’s the precondition of any eventual peace or security talks.

The process of the post-war settlement should revisit the conflicts in Moldova and Georgia.

The UN Security Council should undergo a substantial transformation. Russia should be deprived of its illegal status as a UN SC permanent member.

When global security structures cannot work effectively, regional defense alliances such as NATO should come to the fore to guarantee regional peace and stability.

Chapter 3

Price of War

Ukraine is paying an unprecedented price for its freedom and its European choice – tens if not hundreds of thousands of victims among civilians and military, destruction of its economy and infrastructure.

According to the State Statistics Service and the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, in 2022 Ukraine faced⁵ a drop in real GDP by 29.1%; budget deficit of 18.6% of GDP; growth of the national debt up to 75.4% of GDP; decline in industrial production by 38%; unemployment rate of 25%; drop in exports by 29.9%; inflation – 26.6%, defense and national security expenditures of 23% of GDP⁶.

Due to the war, the national debt of Ukraine increased significantly – compared to the end of February 2022 – by 1.6 times or by 1.65 trillion UAH (as of May 1, 2023). The State and State-guaranteed debt increased from 2.73 trillion UAH as of March 1, 2022, to 4.38 trillion UAH as of May 1, 2023.

According to the Kyiv School of Economics, the losses of Ukraine's economy and infrastructure, as of March 1, 2023, amount to \$144 billion⁷. The World Bank estimates Ukraine's recovery needs⁸ at \$411 billion (as of March 1, 2023). And with the necessary modernization of Ukrainian infrastructure, taking into account security needs, it might be more than \$1 trillion⁹.

International financial assistance to Ukraine in the form of loans and grants¹⁰, as of May 10, 2023, amounted to \$48.9 billion (including the USA – \$16.8 billion, the EU – \$14.5 billion, the IMF – \$5.4 billion, Canada – \$3.65 billion, Germany – \$1.7 billion, the European Investment Bank – \$1.7 billion, United Kingdom – \$1.6 billion, the World Bank – \$1.8 billion. Ukraine's need in foreign aid in 2023 is estimated at \$42.5 billion.

⁵ https://ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/menu/menu_u/nac_r.htm

⁶ https://mof.gov.ua/uk/budget_2022-538

⁷ <https://kse.ua/ua/about-the-school/news/za-rik-povnomasshtabnoyi-viyni-rosiya-zavdala-zbitkiv-infrastrukturi-ukrayini-na-mayzhe-144-mlrd/>

⁸ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-03-22/world-bank-sees-ukraine-s-recovery-needs-rising-to-411-billion>

⁹ <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-economy/3565940-zelenskij-na-vidbudovu-ukraini-potriben-ponad-1-triljon-ce-bude-najbilsij-proekt-u-evropi.html>

¹⁰ Information from the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine of 12.04.2023

Military support to Ukraine¹¹ (armaments, military equipment, training etc.), as of March 1, 2023, amounted to 65 billion Euros, including \$20 billion from the United States¹².

The global economy did not fully recover from the devastating impact of Covid-19, as the Russian aggression dragged it into a new crisis. According to the IMF estimates, in 2022 the global economic growth slowed down to 3.4% compared to 6% in 2021. This is the lowest indicator for the previous twenty years, with the exception of 2008 economic crisis and 2020 as the Covid-19 year¹³. According to the estimates of the Economist Intelligence Unit, Russia's war against Ukraine in 2022 could cost the world economy approximately \$1 trillion¹⁴.

Global inflation in 2022 reached 8.7% against 4.7% in 2021¹⁵. Russia's energy war against Europe has pushed up energy prices. Destruction of agricultural sector and food industry in Ukraine, alongside blockade of Ukrainian agricultural exports has become one of the main triggers for the rise in food prices in the world.

Global supply chains and air travel in all of Eurasia have been severely disrupted by the Russia's war. In addition to the pre-2022 sanctions and "countersanctions" restricting commercial air traffic above Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, the entire Ukraine's and Moldova's airspace have been closed completely after the full-scale invasion began. As have big portions of skies above the European part of Russia and the Black Sea. Russia and over 30 democratic states banned each other's airlines from using their respective airspace. The EuroControl expects¹⁶ these restrictions to last until 2029.

