

Brussels Ukraine Review



INTERVIEW WITH MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF UKRAINE OLEKSII REZNIKOV

INTERVIEW WITH EP PRESIDENT
ROBERTA METSOLA

INTERVIEW WITH EESC PRESIDENT CHRISTA SCHWENG

WAGNER GROUP. THEIR BUSINESS IS DEATH

WHERE IS CHINA IN THE WAR OF RUSSIA
AGAINST UKRAINE?

 Promote
Ukraine

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

In the interviews for Brussels Ukraine Review, the President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola and the President of the European Economic and Social Committee Christa Schweng admit that they would have not believed that Russia would dare to invade Ukraine on a full scale.

Now, in the midst of the most full-scale war that the European continent has seen in the last 70 years, politicians are trying to find out why Vladimir Putin spread the local war to the entire territory of Ukraine.

One of the reasons was that on the eve of important and non-public negotiations with the USA on a number of strategic issues, Vladimir Putin decided to improve the contractual positions by demonstrating the triumphant defeat of the Ukrainian army and the rapid change of regime in Kyiv to a pro-Russian one.

However, the Ukrainian people broke the Kremlin's plans, after which new truths began to be revealed to cautious partners.

The first truth is the realisation that Russia has been an aggressor state. In recent decades, it has carried out military operations in many countries: Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Mali, and the Central African Republic. Regular Russian troops and the private Russian military company "Wagner," whose commanders profess Nazi ideology, have methodically demonstrated their exceptional cruelty in the treatment of prisoners of war and the civilian population in all these countries.

The second truth, as noted in the interview with Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov, is the realisation that Ukraine, even without the status of a candidate for NATO membership, has a powerful and combat-capable army, fights according to the standards of the Alliance, and is now the only force restraining Putin's onslaught in front of the EU borders.

The third truth is Ukraine's compliance with Europe's historical, cultural, and economic values. The European Union has finally begun to understand that Ukraine has exceptional added value, and the EU will simply be stronger with Ukraine than without it.

As a result, we are now witnessing changes that have been impossible to imagine before 24 February 2022. In the process of military operations and victories of the Ukrainian army, Western partners removed restrictions on the supply of one or another type of weapons to Ukraine one by one. Ukraine received the status of a candidate for joining the EU, and NATO received Ukraine's application to join the Alliance (which was already supported by 11 out of 30 countries). However, the victory still needs to be won...

Marta Barandiy



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SEVEN MONTHS THAT CHANGED WORLD

The year 2022, which became the year of a major war on European soil in the 21st century, incredibly accelerated political processes, and September added to the speed, although it would seem that the peak was reached.

Despite the apparent deterioration of US–Russia relations or, on the contrary, in view of it, there was still zero possibility in February that the Kremlin and the White House would agree on some strategic issues, while it could be expected that the price of agreement could be the demand for Ukraine’s future neutrality. Vladimir Putin decided to improve the negotiation positions,

UKRAINE IN THE WORLD



wanting to demonstrate the triumphant defeat of the Ukrainian army and the rapid change of power the Kyiv government to a pro-Russian government. That would have indicated the considerable capabilities of the Russian Federation to solve its problems by force, making its opponents urgently seek broad compromises with this serious and dangerous player.

The 24 February invasion became a genuine revelation for active participants and observers, dramatically changing the perception of Russia's real potential, both purely military and administrative, with a complete reassessment of the political prospects of this state that claims to influence world processes. It is Ukraine that we must thank for the qualitative breakdown of assessments of the Russian reality and its future. At the same time, the world discovered Ukraine and its people, who proved to be capable of an unprecedented level of resistance in this seemingly hopeless situation. But the Ukrainians not only preserved their hope for victory. They also convinced their wary and fearful partners of its irreversibility.

This breakthrough occurred in the spring when the Russians were forced to withdraw from the Kyiv region and the north of Ukraine in general, giving up their "blitzkrieg." At that time, the European Union, while strengthening its sanctions policy against

Russia, already launched a process of symbolic support for the country that had fallen victim to large-scale aggression. Brussels responded to the 28 February application on Ukraine's fast-track to join the EU, and after all the necessary formalities had been met, Ukraine was given EU candidate status on 23 June. At the same time, at the beginning of April, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola, followed by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, personally visited Kyiv, where continuous heavy gunfire had been heard recently. At the same time, Boris Johnson and Andrzej Duda visited the Ukrainian capital on their programme, launching the tradition of Western politicians' visits to Kyiv.

On 26 April, at the U.S. Ramstein Air Base in Germany, a meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group was held for the first time, moderated by American military leaders who were among the representatives of four dozen countries. That moment indicated clearly that Ukraine would not be left alone to face Russia, which flaunts its army as supposedly the second strongest military power in the world. In the course of hostilities, Western partners were one by one lifting restrictions on the supply of one or another type of weapons to Ukraine.

In the summer, heavy battles were fought on the fronts, but the contact line hardly changed. The advance of Russian troops was measured in hundreds of metres per week and only in certain areas. The ability of the Ukrainian defence forces to deter the enemy, which had a multiple fire advantage, continued to impress. It seemed that there would be a protracted, painful confrontation.

The September offensive of Ukrainian troops, resulting in the liberation of almost the entire Kharkiv region, and the catastrophic collapse of the Russian front in the north of the Donetsk region, marked a sharp increase in the dynamics of the confrontation, victorious expectations from Ukraine, and great skepticism about Russia's ability to hold the occupied territories. The attitude towards Putin at the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Samarkand on 15 September was indicative. The prime ministers of Turkey and India, the leader of China, and even the leaders of the countries of Central Asia, traditionally dependent on Russia, did not conceal that they no longer see the Russian president as a defining figure. At the same time, wishes to



The Kremlin chose a non-standard way to force Ukraine to make peace. Mobilisation was announced, which is partial only in words but in practice shocked the entire Russian society who was expecting victorious news from TV screens, not being ready to personally join the war and risk their lives and those of their loved ones.



speed up the end of the war were expressed in conversations with Putin.

The Kremlin chose a non-standard way to force Ukraine to make peace. Mobilisation was announced, which is partial only in words but in practice shocked the entire Russian society who was expecting victorious news from TV screens, not being ready to personally join the war and risk their lives and those of their loved ones.

At the same time, Putin “gave the go ahead” to speed up the accession of the occupied territories to Russia. Obviously, this cunning plan was supposed to turn the situation upside down, to strangely turn the war of aggression into a defensive war, and therefore supposedly a fair war. And since the threat to Russian territory prompts the use of all means of its protection, the question of using nuclear weapons was up in the air. Putin himself warned menacingly that “this is not a bluff.” In a losing position, the Russian leader decided to raise the stakes as much as possible and exacerbate the escalation even more.

The Ukrainian leadership responded with a public refusal in advance to deal with Putin and conduct any negotiations with him, as well as with a demonstrative submission of an application

to join NATO under an accelerated procedure. This is a rather symbolic step, but it has caused a real reaction of support. The joint statement was made by nine leaders of Central and Eastern European countries: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. They spoke in favour of Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic prospects and called on all the Alliance members to “significantly increase military aid to Ukraine.” Canada expressed similar support.

Meanwhile, Russia has continued to raise the degree of escalation. The Kremlin’s new approach to the war took visible shape on 10 October when Ukraine experienced strikes on civilian infrastructure on a scale unprecedented since the beginning of the war. Energy facilities were hit by high-precision missile weapons and UAVs causing electricity supply problems in many regions across the country. The next day, the attack was repeated on a slightly smaller scale, and since then the energy sector has been suffering daily from the enemy’s attempts to destroy it. The goal is clear: the life of Ukrainians during the upcoming cold season must become unbearable.

Energy facilities were hit by high-precision missile weapons and UAVs causing electricity supply problems in many regions across the country. The next day, the attack was repeated on a slightly smaller scale, and since then the energy sector has been suffering daily from the enemy’s attempts to destroy it.

Such actions have all the signs of a war crime as they are directed against the civilian population.