As a result, air cargo volumes in January 2023 compared to January 2022 dropped in all world regions except Latin America (most severely in Europe: by 20.4%)¹⁷.

In 2023, the world GDP is supposed to grow up¹⁸ by 2.8%, and in 2024 – by 3%. This is the weakest medium-term forecast for the growth of the world economy since 1990¹⁹. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and

¹¹ <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/04/14/krayiny-nato-za-rik-nadaly-ukrayini-blyzko-e150-mlrd-dopomogy-z-nyh-65-mlrd-cze-vijskova-pidtrymka/>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02XbgqbabZxjCxbLRyPSRXBs1h1YefoPP1kVyjkSef9wZvEP2GvcB2ccnuTVFZvddel>

¹² <https://suspiilne.media/280175-skilki-grosey-ukraina-otrimala-vid-ssa-ta-miznarodnih-souznikov/>

¹³ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2023/04/11/world-economic-outlook-april-2023>

¹⁴ <https://forbes.ua/news/svitova-ekonomika-vtratit-1-trln-cherez-vtorgnennya-rosii-v-ukrainu-the-economist-05082022-7541>

¹⁵ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2023/04/11/world-economic-outlook-april-2023>

¹⁶ <https://www.eurocontrol.int/sites/default/files/2023-03/eurocontrol-seven-year-forecast-2023-2029-spring-2023.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.iata.org/en/pressroom/2023-releases/2023-03-07-02/>

¹⁸ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2023/04/11/world-economic-outlook-april-2023>

¹⁹ <https://www.unian.ua/economics/finance/bidnist-i-golod-mozhut-posilitisya-mvf-dav-naygirshiy-prognoz-za-ostanni-30-rokiv-12208710.html>

Development predicts that in 2023 the Russia's war may cost the global GDP \$2.8 trillion²⁰, while global inflation in 2023, according to the IMF, is expected at the level of 7%²¹.

The Russia's war forced Ukraine as well as the NATO Member States to massively increase their defense budgets.

Ukraine's defense and national security expenditures in 2022 amounted to 1.5 trillion UAH (23% of GDP)²². In 2023, they will reach 1.67 trillion UAH (\$45.6 billion). This is 26.5% of the expected GDP of Ukraine in 2023 and 55% of budget expenditures in 2023²³. According to Serhiy Rahmanin²⁴, a Ukrainian MP sitting on the Defense and National Security Committee, Ukraine currently spends 2.7 billion UAH (\$67 million) on immediate military needs daily.

In 2022, the NATO Member States spent \$1.2 trillion on defense purposes²⁵.

In 2023, Poland has announced the increase of its defense spending to the unprecedented 4% of GDP²⁶ from 2.4% of GDP in 2022, which was already the third highest percentage among NATO countries after Greece (3.76%) and the US (3.47%)²⁷. In actual terms, Polish defense spending in 2023 is set to go up from \$15.1 billion in 2022 to \$22.2 billion in 2023. In addition to massive military technical modernization, a part of the budgetary increase on defense will fund a more than 100% increase in Poland's troop strength from 143,500 to 300,000 over five years²⁸.

Germany has created a special fund for the modernization of weapons in the amount of 100 billion euros²⁹. Total global military expenditure increased by 3.7% in real terms in 2022, to the all-time high of \$2240 billion. Military expenditure in Europe saw its steepest year-on-year increase in at least 30 years³⁰. And in 2022 it increased by 13 %.

Talking about the impact of the war one cannot miss the huge number of refugees from Ukraine – over 10 million people came to Europe and other

²⁰ <https://gmk.center/ua/posts/iakoiu-bude-dynamika-svitovoi-ekonomiky-u-2023-rotsi/>

²¹ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2023/04/11/world-economic-outlook-april-2023>

²² https://mof.gov.ua/uk/budget_2022-538

²³ <https://yur-gazeta.com/golovna/rada-zbilshila-vidatki-na-nacionalnu-bezpeku-ta-oboronu-na-5182-mldr-grn.html>; The Law on the State Budget of Ukraine in 2023 including amendments introduced by the Parliament on March 21, 2023, and signed by the President on April 11, 2023.