Another point is the active involvement of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the crimes of the Putin regime. Shahed-136 Iranian kamikaze drones became an important part of the massive attack on Ukraine. Renamed by the Russians as “Geran-2” and launched by dozens at once, they hit the population and civilian objects. In addition, Iran’s export of weapons of this type violates UN Resolution 2231. Although official representatives of IRI deny the fact of handing over UAVs to Russia, there is enough evidence to the contrary. Given Tehran’s close links with Islamist terrorist groups, the risks

of the use of kamikaze drones in other parts of the world are a very likely prospect that should be considered, primarily by Israelis, but also by Europeans.

Eight months into the full-scale war, the Ukrainian army has largely switched to the use of Western weapons. Large batches of modern NATO-standard weapons have been ordered in advance, and the combat experience of the Armed Forces of Ukraine has no equal. Ukraine, shielding Europe from the aggression coming from the east, is already an important element of the unified European defence. September and early October showed just how effective this element is becoming on the battlefield. At the moment when Ukraine–NATO relations will finally be formalised by full-fledged membership, its contribution to the security of Europe and the world will be even more significant.

It must be noted that Vladimir Putin’s contribution to Europe’s rethinking of its security and Ukraine’s role in this security system is invaluable. Of course, nobody will thank him.



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OLEKSII REZNIKOV, MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF UKRAINE: "UKRAINE WILL LIVE ONLY IF THERE IS SOMEONE TO DEFEND IT"

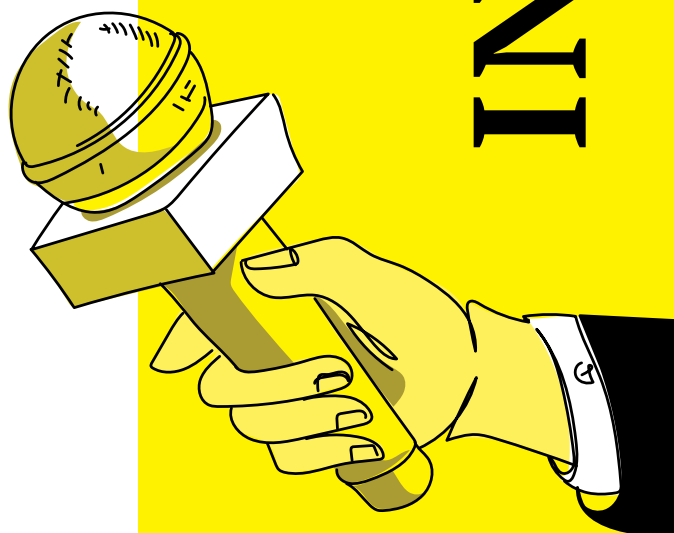
In your opinion, how is Ukrainian civil society coping with the collective responsibility imposed on it by the Russian aggression? What manifestations of this responsibility have impressed you the most?

Since the restoration of our Independence, it is one of the first times we realised so profoundly that Ukraine will live only if there is someone to defend it. With weapons, at the cost of one's own life, sacrificing the most precious things.

Generally, the enemy underestimated the Ukrainian society, which had undergone an even greater transformation than our government and army. And changes in society are the source and guarantee of stability of changes in state institutions. The government and the army rely on free people, and this bond in Ukraine is inseparable.



Wars are waged by nations, not by armies. The trial of Russian hybrid aggression in 2014 and large-scale invasion in February 2022 fell to our lot.



INTERVIEW



Wars are waged by nations, not by armies. The trial of Russian hybrid aggression in 2014 and large-scale invasion in February 2022 fell to our lot.

Volunteers from the Maidan became the first obstacle to Russia nine years ago. In February of this year, our men and women joined the Territorial Defence Forces, got involved in volunteering, provided accommodation for internally displaced persons. The whole nation stood as one to defend Ukraine.

This responsibility is manifested everywhere. Over this period, billions of hryvnias have already been transferred to the needs of the Armed Forces. People stand in lines to donate blood for wounded soldiers, host displaced people from war-torn cities for free and, as they say, share all they have with them...

What have foreign activists already done, what can they do and what should they do to help Ukraine win? What exactly can activists and volunteers do for Ukraine in such a strategic city as Brussels (from the standpoint of humanitarian aid, advocacy and rallies)?

First of all, I will talk about Brussels, which is the capital of NATO and the European Union. Important decisions are adopted there regarding military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine aimed at countering Russian aggression. Activists, volunteers and the society react very sensitively to the tone set by European and Euro-Atlantic politicians.

In fact, in parallel with the help from governmental and non-governmental organisations, the Ukrainian people feel very strong support from foreign activists as well. A lion's share of them is from the European continent and other partner countries to Ukraine. They gave shelter to millions of Ukrainians who were forced to leave their homes because of the war. Thousands of people in various cities in Europe and other countries of the world come to rallies to support Ukraine and condemn Russian aggression. Of course, we are

De facto we have already paved our way to the Alliance and proved compatibility with its standards. In fact, we are allies for a long time already.

By the way, even during my appointment as the Minister of Defence, I clearly identified accession to NATO as one of the main priorities. We discussed it with our foreign partners, presented our arguments in favor of Ukraine joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. We were often told that this is impossible in the near future because Ukraine does not meet the specified criteria on the possession of the appropriate types of weapons.

When Russia's full-scale invasion into Ukraine broke out, our partners helped us by searching for any Soviet weapons: from ammo to weapon systems. Later, we managed to convince them that this was a bad story doctrinally: they were trying to help, as they believed, the "small Soviet army" fight against the "big Soviet army." The small one always loses. But we are not the Soviet army, we have become different during these eight years of hybrid war. We are de facto ready to be a NATO army. Today, we already have a considerable number of foreign-made types of 155mm artillery, ATGMs, MANPADS, MLRS systems, anti-ship and anti-radiation missiles, modern UAVs, counter-battery systems and

sincerely grateful to them for doing this!

Are these facts a sign of support for our country? I believe they are. But to my mind this movement should become even more massive. People in Ukraine die from the hands of the Russians every day. It is necessary to remind people all over the world about the war crimes of the Kremlin regime even more loudly, to rouse the masses and the public and, by doing so, put pressure on the Russians. Because we are protecting not only ourselves, but also the values of the world democracy from the rashist onslaught.

Ukrainian activists often ask: what will be considered victory? When can we say exactly that we have won? Will the return of all territories be such a victory? Or the collapse of the Kremlin? Or accession to NATO?

The matter of complete victory over the Russian aggressors is absolutely clear and unambiguous. The President of Ukraine has repeatedly emphasised: our country will be considered free when it restores its territorial integrity and sovereignty completely within internationally recognised borders as of 1991. I stress, as of 1991, not as of the morning of 24 February 2022.

When do you expect Ukraine to join NATO? What can activists do to help achieve this goal?



The matter of complete victory over the Russian aggressors is absolutely clear and unambiguous. The President of Ukraine has repeatedly emphasised: our country will be considered free when it restores its territorial integrity and sovereignty completely within internationally recognised borders as of 1991.

Western armoured vehicles. Our defences will be strengthened by modern air defence systems: NASAMS and IRIS-T. That is, the hurdles to Ukraine's path toward NATO are being removed. And we clearly prove our partnership and interoperability with NATO on the battlefield, protecting not only our state but also the entire civilised world from Russian tyranny.

Should the Ukrainian civil society try to find a connection with the Russians (Russian oppositionists)?

First, the question whether there is a civil society and opposition there should be answered. Russian opposition often ends when the question "whom does Crimea belong to?" must be answered.

Some activists believe that there are no "good Russians." How do you feel about this narrative?

Russian propaganda uses this term for its own ends. They say that if there are people who publicly or silently do not support Russian aggression against Ukraine, then the regime in Russia is supposedly not so dictatorial. And then the insidious Russian authorities use this narrative to soften sanctions against the aggressor state and prevent it from being recognised as a terrorist state. They say: why should the whole country be held accountable if there are famous Russian citizens who respect democratic freedoms and are opinion leaders?

After "partial mobilisation" was announced in Russia, more than 700,000 Russians fled the country. Is it positive or negative for us? What should the EU do with the so-called "Russian refugees"? What does this "mobilisation" mean for the Russians themselves?

By the way, after partial mobilisation was announced in Russia, I publicly addressed the Russians. I deliberately warned them not to face certain death for the illusory goals of the Russian dictator, not to shed their blood for his fantasies and false goals, and not to kill Ukrainians, many of whom not that long ago treated Russians as good neighbours.