²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v30avcrnYY>

²⁵ <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2023/world-military-expenditure-reaches-new-record-high-european-spending-surges>

²⁶ <https://www.dw.com/en/poland-to-ramp-up-defense-budget-to-4-of-gdp/a-64555544>

²⁷ <https://www.dw.com/en/poland-to-ramp-up-defense-budget-to-4-of-gdp/a-64555544>

²⁸ <https://www.businessworld.in/article/Poland-To-Hike-Defense-Spending-By-47-To-22-2-Bn-Amid-Ukraine-Crisis-/09-03-2022-422384/>

²⁹ <https://www.economist.com/europe/2023/05/07/europe-is-struggling-to-rebuild-its-military-clout>

³⁰ <https://www.sipri.org/media/2023/world-military-expenditure-reaches-new-record-high-european-spending-surges-0>

Western countries. It became a test for both sides – Ukraine and the Western nations, and we all must be proud – both sides have passed it.

The impact of the war is devastating.

It proves that there is no more chance to avoid difficult but strategically important decisions. Ukraine should be invited to join NATO, thus strengthening the common Euro-Atlantic security and deterring any future threat of external aggression.

The price of previous mistakes is unbelievable.

This must not be repeated.

Chapter 4

86% of Ukrainians are in Favor of NATO Membership

The war has clearly identified friend or foe for NATO and Ukraine.

According to a survey conducted by the Ukrainian “Democratic Initiatives Fund”, in 2002 (the year of proclaiming the official goal of Ukraine to attain NATO membership), 32% of Ukrainians were in favor of NATO membership, while 41% did not support the idea³¹. In 2008 (the year of the NATO Bucharest Summit), 22% were in favor of the membership while 59% were against it³².

Until the Revolution of Dignity and the beginning of the Russia’s war against Ukraine in 2014, the overall public opinion on this issue remained more or less stable. According to opinion polls conducted by the Rating Sociological Group³³, the level of the NATO membership support was fluctuating around 20% for a number of years (26% in 2010, 19% in 2012, 20% in 2013), while the level of opponents was over 60% (2010 – 63%, 2012 – 64%, 2013 – 65%).

The dramatic events of 2014 changed the dynamics substantially: September 2014 – 43% in favor and 31% against, 2017 – 44% in favor and 34% against, 2021 – 55% in favor and 35% against.

The Russian large-scale invasion of Ukraine pushed the level of NATO membership support to 72% in favor, with only 12 % against in March 2022; and to 76% in favor with 10 % against in June 2022, and to **86% in favor** with 3% against in January 2023.

The Ukrainians clearly demonstrate that they do not consider any other alternative than the NATO membership to guarantee common security.

On the other hand, the situation in the NATO Member States was never so favorable for Ukraine and its membership in NATO.

According to a survey³⁴ conducted in April-May 2022, 67% of citizens of the NATO Member States think that Russian invasion of Ukraine influenced the security of their countries, while only 25% do not share this view.

³¹ <https://dif.org.ua/article/dumka-gromadyan-ukraini-shchodo-vstupu-ukraini-do-nato>

³² <https://dif.org.ua/article/rezultati-zagalnonatsionalnogo-sotsiologichnogo-opituvannya-shchodo-chlenstva-ukraini-v-nato-ta-es>

³³ <https://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/303cecc9f6fc1abb2a66a34cbbca21ef.html>

https://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/dinamika_ideologicheskikh_markerov.html

https://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/dinamika_ideologicheskikh_markerov_oktyabr_2013.html

https://ratinggroup.ua/files/ratinggroup/reg_files/rating_war_changed_me_and_the_country_february_2023.pdf

³⁴ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_196561.htm

According to the GLOBSEC poll³⁵ conducted in May 2022 in 9 NATO Member States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria), 62% respondents believe that by warding off Russia's aggression Ukraine is fighting for democracy in Europe.

Opinion poll³⁶ of December 2022, conducted in all 27 EU Member States showed that 68% of respondents believed that the Russian attack on Ukraine was the attack on the whole Europe against 32% who did not support such vision, and 62% of respondents thought that Ukrainians defend European freedom and prosperity as well, while 38% did not.