As for the fact that more than 700,000 Russians have fled the country, I believe they had better express their position against mobilisation in the squares of large cities. I know that there are people among them who earlier ar-

dently supported the so-called "special military operations." Whether to grant them asylum or not is up to the people and leadership of the countries to which they arrive.

How do you assess the risk of use of nuclear weapons? Is there an action plan for this case?

Of course, there is a risk that Russia may use nuclear weapons. Our partners from the USA and the UK are also talking about it.



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White House, in particular from U.S. President Joe Biden.



Of course, there is a risk that Russia may use nuclear weapons. Our partners from the USA and the UK are also talking about it.

But I would not assess this risk as too high. The Russian leadership, represented by Putin, has been blackmailing the world with its nuclear baton for many years. But no one knows what the actual condition of this weapon is. Putin and his generals probably do not know it, too. Moreover, Russia's nuclear potential ended in 1997, and the last time they conducted nuclear weapons tests was in the late 1990s. One should not be afraid of Putin and constantly give in to his threats. In addition, clear and tough signals about the devastating consequences for Russia in the event of the use of its nuclear potential are constantly coming from the

Are the Armed Forces of Ukraine ready for winter? Does Ukrainian light industry have enough capacity to provide winter uniforms and equipment? Should foreign volunteers focus on this issue, or it is better to concentrate on something else?

Yes. Traditionally, the transition to winter uniform is done on 15 October. However, we started preparing the transition to winter clothes in advance back in summer. The first contracts were signed in June. We concluded agreements, kept adding volume, and in the end ensured steady supplies. Today. I can state that the primary needs of our defenders directly at the front lines, have been met. Next are the near front-line zones, areas distant from the frontline and the formation of reserves. Deliveries are made every day. The command identified the provision of the front



The command identified the provision of the front as the number one priority. The command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine distributes everything that arrives to the army logistics warehouses according to priorities and ensures deliveries directly to the units.

When will we liberate our territories?

I do not presume to predict the date of the end of the war. But I have already said how it will end: with our victory and the restoration of our borders as of 1991.

When our border guards stand along our borders, when the air carriers resume their operation because there is no longer any danger, then the war will be over.

As you can see, we have a very positive trend in this direction. As a result of the counter-offensive of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Kharkiv region alone, which began more than a month ago, we have liberated about 8,500 square kilometers of our territory. Today, we see progress in the South and the East. So, I repeat again: this war will end with the victory of Ukraine and the collapse of the empire.

as the number one priority. The command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine distributes everything that arrives to the army logistics warehouses according to priorities and ensures deliveries directly to the units. If someone at the front lines does not have a uniform now, there may be various reasons for that. The rhythm of the war makes its adjustments. After all, the key issue now is logistics. The logistics forces are doing really well and working wonders. It is not possible to predictably pack purchased goods into a warehouse and safely deliver them to the brigades. Threats of strikes have not gone anywhere, so most of the work is done “from the wheels” to reduce the risk of losses. You cannot simply form convoys of trucks; you have to divide and hide them. Yes, there may be delays due to logistics. However, it is usually a matter of a few days.

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MINISTER FOR EUROPEAN AND
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ATHLETES.**



UKRAINE-NATO: DEFENCE INTEROPERABILITY

On 30 September, Ukraine applied to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) regarding the start of the negotiation process on future membership in NATO. Ukrainian society has been preparing for this moment for many years. The Revolution of Dignity of 2014 finally determined Ukraine's strategic course for joining NATO, which later, in February 2019, was enshrined in the Ukrainian Constitution.

All these years Ukraine has been undergoing a fundamental transformation: we have changed

from a post-Soviet country to a stable democracy with strong institutions (the stability of which became apparent in the conditions of Russia's full-scale war). Ukraine's integration into the Western world took place both on a deep level of shared values and on technical, or sectoral, level. At the same time, public support for Ukraine's accession to the Alliance grew, and since the beginning of Russia's full-scale war, support has reached a historic high.

One of the criteria for the Alliance's perception of Ukraine as "one of us" is the interoperability of the military formations of Ukraine with those of the NATO Allies. Interoperability is achieved by implementing approaches, practices, principles and standards used by NATO Allies in the Armed Forces of



Ukraine (AFU) and other components of the security and defence sector.

As of the end of 2021, some 255 NATO standards and guidance documents have been implemented in Ukraine. And since 24 February, the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other components of the security and defence sector have clearly demonstrated their interoperability with those of NATO member states in real time on the battlefield.

They also gain invaluable combat experience, which is important for both Ukraine and the Allies. As British Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace said in an interview with the **Evening Standard** on 12 October, Russia is no longer a superpower, and at every step the Russian Federation was overestimated and Ukraine was underestimated.

This article contains arguments why Ukraine is already a de facto part of NATO not only civilisationally and politically, but also in military and security terms, using examples of the implementation of NATO approaches, practices, principles, and standards in various activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other components of the security and defence sector. At the same time, the steady assistance of the Allies in the process of reforming and training the Armed Forces is greatly appreciated, as well as the mobilisation of military support with the beginning of a full-scale invasion.

DEFENCE PLANNING AND BUDGETING

The Ministry of Defence implements the defence resource management model in accordance with NATO approaches and principles. In Ukraine, a comprehensive review of the security and defence sector regularly takes place, based on which the Strategic De-

fence Bulletin and other conceptual documents in the security and defence sector are developed. Based on the recommendations of NATO experts, the following was developed: A Unified List (Catalog) of the capabilities of the Ministry of Defence, the AFU and other components of the state's defence forces; Catalog of typical carriers of the capabilities of the AFU and other components of the defence forces. The Ministry of Defence has started another cycle of defence planning based on data from the Unified List (Catalog) and the Catalog of typical carriers, taking into account real and potential military threats and the financial and economic capabilities of the state.

DEFENCE GOVERNANCE AND COMMAND AND CONTROL

The system of defence governance and command and control in the AFU has been transformed from the post-Soviet model to the state-of-the-art Euro-Atlantic one. Responsibilities between the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff are divided, the positions of the Chief of the General Staff and the Commander-in-Chief of the AFU are separated. The structure of the General Staff of the AFU and operational-strategic and operational-level headquarters corresponds to the typical structures of



The Main Situational Centre of Ukraine has been modernised in accordance with Euro-Atlantic practices. The centre processes big data volumes from all state and non-state databases, including from satellites and directly from the event locations. There is also a network of situational centres in the components of the security and defence sector.

strategic-operational-level headquarters of the armies of NATO Allies: J-, G-, M-, A- structures.

The command and control bodies are divided by functional areas – command of the joint forces, support forces, medical forces, communications and cyber defence forces, etc.

The force generation and force employment are clearly divided: the function of the force employment of is performed by the Joint Forces Command of the AFU by analogy with the armies of the NATO Allies.

C4ISR components (Command and Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) are being implemented in the AFU. The Main Situational Centre of Ukraine has been modernised in accordance with Euro-Atlantic practices. The centre processes big data volumes from all state and non-state databases, including from satellites and directly from the event locations. There is also a network of situational centres in the components of the security and defence sector.

PROFESSIONALISATION AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

The new military ranks of senior officers, privates

and non-commissioned officers and their codification comply with the NATO STANAG 2116. The reserve of candidates for promotion is formed according to the rating principle based on the results of a comprehensive assessment.

Staffing of the AFU with servicemen under contract is close to staffing in the armies of NATO Allies. In particular, military commissariats have been transformed into territorial centres of recruitment and social support. Each of them has a recruiting and staffing department with contract military service selection officers.

Programs of professional military education of non-commissioned officers and officers of the AFU L1-L4 are formed in accordance with the principles and methodology of NATO. In particular, the courses involve studying the procedures for preparing and making operational (Joint Operational Planning Process) and tactical (Military Decision Making Process) decisions according to NATO standards.

With the help of the NATO Allies, the non-commissioned officers (NCO) corps was created - the backbone of the AFU and other components of the defence forces, active training of junior commanders - future military leaders - continues. NCO training centres have been established in each service of the AFU.

TROOPS -TRAINING

Since 2021, the training of the defence forces has been taking place according to the NATO approaches, which means according to a single plan and under a single leadership. Based on NATO guidance documents, 13 doctrines and instructions on training and employment of the AFU and other components of the defence forces have been developed; 50 new combat manuals of



With the help of partners, Soviet samples of weapons and military equipment are gradually being replaced by samples of foreign production. Russian aggression against Ukraine gave a new, extremely powerful impetus to this process.