IPSOS survey³⁷ conducted in January 2023 in NATO/ EU Member States and Australia showed that 57% of respondents supported further aid for Ukraine until all Russian forces were swept away from Ukrainian territories.

The situation in the United States is very supportive toward Ukraine as well.

Gallup poll³⁸ conducted in January 2023 proves that 65 % of Americans believe it is necessary to support Ukraine in liberation of its territories even in case of a prolonged conflict, while 31% are against this.

More than half of Americans want Ukraine to join NATO. The survey, conducted on April 4, 2023, by Redfield & Wilton Strategies on behalf of Newsweek, found³⁹ that a majority of Americans backed Ukraine's ambition to join NATO, saying they were either strongly supportive (30%) or supportive (25%). 5 % were either strongly opposed or opposed (5 %), with 26 percent indifferent. 7 % said they didn't know. The figures are quite similar to those on the Swedish membership in NATO – 36 % were strongly supportive, 28 % supportive, 22 % indifferent, 2 % strongly opposed, 4 % opposed, and 9 % didn't know.

These numbers testify to very favorable conditions for taking a strategic decision by NATO on Ukraine's membership in the Alliance.

Any unfair delay, at the backdrop of enormous human losses in the war and strong devotion to freedom and European ideals, may cause huge disappointment in Ukrainian society with many dramatic consequences.

³⁵ <https://www.globsec.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/GLOBSEC-Trends-2022.pdf>

³⁶ <https://eupinions.eu/de/text/anxious-we-stand>

³⁷ https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2023-01/ukr_Global%20Advisor%20-%20War%20in%20Ukraine%20-%20Jan%202023%20-%20Graphic%20Report.pdf

³⁸ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/469328/one-year-later-americans-stand-ukraine.aspx>

³⁹ <https://www.newsweek.com/ukraine-join-nato-america-public-opinion-1794221>

Chapter 5

The Kyiv Security Compact

Recommendations for international security guarantees for Ukraine called The Kyiv Security Compact⁴⁰ were published on September 13, 2022.

The document suggests that “given Ukraine’s unique geopolitical position”, “the most effective security guarantees lie in its capacity to defend itself”. However, to become an effective guarantor of its own security, Ukraine needs to undergo a scaly process of strengthening its military capabilities. To this end, the guarantor states, which are at the same time NATO Member States, are supposed to provide financial aid, investments to Ukrainian defense industry, technology transfers, arms, military equipment, ammunition, military training, enhanced intelligence cooperation, etc.

In case of aggression, the Kyiv Security Compact will fulfill its purposes by mobilizing the necessary political, financial, military, and diplomatic resources for Ukraine’s self-defense including imposing sanctions on the aggressor state.

The authors of the Compact also expect that the security guarantees of this document will lay the foundations for a new security order in Europe.

Will these ideas work?

The security model based on the Compact has a number of serious disadvantages:

It is expensive for partners, as it requires an increase in military spending.

It is expensive for Ukraine, as it envisages constant high-level of military spending.

Ukraine will need to keep large Armed Forces and apparently re-introduce a conscript army.

It is not fair for Ukraine to pay the biggest price – financial and human – for the European peace and security.

It is not effective in the sense of deterrence, as it does not eliminate a temptation for Russia to regain control over Ukraine or some other European countries in the future.

It does not rule out Russia’s nuclear blackmail in future.

⁴⁰ https://www.president.gov.ua/storage/j-files-storage/01/15/89/41fd0ec2d72259a561313370cee1be6e_1663050954.pdf

It limits the possibility to deploy NATO countries' military forces in Ukraine to deter possible future security threats.

Thus, in its suggested form, the Kyiv Security Compact will simply freeze the current security conditions.

The idea of putting Western assistance to strengthen Ukrainian defense potential into a more strategic, organized and prescribed order is correct and vitally important. Still, in order to build up a strong deterrence system we need a combination of two factors – Ukraine's accession to NATO and strengthening Ukraine's military potential.

Even the most generous Western assistance cannot replace Article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the Ukrainian and European security – neither practically nor psychologically.