In Ukraine, the first steps have been taken for the operation of a unified logistics system in accordance with the NATO approaches and principles.

services, separate branches of troops (forces) for the training and employment of the AFU and other components of the defence forces have been developed and put into effect. The units of the AFU are evaluated and certified according to NATO practices: the first 11 military units of the company-brigade level have already been evaluated.

WEAPONS AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT

With the help of partners, Soviet samples of weapons and military equipment are gradually being replaced by samples of foreign production. Russian aggression against Ukraine gave a new, extremely powerful impetus to this process.

Currently, Ukraine ranks second in the world in terms of the number of modern anti-tank weapons of foreign production, the existing artillery equipment

is being replaced by NATO models of 155 and 105 mm calibers, and the first air defence systems of the NASAMS (USA) and IRIS-T (Germany) types have arrived and more are expected to arrive in the near future. Negotiations on the provision of Ukraine with modern foreign-made aircraft are ongoing. The defence forces use modern systems of communication and automation of the command and control, unmanned aerial vehicles, armoured vehicles, etc.

In the medium term, it is expected that the main old Soviet models of weapons and military equipment will be completely replaced by NATO models.

Thus, the technological compatibility of the AFU and the components of the defence forces with the military formations of the NATO Allies will be achieved.

UNIFIED LOGISTICS SYSTEM

In Ukraine, the first steps have been taken for the operation of

a unified logistics system in accordance with the NATO approaches and principles.

The structure of the military logistics command and control bodies is functioning. A modern model of logistics support based on the principle of centralised supply of material resources has been developed. It includes creation of unified centres for the logistics provision according to the territorial principle.

Typical organisational and staffing structures of tactical level logistics have been introduced. The Host Nation Support Concept has been implemented. This is a necessary pre-condition for conducting potential NATO operations (missions) in the territory of Ukraine.

During the sixth Ramstein-format meeting on 12 October, Ukraine presented the results of ensuring control over weapons received from international partners. According to Minister of Defence of Ukraine Oleksii Reznikov, NATO's LOGFAS, along with other tools, is already working. LOGFAS allows the collection, processing, analysis and information distribution to support logistics operations.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

A single management body has been created in the AFU - Medical Forces Command, to which medical institutions of the security and defence sector are subordinate. A four-level system of medical and evacuation measures based on the best practices of simi-

lar systems of NATO Allies has been implemented in the system of medical support of the AFU.

In the field of medical rehabilitation in Ukraine, high-quality prosthetics services have become available in recent years, thanks in part to the NATO Trust Fund on Medical Rehabilitation in Ukraine. Ukrainian prosthetists were trained by foreign specialists in accordance with the internationally recognised standards of ISPO Category II. A training program for physical and rehabilitation medicine for Ukrainian doctors was created based on the training program of the European Council for Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine of the European Union of Medical Specialists. A number of institutions for the treatment (rehabilitation) of veterans are equipped with the necessary medical equipment.



A single management body has been created in the AFU - Medical Forces Command, to which medical institutions of the security and defence sector are subordinate. A four-level system of medical and evacuation measures based on the best practices of similar systems of NATO Allies has been implemented in the system of medical support of the AFU.

**THEIR BUSINESS
IS DEATH**
THEIR BUSINESS
IS DEATH

**RUSSIAN AGGRESSION.
WAGNER GROUP**



The Wagner Group, also known as PMC Wagner: we hear this name in the news regarding brutal mass murders, torture, destruction, and annihilation of the civilian population in war zones. These unlawful acts can be traced back to the Kremlin's orders, which PMC Wagner carried out. But what is the Wagner Group? How did it come about? What ideology do its participants profess?

According to the group's founder, Dmitry Utkin, whose own call sign is "Wagner," a contract with PMC Wagner is a deal with the devil. Utkin openly calls the company a militarily structured criminal group. Unlike other PMCs in the world, PMC Wagner is not a registered legal entity. Moreover, its actions should be qualified as terrorism. Terrorism is the deliberate use of terror by means such as arson, murder, torture, taking hostages, intimidating the population and authorities, or committing other encroachments on the lives or health of innocent people. This is precisely what PMC "Wagner" does.

KREMLIN'S ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIVATE MILITARY COMPANIES

The idea of creating private military companies (PMCs) was brought to Russia by Eeben Barlow, a former lieutenant general of the South African security forces and founder of the world's first legal private army, Executive Outcomes. It is known that Barlow arrived in Russia in 2010 as a participant in the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. In addition to giving an official address, he privately presented the PMC concept to representatives of the General Staff of the Russian Defence Ministry, where he proposed forming private military companies from retired military personnel and contractors.

In 2011, the security firm Moran Security Group was registered in Russia. It was headed by Alexey Badikov. The firm was engaged in protecting private ships from being captured by pirates because, at that time, this was an urgent issue in the Somali region. However, the firm was not successful: competition and ignorance of regional problems led to an arrest of the Moran Security Group's crew onboard the Myre Seadiver in October 2012 while in Nigeria.

Bashar al-Assad turned to Putin for help when an uprising

and civil war broke out in Syria in 2012; protesters demanded the resignation of President Bashar al-Assad and an end to nearly 50 years of one-party Ba'athist rule.

RUSSIAN PMC IN SYRIA

When Bashar Assad appealed to Vladimir Putin for help in the war in Syria, the Kremlin decided to use the PMC as an instrument for covert assistance. To cover their actions, they made a contract with the Syrian Arab Republic's Ministry of Oil and Mineral Resources to



According to the group's founder, Dmitry Utkin, whose own call sign is "Wagner," a contract with PMC Wagner is a deal with the devil.



protect facilities that produce, transport, and process Syrian oil. The Syrian ambassador to the Russian Federation, Riad Haddad, personally conducted all negotiations in Moscow with pro-Russian mercenaries and later signed a deal with Moran Security Group. Formally, the recruitment of mercenaries to Syria was carried out by Vadim Gusev, the deputy director of the Moran Security Group company, and Yevgeny Sidorov, the head of the personnel service. In 2013, Sidorov created the Slavonic Corps PMC in Hong Kong, which recruited former members of special forces, including the FSB, GRU, Airborne Forces, and Internal Troops of Russia. The indicated offshore PMC was a front for the Russian security company Moran Security Group.

The operation of the Slavonic Corps in Syria turned out to be a failure. After suffering heavy losses from being caught in an ambush, the fighters of the Slavonic Corps managed to retreat under the cover of artillery and aircraft of the Syrian armed forces. One of the commanders, D.V. Utkin, call sign “Wagner,” former commander of the 700th separate special unit (military unit 75143) of the General Directorate of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, managed to make a tactically correct retreat, thus saving the lives of his personnel. This was the only com-

bat encounter of the Slavonic Corps in Syria that did not turn into a grave for Russian mercenaries. Another group of personnel of the Slavonic Corps was saved from destruction by a dust storm. The (allegedly) retreating enemy was not pursued. Moreover, during their retreat, some of the mercenaries left personal belongings and documents, which fell into the hands of their enemy and became indisputable proof of the Russian adventure in Syria.

On 8 October 2013, the Russian government urgently sent two chartered vessels to Syria to take the mercenaries to Moscow. They were immediately met by FSB special forces and arrested at the gate. Following this, in October of 2014, the Moscow City Court sentenced the company’s leaders, Vadim Gusev and Yevgeny Sidorov, to three years in prison for being mercenaries to hide the involvement of the Russian authorities in the activities of the Slavonic Corps.

However, the Kremlin did not abandon the idea of PMC as an instrument of hybrid war. Thus, Utkin, under the personal number M-0209, headed a freelance unit created by Russian military intelligence. This unit became popularly known as PMC Wagner, named after Utkin’s call sign.

PMC WAGNER

Private military company Wagner is a term used by the media. In fact, legally, such a company does not exist. It has never been registered anywhere, is not part of the regular armed forces of Russia and has no legal status on Russia’s territory. Its fighters are not



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on the lists of personnel of any military unit of the Russian Federation, and PMC activities are formally prohibited in the Russian Federation. The first official source that mentions this unit is the 2017 US Department of the Treasury sanctions list, which includes PMC Wagner.