Negotiations on the Compact will require time and resources that may divert the Allies' attention and become an artificial obstacle for the most important track – attaining NATO membership.

In case the Compact is elaborated or signed, it should be regarded as a secondary tool, but not the basis for Ukraine's and regional long-term security.

Chapter 6

Prospects for Moscow

Russia must bear all political, financial, and military consequences of its aggression and war crimes committed in Ukraine since 2014.

Elaborating on the strategy toward Russia we need to come out of the worst-case scenario – the scenario of a post-war Russia as a totalitarian, highly militarized, nuclear state with widely spread neo-imperial and revanchists sentiments among its leadership and the majority of its population, possibly with Putin being replaced by another totalitarian ruler. Taking into account the realities on the ground, such a poor picture of future Russia seems to be the most probable one.

Recent opinion polls show that a bloody war with thousands of victims among the Russians does not change their sentiments. Neither does it undermine their support of the disastrous actions of President Putin who continues to throw thousands of Russian lives and Russia's wealth into the fight to keep his power and ambitions. According to opinion polls conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM)⁴¹, 68% of Russians support the so-called special military operation against Ukraine. In 2022, the level of Putin's actions approval increased by 15%. Starting in February 2022 and over the next year, the willingness of Russians to participate in protest rallies fell by one and a half to two times.

Conducting independent sociological research in present-day Russia is impossible and one may question the accuracy of these figures. However, they represent the tendencies in the Russian society we need to take seriously.

These and many other indicators clearly testify to the dramatic fact that Russian society en masse supports the armed aggression against Ukraine.

Considering future security scenarios, we should be prepared to face a weakened but unsatisfied, revanchist, militarized Russia which is ready to use its forces, including their nuclear component, for illegitimate neo-imperial purposes.

Thus, it is critically important to maintain the following policy guidelines:

To continue efforts aimed at ensuring the full restoration of the Ukrainian territorial integrity and sovereignty in the internationally recognized borders of 1991.

⁴¹ <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/specialnaja-voennaja-operacija-god-spustja>

To bring the Russian leadership and perpetrators of war crimes to international legal responsibility.

To ensure that Russia pays the full price to compensate for the losses and destructions incurred to Ukraine.

To maintain international economic sanctions in order to limit Russia's abilities to rebuild its military potential and to push Russia towards demilitarization and denuclearization, implementation of arms control treaties, and confidence-building measures developed during future peace talks.

Russian society must learn all the lessons of its aggression against Ukraine and other neighbors, and accept the new realities of a united Europe, of which Ukraine is an integral part.

Russia will not do this itself.

Russia will stop only where and when we stop it.

Chapter 7

Vilnius Summit: Ukraine's Invitation to NATO

On April 6, 2023, the Lithuanian Seimas called to invite Ukraine to join NATO as a Member State at the Summit in Vilnius.

If taken, such a decision will become a historic step forward in pursuit of peace in Ukraine and Europe. After the invitation, Ukraine and NATO could start accession talks to discuss formal obligations that are required for the country's accession to NATO. All sensitive aspects could be tackled during this process, defining the appropriate time and conditions for further steps.

Non-allied Ukraine, staying in a gray security zone, will weaken Europe and make it vulnerable to external threats. The uncertainty may become a permanent temptation for Russia to renew its efforts to bring Ukraine back to its "sphere of influence". Whatever means will be chosen for these purposes – military aggression or interference into Ukraine's internal political life – they will be destructive to stability and security of the country and the whole region.

To be stable, safe and prosperous, the European continent needs the strong and well-defined security architecture capable to deter effectively the existing threats from the East.

It is not the Ukraine's membership in NATO that could provoke Russia to start another war. It is security vacuum that poses a permanent temptation for Russia to act aggressively.

The sole militarization of Ukraine will not restrain Russia, as Russian aspirations toward Ukraine are of irrational nature.

For Ukraine, the NATO membership is of existential importance.

This is the only way how to ensure Ukraine's reliable security and full-scale integration into the West. Remaining in security uncertainty, Ukraine will hardly join the European Union. Ukraine's NATO membership should come first to provide conditions for the future accession to the EU. With Finland and Sweden memberships in NATO, the era of neutrality as a basis for security on the border with Russia is over.