The military formation, called the Wagner Group, was created in 2014 on the basis of the above-mentioned organisation Slavonic Corps.

In the spring of 2014, PMC Wagner participated in the occupation of Crimea, and later their mercenaries fought in Luhansk and Syria on the side of the Russian Federation. All of them were equipped with armoured vehicles and heavy weapons. The owner of the military company is Yevgeny Prigozhin, a Russian oligarch and a confidant of Vladimir Putin. The Wagner Group is headed by Dmitry Utkin, call sign “Wagner,” a staunch supporter of Nazi ideology. Until 2013, Utkin was the commander of the 700th Independent Special Forces Detachment of the 2nd Independent Brigade of the GRU of the Russian Ministry of Defence. Members of PMC Wagner have repeatedly received awards in Russia on the personal orders of Russian President, Vladimir Putin, although they were not officially published.

According to data from open sources, many fighters of PMC Wagner are follow-



According to data from open sources, many fighters of PMC Wagner are followers of far-right, neo-Nazi ideology.

ers of far-right, neo-Nazi ideology.

A group of soldiers of PMC Wagner, led by a man in a Wehrmacht cap. The faces of the mercenaries are covered, but the baldness and the shape of the ear that we can see in the photo suggest that this person could be Utkin.

Another “high-ranking” militant, a friend of Dmytro Utkin, is Yan Petrovsky, deputy commander of the Task Force Rusich, a special-purpose unit. Task Force Rusich is a Russian neo-Nazi militarised group that has been actively involved in military operations in Ukraine and Syria. In a number of photographs taken during Petrovsky’s



PHOTO OF UTKIN WITH NAZI TATTOOS

stay in Syria, he can be seen in the pose of a Nazi salute. These images were not only localised to determine Petrovsky's exact location but also to identify him despite the blurry image of his face in the photographs.



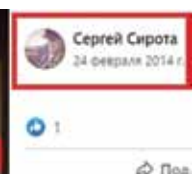
In a number of photographs taken during Petrovsky's stay in Syria, he can be seen in the pose of a Nazi salute.



The following photos are posted by the twin brothers Sirota S.V. and Sirota A.V., former employees of the Kaliningrad OMON. After serving in the Slavonic Corps in 2014-2015, the Sirota brothers fought in Ukraine, and since 2016 they repeatedly traveled to Syria and Sudan as part of the PMC Wagner, where they serve as a driver and gunner of the ATGM anti-tank platoon (1915 and M-1240 respectively). Not only do the brothers like to pose with Wagner's grave crosses on their chests, but also, since their service in the Slavonic Corps PMC, they openly wear equipment with the double-sig rune, a Nazi symbol.

The following photos are posted by the twin brothers Sirota S.V. and Sirota A.V., former employees of the Kaliningrad OMON.

This is a photo of a military vehicle belonging to the mercenaries of PMC Wagner. It has the Othala rune painted on it, which was on the flag of the SS infantry during the Second World War.



<https://www.facebook.com/100005159130334>



Another frequently encountered rune, Tiwaz, is associated with war. In the SS, it was positioned as a battle rune (Kampf), symbolizing military command. We see this rune on a photo of Russian mercenaries taken in the Central African Republic (CAR):



Below are photos from the conflict in Libya, where the mercenaries of PMC Wagner left swastika signs and SS runes, as well as other symbols of hatred in the territory they controlled. The inscription on the wall reads in Russian: “I see mosques on Russian land, but I would rather see them in hellfire.” 14/88 is a combination of two symbols of hatred associated with the Nazis: the first symbol is 14 (shorthand for the “14 words” slogan: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children,” and the second is 88 (stands for Heil Hitler). These signs were left by Russian mercenaries in the suburbs of Tripoli.



Having started its journey in 2014 during the Russian aggression in the east of Ukraine, the Wagner Group has shown itself to be an effective means of realising the hybrid expansion of the Kremlin. The company’s presence quickly spread to the Middle East, Africa, and even South America, with the Kremlin encouraging its militants to have complete freedom of action. A few years ago, the media repeatedly published footage of the Wagner Group beating people to death with sledgehammers, as well as beheading and burning people alive. However, at that time, these facts did not convince the world to recognise the Wagner Group as a terrorist organisation and Russia as a sponsor of terrorism. Now, this neo-Nazi group advocates for the torture of Ukrainian prisoners, including the “removal of body parts.”



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Militants of this organisation are accused of many murders and war crimes on the territory of foreign countries: Ukraine, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Mali, and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Four years ago, journalists Orkhan Jemal, Kirill Radchenko, and Oleksandr Rastorguev were killed in the Central African Republic after traveling there to investigate the activities of PMC Wagner. They were followed from the moment they arrived in the CAR, then shot on the road between the cities of Sibut and Kaga-Bandoro.

In Mali, on the 5 March 2022, the Wagner Group arrived in a village and, according to eyewitnesses, gathered adult men and teenagers, tied their hands behind their backs, and blindfolded them. The people captured were both residents of the village and others who came from outside settlements to get water. The soldiers blocked women and children while they looted houses in the village. After that, they beat the bound men with batons. Then they abducted more than 30 people. The next day, their bodies were found four kilometers from the village having been shot and burned.

Today, PMC Wagner continues its terrorist activities on the territory of Ukraine: the explosions in Olenivka, which led to the mass death of Ukrainian defenders, are undoubtedly acts of terrorism. According to available information, this act was carried out by

mercenaries from PMC Wagner under the personal command of Wagner Group's nominal owner: Yevgeny Prigozhin.

During the storming of the Vuhlehirs'ka Tes powerplant in the Donetsk region, PMC Wagner militants dressed up as Ukrainian servicemen, which violated Article 23 of the Hague Convention on the Laws and Customs of War. They confirmed this when they themselves posted a video on the Internet, which clearly shows their combatant dressed in the uniform of a Ukrainian soldier.

The nuclear blackmail of the whole world is connected to the Russian seizure of the Zaporizhzhya NPP, in which the Wagner group was also involved. The Russian command gave the order to mine the nuclear power plant, but the Russian Armed Forces service members refused to carry out the order. Representatives of the "Rosgvardiya," despite the loud statements of the leadership, also hesitated after apparently realising that the consequences of their actions could lead to a nuclear disaster that would surpass Chernobyl in terms of scale. The Wagner Group's fighters were then brought in to carry out the order; they fulfilled it without hesitation.

A significant number of Russian mercenaries serving in PMC Wagner are known for their involvement in war crimes around the world while adhering to Nazi, chauvinistic views, and thus their actions clearly fall under the definition of terrorism.



Today, PMC Wagner continues its terrorist activities on the territory of Ukraine: the explosions in Olenivka, which led to the mass death of Ukrainian defenders, are undoubtedly acts of terrorism. According to available information, this act was carried out by mercenaries from PMC Wagner under the personal command of Wagner Group's nominal owner: Yevgeny Prigozhin.

Ukraine NOW

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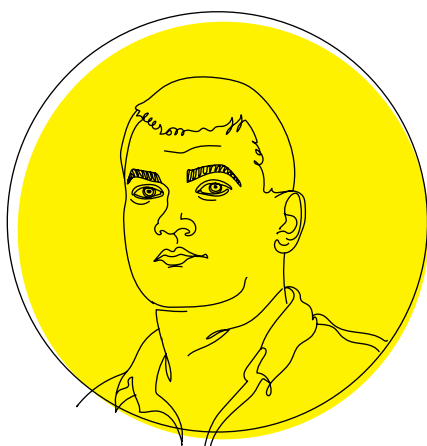
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WHERE IS CHINA IN THE WAR OF RUSSIA AGAINST UKRAINE? AGAINST UKRAINE?



**STEPAN NAZARENKO,
A UKRAINIAN
JOURNALIST,
PUBLICIST,
VOLUNTEER**

Russia's unsuccessful blitzkrieg in Ukraine turned into a long-term test not only for the armies but the economies of the two countries as well. The Russians have been building up a financial cushion for decades through oil and gas exports, so the advantage was on their side. But anti-Russian sanctions and support for Ukraine provided by the European Union, the United States, and other Western countries made it possible to alter the course of the "war of attrition."

However, the question remained: "Whose side is China on?" An answer to that may hasten the end of the war. So far, the Chinese authorities remain silent and adhere to formal neutrality, which is perceived as supporting the aggressor state. At the same time, Chinese state propaganda promotes the narrative of Russia's rightness inside the country and

**RUSSIAN AGGRESSION.
ROLE OF CHINA**

abroad. In particular, all pro-Ukrainian posts have been removed from Chinese social networks, and Chinese media sent journalists to work among Russian troops in Ukraine.

EASTERN 'NEUTRALITY'

Not giving a definite answer is a tradition of the PRC, associated with the peculiarities of Eastern diplomacy. But it raises concern as it can indicate insecurity or hidden support for the aggressor.

It is difficult to see China as a state that is not confident in its strength. It is the world's second largest economy, which has long outgrown the status of a world factory of consumer goods. It has a powerful industry and a developed military-industrial complex that produces a wide range of products, from small arms and armoured vehicles to aircraft carriers and jet aircraft that could come in handy for Russian dictator Vladimir Putin.

That is why it is very important to get a clear position from the People's Republic of China regarding Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Otherwise, its "neutrality" will always have the "taste" of supporting dictator Putin.

It is only worth mentioning that when Russia vetoed the UN Security Council resolution condemning Moscow's attempted annexation of a part of Ukraine on 30 September, China was not among the 10 Security Council member states that supported the document. China, along with India, Brazil and Gabon, abstained, creating the illusion of multi-vector world order. This adds nervousness to the geopolitical situation and creates a wave of rumours and fakes that affect China's international reputation.

CAUSES OF INDECISION

This indecision is usually associated with several application goals. The first is China's ambitions related to Taiwan, a partially recognised state that enjoys a lot of Western support. China, which considers this island as its part, might explore the "red lines" that the collective West can forgive in case of a full-scale invasion of Taiwan, using the



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example of the Russian-Ukrainian war. However, the West has determination, as we all remember, the August visit of American top politician Nancy Pelosi to the island despite threats from the PRC.

The second is the 20th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in October 2022, at which the new General Secretary of the Communist Party will be elected. Usually, the anticipation of such events also does not promote drastic statements.

The third reason for the chosen “neutrality” is the desire to make a profit at the expense of a weakening neighbour.

JUST BUSINESS AND HUMANITARIAN ISSUE

The EU, the USA, and other G7 countries have been actively implementing anti-Russian sanctions since 24 February 2022. However, China remains among those still keeping its economy open to Russia. The country increases purchases of Russian oil, imports gas and rolled metal, and sells its goods to Russians.

This is the usual pragmatism as Russia gives big discounts on its industrial products and energy. However, cooperation with Russian companies is almost a direct financing of the Russian military machine.

It is noteworthy that the People's Republic of China does not even transfer the obtained profits for solving humanitarian problems, although pointing to them. At the UN Security Council meeting on 7 September, China's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Geng Shuang stated that the international community should continue to provide support to Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

But these are just words. As of September, it is known only about the assistance provided by the PRC back in March. These are two tranches worth \$2.36 million – figures incomparable to Ukraine's support obtained from the G7 or the size of the Chinese economy.

EUROPEAN PRESSURE

At the end of March, the 23rd EU-China Summit was held, at which EU leaders tried to convince Beijing not to support Russia in its war against Ukraine. “We count on China's support to achieve a lasting ceasefire, to stop the unjustifiable war and address the dramatic humanitarian crisis it has generated,” said European Council President Charles Michel.



At the end of March, the 23rd EU-China Summit was held, at which EU leaders tried to convince Beijing not to support Russia in its war against Ukraine.

“We count on China's support to achieve a lasting ceasefire, to stop the unjustifiable war and address the dramatic humanitarian crisis it has generated,” said European Council President Charles Michel.

Note that during the dialogue between the EU and China, the latter simply repeated the narratives of Russian propaganda, blaming NATO for Russia's actions. Meanwhile, the PRC's non-compliance with sanctions against Russia emphasises the PRC's disrespect for international problems, EU norms and institutions.

By the way, China has not yet provided open military support to the Russians officially. However, there are other ways to help the aggressor. It is the already mentioned disregard for sanctions and vote in the UN that creates a "diversity of opinions" beneficial to the Russians.

"No European citizen would understand any support to Russia's ability to wage war. Moreover, it would lead to a major reputational damage for China here in Europe," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen warned in March.

However, there were no joint statements or decisions made following the Summit. In the final press release by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, the war in Ukraine was called the "Ukrainian crisis," while the Russian-invented wording "special military operation" was also not used. China's Communist Party leader Xi Jinping called for "peace negotiations."

The six months that have passed since that meeting have not changed the behaviour of Russia and dictator Vladimir Putin. Statements and actions crossed all the lines of international law and are aimed only at the escalation of events.

Therefore, it is possible that the EU should initiate another meeting with China and find more convincing arguments for Chinese political leaders.

PERSONAL ISSUES

Ukraine also has personal reasons for the PRC's more favourable attitude as Chinese industry and the military-industrial complex developed in partnership with our state.

For several decades, Ukrainian metallurgists have been supplying China with rolled metal and iron ore, which has enabled this eastern country to become the world's largest steel producer and exporter.

No less interesting is the military cooperation between the People's Republic of China and Ukraine, all the features of which are unlikely to be made public in the near future. But it is impossible not to notice certain events.



Ukraine also has personal reasons for the PRC's more favourable attitude as Chinese industry and the military-industrial complex developed in partnership with our state.



The active stance of the People's Republic of China instead of "neutrality" could have allowed solving the complicated geopolitical situation with Ukraine at the core. At the same time, China's turning a blind eye to Russia's flagrant violations of international law, disrespect for the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty, undermines the world order, its existing norms and rules.

On 17 June, the third Chinese aircraft carrier Fujian was launched in Shanghai, which became yet another demonstration of China's military capabilities. Therefore, it is worth recalling the role of Ukraine in the development of this area of the naval forces of the People's Republic of China. The first Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning was built in Mykolaiv, Ukraine, and sold unfinished to China in 1998. Its design became the basis for the creation of the second and third Chinese aircraft carriers.

There are other examples in which the role of the PRC was clearer. In 2020, China became the major buyer of Ukrainian grain. That is, Ukraine became one of the guarantors of food security of the Celestial Empire. But this year, the export of agricultural products stopped due to Russian aggression and the blockade of Black Sea ports. This might have been a painful blow to the PRC because foreign minister Wang Yi called for "promoting a ceasefire as soon as possible to ensure a green corridor for grain exports" as early as May. At the end of July, the "grain corridor" started to work.

Against this background, China's promise to provide Ukraine with \$790,000 in aid looks ridiculous given the size of its economy and great power rhetoric. The stark contrast to China's "boundless" partnership with Russia could not be clearer.

It appears that while Ukraine helped the PRC build a modern army, including the PRC's first aircraft carrier and air-launched cruise missiles, when the war broke out, China chose Russia.

The active stance of the People's Republic of China instead of "neutrality" could have allowed solving the complicated geopolitical situation with Ukraine at the core. At the same time, China's turning a blind eye to Russia's flagrant violations of international law, disrespect for the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty, undermines the world order, its existing norms and rules. The question arises: "Will China support Russia's invasion of other world countries?"



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**TO RESIST ON
THE LEGAL FRONT**



"CANDIDATE STATUS TO UKRAINE WAS THE BEST DECISION THAT THE EU COULD HAVE TAKEN" - EP PRESIDENT ROBERTA METSOLA

made a promise to President Zelenskyy to return with my family once Ukraine has won the war.

How did you first learn about Ukraine? At what age? How was it? What were your first impressions? Can you describe this moment?

I seem to remember that the first time I heard about Ukraine was, like many, during a geography lesson at school. Back then, I would have never imagined that Ukraine and its people would one day represent the embodiment of the fight for democratic values in the European Union. The first time I visited Ukraine was on 1 April this year. It was then that I

How did you learn about the beginning of the full-scale war? What were your first thoughts and actions (did you anticipate it)? How was this day in the European Parliament different from others? Have you noticed the consolidation of forces around the Ukrainian issue? Perhaps some pro-Russian politicians have moved to the side of Ukraine?