Ukraine's membership in NATO is vitally important for the West, too.

It will bring a strategic stability and peace to Europe putting the full stop in the issue on affiliation of one of the largest European nations, discouraging today's and tomorrow's Russian imperialistic temptations.

It will enlarge the common space of stability and significantly reduce the threat of an attack on today's Eastern European members of the Alliance.

Ukraine's membership will strengthen NATO militarily – both in the sense of manpower and combat experience. The Ukrainian Armed Forces trained and equipped according to the NATO standards, will become one of the strongest European components of the Alliance.

It is the most cost-effective way of strengthening Ukraine's and NATO military potentials to resist the Russian threat – no need for duplication of capabilities, no problem with communication, C3 (consultation, command and control), interoperability and logistics interaction, outreach possibilities for NATO air and antimissile defense, etc.

Membership of Ukraine in NATO means regaining control over Crimea and the lead role of NATO in the Black Sea region, eliminating the risk of its nuclearization.

It will provide more possibilities to control the Russian Armed Forces and its military infrastructure, and to pursue Moscow to return to arms control agreements decreasing military risks for Europe and the world.

It will secure effectively the core values of the West – democracy and market economy.

In the conditions of security threats, democratic and economic freedoms may be easily abused.

Democratic societies cannot remain neutral between NATO and autocracies. This is true not only for Ukraine, but also for Moldova and Georgia.

Ukraine's invitation to NATO is a test of the ability of the West to defend its values and leadership in confrontation with autocracies.

Economic benefits of Ukraine's membership in NATO might be also impressive: security of Western investments; integration of Ukraine's industrial, military industrial, IT, logistics potential to the Western economy; development of secure alternative to Russia transportation corridors, including for energy resources, to/ from the East and South; enhancing food security for Europe and the world; bringing Ukrainian refugees back to the country; arranging stable supply of essential mineral resources from Ukraine for modern technology, including uranium and ilmenite ores, neon, lithium, etc.

Ukraine in NATO will strengthen the strategic positions of the Alliance in a wider region including the Balkans, the Black and Mediterranean Seas.

Through Ukraine, NATO may expand its preventive capabilities for moderating processes in the post-war Russia and reduce threats originating from this country.

Full integration of one of the largest European countries into the EU and NATO will strengthen the overall potential of the West. It will also downplay possibilities of the anti-West cliques of autocratic countries.

Finland and Sweden paved the way for an accelerated procedure of joining NATO without a Membership Action Plan.

Ukraine fully meets the most important precondition of the NATO membership – Ukraine's membership will strengthen the security of the Alliance.

Ukrainian people proved its devotion to democratic values and freedoms.

The NATO Vilnius Summit should finally open the doors to Ukraine's membership.

THE STRATEGIC DECISIONS MUST BE TAKEN NOW

The 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius should become a turning point in our efforts to ensure Ukraine's membership in the Alliance. We call upon the Allies:

- To take a political decision to offer Ukraine membership and start accession talks.
- To invite Ukraine to participate in the meetings of the North Atlantic Council, to integrate into the NATO's structures and to participate in all aspects of the NATO activities.
- To begin talks within the Alliance on offering Ukraine an Article 5-like collective defense guarantees for the period before the accession to NATO. As already suggested by the expert community, this could be implemented initially by a coalition of the willing, but preferably by all allies since they would be sharing the same risks.
- To reaffirm NATO Member States' steadfast position that viable resolution of the Russia's war against Ukraine must be based on full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the internationally recognized borders, liberation of all occupied Ukrainian territories, unconditional release of persons illegally captured by Russia since 2014, unconditional compensation of all the losses inflicted upon Ukraine, bringing the persons responsible for the aggression, genocide and war crimes against Ukraine to justice.
- To confirm common understanding that any proposals on urgent and unconditional cease-fire and immediate peace talks between Ukraine and Russia without respecting the above-mentioned conditions in the present circumstances will lead only to providing Russia with opportunities to recover its military potential in order to start another military aggression against Ukraine or other countries.

No more delays. Strategic decisions must be taken now.



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