I will never forget 24 February 2022. It is a date that will be

etched in my mind forever. It was with shock and incredulity that I heard the news of the attack on Ukraine. Although some countries - the Baltics, Poland, the Czech Republic, Finland - had been warning us for some time, we did not foresee what Putin was truly capable of. That is why from the moment Putin's tanks rolled into the territory of independent and sovereign Ukraine, we immediately changed our way of relating to Russia and called for the strongest sanctions possible. It was clear to us that the European Parliament's position on this had to be firm: to stand with Ukraine.

But this date will also remain marked in my memory because of the unprecedented display of European unity. In the face of adversity, our Europe has grown stronger than ever. And we are ready to go further still to defend our values, the same values for which the Ukrainian people are fighting for.

The Ukrainian flags hanging near the EU Parliament for a week were an unprecedented case when the flags of one state took the place of all others. Whose idea was it, and was it challenging to find support?

The European Parliament, over which I have the responsibility of presiding, wanted to make it clear that the European Union firmly supports Ukraine with a strong image of unity. It was also important for us to show that our promises of hope and our political support can also result in tangible outcomes, outcomes like military and financial assistance that have helped and continue to be helping our Ukrainian friends on the ground.

In your view, what is the main challenge Ukraine will face on its path to becoming an EU member? How can we overcome it?

Granting candidate status to Ukraine was the best decision that the European Union could have taken. It has not only given hope to Ukrainians but more tangibly, it will provide Ukraine with momentum for reforms and access to EU programmes. Of course, accession remains a merit-based and structured process and each country has its own course, so Ukraine will have to work hard to fulfil all the criteria and implement all the reforms necessary to first start the negotiations and ultimately to become a fully-fledged EU Member State. I have a lot of confidence in the Ukrainian government and believe that it is firmly on the right track. If the pace with which Ukraine answered all the questions required before being granted candidate status is anything to go by, then you are going to beat every record on the way.



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“NO WAR FATIGUE TO BE ALLOWED” – EESC PRESIDENT CHRISTA SCHWENG



What can civil society organisations outside of Ukraine do to help the country win this war and rebuild?

First and foremost, I believe that the role of civil society is to continue advocating for maintaining EU solidarity and generosity vis-à-vis Ukraine. Our members and their national organisations were, and continue to be, on the frontline for helping refugees from Ukraine.

We, as a Committee, are dedicated to strengthening cooperation and exchanges with Ukrainian civil society organisations. These contacts and partnerships will be of crucial importance for the reconstruction of Ukraine.

Let me emphasise that the rebuilding processes should be sustainable, transparent and based on the latest green and digital technologies. They need to be seen as an opportunity to create equal chances for all. And why not design a Ukrainian Green Deal on the basis of the European Green Deal? The reconstruction must be a common effort by the Ukrainian administration and civil society. Ukraine is truly lucky to have a vibrant and very competent civil society, which has gained invaluable expertise and know-how over the past three decades.

We stand ready to share our experience and knowledge. Some of our Member States have very recent experience with post-war recovery, and their expertise and lessons learnt will certainly be of great value. It will be a colossal challenge for your country, but also for Europe, and it will require the genuine involvement of civil society. We believe that civil society organisations need to be included in the design and monitoring of the reconstruction efforts, also to ensure that these

efforts are made in line with EU legislation.

In the circles of the EESC, do you feel the fading of attention in six months?

Let me be very clear – and to echo President Von der Leyen in her State of the Union speech given in mid-September – we simply cannot and we will not allow for any solidarity fatigue or war fatigue. This is not exclusively about Ukraine, this is about all of us; our security, democracy, freedom and fundamental rights. This is about our future.

At the Committee, but also in more informal settings, it seems almost impossible to hold any debate without touching upon Ukraine, be it in relation to energy or food security, of course, but also with regard to the environment, social and economic issues, internal market... you name it.

In July, the EESC organised a conference in Krakow on relief and reconstruction of Ukraine and its European perspective. The event brought together up to 200 stakeholders representing Ukrainian and European civil society, local and national authorities, to discuss activities supporting people fleeing the war and to begin reflecting on how to better support the work of civil society organisations once the war is finally over.

The Committee maintains regular exchanges in the framework of the established channels, namely the EU-Ukraine civil society platform and domestic advisory group. Our members and their organisations are continuing their activities in support of Ukraine either at the level of their respective Member States or at European level.

Let me reassure you – Ukraine is constantly present in our thoughts, in our exchanges, and in our hearts.

How did your feelings and predictions about this war evolve in six months?

Like everyone else, I will never forget that terrible morning of 24 February. What had been unimaginable became a reality – there was a war in Europe. It was a plenary day in our Committee. We changed the agenda immediately to have a first debate on what had just happened. As you



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Today, we are hopeful, inspired by your extraordinary courage, and determined. We are looking to the future, to our common future because now, Ukraine is an EU candidate country.

can imagine, it was very emotional...and it has remained like that ever since.

At the beginning, we were scared, we were speechless, even lost. But very quickly, these feelings turned into ideas, plans and actions. No one wanted to be idle, be it on a personal or institutional level. Since the very first day, we condemned the Russian aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms, we adopted two unequivocal resolutions, we provided space for Ukrainian civil society organisations, including yours, on our

premises. We reached out to our partner organisations in Ukraine, we organised events and a high-level conference on Ukraine, and much more.

Today, we are hopeful, inspired by your extraordinary courage, and determined. We are looking to the future, to our common future because now, Ukraine is an EU candidate country.

Which stories of EU-Ukraine cooperation inspired you the most since the start of the full-scale war?

It is very difficult to pick just a few. Every day, we are witnessing incredible stories, some of them break our hearts, others warm them. During the first days and weeks of the war, we were all amazed by the immense solidarity shown by ordinary people, who, very often, did not hesitate to hand over keys to

their houses to people they had never met before. Ukrainian children mingled with ours in schools and in playgrounds, their mothers were given jobs and became our colleagues or attended training sessions to help them integrate into the EU labour market faster.

But to be more concrete, during my trip to Krakow, which I already mentioned, I had the privilege to meet Polish women scouts, who, since the very first day of the war, have been putting their own jobs, personal comfort and sometimes even their families on the side to help

Ukrainians arriving in Poland. They have worked tirelessly, no longer counting all the sleepless nights they have had to endure since February. Their testimonies were truly inspiring – full of unimaginable suffering on the one hand, but bursting with hope on the other. Encounters like that fill me with the conviction that humanity will prevail and that this terrible war will soon be over.

What new things can Ukrainians bring into the European family?

I think we do not emphasise enough all the added value that

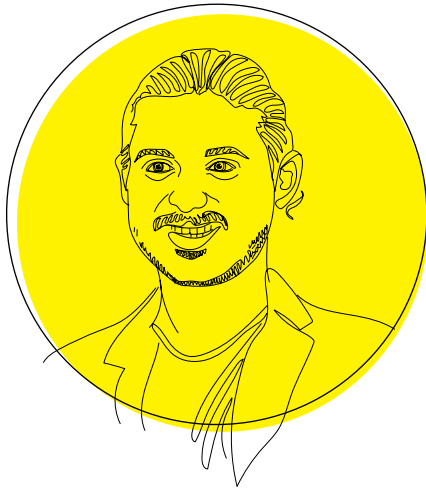
Ukraine would bring. Not only do we share the same history, ideals and aspirations, but we will simply be stronger with Ukraine than without her. Your compatriots are proving on a daily basis their incredible heroism and determination. I have said it countless times and I will repeat it once more: Ukraine is fighting for us, for everything we believe in.

With Ukraine, our European family will be enriched with courageous people, their culture, traditions and historical experience, but also with their delicious cuisine, outstanding athletes, brilliant youth, vibrant civil society, and much more.



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STRIKE A PAUSE STRIKE A PAUSE



DANYLO POLILUEV-SCHMIDT, CULTURAL COLUMNIST FOR THE PROJECT “UKRAINE IN DEUTSCHLAND,” DECISION BOARD MEMBER OF THE NGO IWEK E.V., ACTIVIST, PODCAST CREATOR “ALIARMIA? ZMOVA? ZNEVIRA?” AND BLOGGER BERLIN, GERMANY

*“The freedom has a name.
Its name is Ukraine.
And the Ukrainian flag is the
flag of freedom today.”*
Ursula von der Leyen

More and more often Ukrainians hear the suggestion to sacrifice territories to Russia in a deal to secure peace in Europe. These suggestions frequently come from the far left and far right of the political spectrum, despite the fact that none of these politicians have ever been to Ukraine and thus can hardly begin to understand the reality of the current situation.

At the same time, Ukrainian culture is blamed for being too anti-Russian and too nationalist. It seems there is a huge void in understanding how Ukrainian culture enables millions of Ukrainians

**CULTURAL
PAGE**



In the book “Talking to Ukrainians. An outsider’s perspective” from Alexander Fontaine, I found an interesting statement: “I understand that what I wrote will be criticised. I want to clarify that any negative comment on the Russian Federation is by no means a criticism of Russians as a people.” When the Russian Federation is distinguished from its people – who, after all, built and constructed Putin’s regime, fed its corruption, and went down the path of authoritarianism – all responsibility is taken away from the real executors: the people of Russia. Furthermore, this distinction also obscures a real danger. Weaponised culture kills as effectively as a precise gun. Each time Russian culture is used as an example of the “mysterious Russian soul,” it causes irreversible damage to the realm, where we live. It sows the grain of doubt: if Russia really is so powerful, how can it ever be defeated? It is also used to justify imperialist, genocidal behav-



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to survive the ongoing atrocities and horrors of the Russian occupation. Ukrainian culture produces tremendous resilience and an eagerness to live, to win, and to create. There is no doubt that Ukrainian culture, the Ukrainian people, and the Ukrainian government are tightly connected to one another. They are in a symbiotic relationship, where everyone both gains and gives, even if this sometimes comes in the form of harsh criticism or demands to be better.

With this point in mind, I would like to turn to the question of double standards in the Russian war against Ukraine.



our towards its neighbours. Finally, it skews, and may even destroy, our sense of orientation in reality. Some time ago, the Ukrainian historian Yaroslav Hrytsak claimed in “Ukrainian” that during the initial days of the full-scale Russian invasion in Ukraine, he received a message from a fellow professor who had fallen in love with Russian culture after hearing the first notes of Tchaikovsky’s musical works. He fell in love enough to even make it the subject of his studies. Well, the message he sent to Yaroslav Hrytsak said: “I hope that Putin will conquer you soon and everything will be normal again.” Yaroslav Hrytsak mentioned that his fellow scientist doesn’t understand that Russian culture is something bad. For people who never experienced Russian or Soviet occupation, Prof. Hrytsak’s words may sound harsh. However, Mr. Hrytsak isn’t alone

in his interpretations of and feelings toward Russian culture. It is a very common pattern among Eastern Europeans, and especially Ukrainians, who suffered under Russian and Soviet occupation or Russian-imposed regimes. The victims often lived through cultural oppression and linguistic genocide, like Holodomor of 1932-33. Tsarist, Soviet, or today’s Russian culture make Ukrainians feel disgust or even hatred. The often-overlooked deadly shots from Russian culture can be illustrated by three world-renowned Russian poets, writers, and essayists: Bulgakov, Solzhenitsyn, and Brodsky. And, unfortunately, there are far more examples. Russian culture developed under the tsarist and



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and state-building to stop as fast as possible and everything possible to be done to rebuild the Russian empire.

Solzhenitsyn, a Nobel Prize winner, has a more diligent strategy and in his “Rebuilding Russia” essays, he gives numerous hints arguing against Ukrainian independence. He projects his opinion that the Ukrainization of the 1920s was a huge mistake and that the Ukrainian language was created by the

later the red terror, a period characterised by the mass murder of Ukrainian intelligence officers and the extermination of Ukrainian elites, a process which continued until the dissolution of the USSR.

All three writers were caught up in an enormous Ukrainophobic narrative, yet none of them have been cancelled. Bulgakov, in his “White Guard,” “Notes About Kyiv,” and “The Days of the Turbins.” writes that the Ukrainian language is disgusting and that it is just a made-up language of non-educated people. Further, he argues that Ukrainian independence was just a historical mistake. Overall, he wants the “madness” of of Ukrainization



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DEMONSTRATION OF PROMOTE UKRAINE AGAINST THE RUSSIAN SEASON AT THE BRUSSELS' THEATRE LA MONNAIE IN SEPTEMBER 2022





UKRAINIAN TEMPORARILY PROTECTED WOMEN AT AN ART THERAPY LESSON IN THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF PROMOTE UKRAINE



Austrian-Hungarian Empire and the Germans as a weapon against “Great Russia.” Also, Solzhenitsyn seriously questions the territorial integrity of Ukraine. He would rather see Ukraine divided up into several parts or, better yet, just becoming a part of the “Great Russian Land.” It becomes even more terrifying when the Nobel Prize winner talks about so-called Ukrainian separatism and justifies crimes against Ukraine as preventive actions from the Russian side.

And last, but not least. is Brodsky. At Brodsky’s Evening in the Hall of the Jewish Community in Palo Alto in New York City on 30 October 1992, Brodsky reads a poem “On Ukrainian Independence” in which he first mocks Ukrainians as rednecks and narrow-minded peasants,

then proceeds with: “So go with God, you swift Cossacks, you hetmans, you prison guards, Just remember, when it’s time for you, too, to die, you Bravehearts, as you scratch at your mattress and visibly suffer, you’ll forget the lies of Taras [Shevchenko], and whisper the words of Alexander[Pushkin].”

These writers’ words exhibit strong imperial chauvinism smoothly covered by the beautiful façade of Russian culture. If the culture, the government, and the people are neatly divided from one another, the cause-consequences connection gets blurred and less understandable for outsiders. When the picture is blurry, the Russian invasion of Ukraine may come as a huge surprise, but it is not. All the words of Russian

Russia’s war against Ukraine was built upon cultural chauvinism, disrespect, and a disgust toward the Ukrainian nation. This was a perfect combination to begin the war in 2014 and, eight years later, a full-scale invasion.

writers and elites, which they poured over the Russian people decade after decade, had a direct impact on today's situation. Russia's war against Ukraine was built upon cultural chauvinism, disrespect, and a disgust toward the Ukrainian nation. This was a perfect combination to begin the war in 2014 and, eight years later, a full-scale invasion.

Demonisation of others comes directly from the Russian cultural code. As a consequence, Russia's notorious oppression, dehumanisation, and bullying of the nations within its orbit has triggered major removals of Soviet and Russian monuments, such as statues of Lenin and other figures, in the Baltic states. Decommunisation in Poland took place immediately after it regained its independence and elected a new democratic government. The "Fall of the Lenin" in Ukraine during the Revolution of Dignity was a clear protest. Many forgotten Soviet cemeteries and memorials in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania will also be decommunised.

In my view, it is only the beginning of the movement to "cancel" Russian culture. The whole world can now see the loathsome deeds of Russian sol-



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The whole world can now see the loathsome deeds of Russian soldiers in Ukraine. The motive is the same: massacre in Bucha, Irpin, Olenivka, Izyum, and we still don't know what awaits us in the still occupied territories – the torture of civilians, mass rape of Ukrainian women, public castration of Ukrainian soldiers... Who is guilty?

diers in Ukraine. The motif is the same: massacre in Bucha, Irpin, Olenivka, Izyum, and we still don't know what awaits us in the still occupied territories – the torture of civilians, mass rape of Ukrainian women, public castration of Ukrainian soldiers... Who is guilty?

From my standpoint, the answer is clear: Russians, the Russian government, and Russian culture all together. Polish singer Maria Peszek describes the situation best in her song Modern Holocaust: “cuz it's not like the only evil is Hitler or Stalin, the evil is in everyone, we create the evil ourselves, 'cuz it's not like the only evil is Putin or Bin Laden you have your own rifle at home, too.” The results of Russian cultural processes are now plain to see - the reign of terror and war of terror.

We, Ukrainians, had the misfortune to face the Rus-

sian terror, and we are in our right to make use of this experience and give everyone a piece of advice. Humanity can either stay blind to the weaponisation of Russian culture or deal it a fatal strike and cancel the Russian culture for as long as possible. This will give the time and space to discover the great works of Czech, Polish, Ukrainian, and Baltic culture.

In conclusion, I would like to quote one of my brave German friends and Doctor of Philosophy Schmidt: “Russia proved to be unworthy of having any monuments in any country.”



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