

# UKRAINE'S FOREIGN POLICY IN TIMES OF WAR: FEATURES AND PRIORITIES

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# UKRAINE'S FOREIGN POLICY IN TIMES OF WAR: FEATURES AND PRIORITIES

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**Russia's large-scale war against Ukraine, while provoking a dangerous confrontation between the world's centres of influence, changed the content and specifics of the activities of the Ukrainian state and society in general and its foreign policy in particular. During the war, and especially amidst large-scale intervention, the nature, means and priorities of Ukrainian diplomacy were transformed. This is a unique experience in the global arena that deserves attention. Some of the peculiarities and features of Kyiv's foreign policy during the war are outlined in this publication.**

## 1. GEOPOLITICAL TRENDS AND PROCESSES

Ukraine's foreign policy is carried out against the backdrop and under the influence of escalation of several dangerous inter-connected regional and global conflicts. These include (a) a number of local simmering (latent) conflicts with either direct or indirect impact on Ukraine; (b) an acute West-Russia confrontation caused by the Kremlin's aggression against Ukraine; (c) the growing US-China confrontation, which is acquiring signs of a systemic global crisis; (d) a global conflict between the democratic civilised world and the camp of authoritarian countries. Obviously, these processes are interrelated and have similar causes and nature.<sup>1</sup>

*Crises and conflicts at the regional level.* A large-scale war in the centre of Europe, energy blackmail and blockade of Ukrainian agricultural exports by Russia, and the unfavourable global situation have aggravated socio-economic problems in the EU. The situation was further complicated by the massive influx of refugees from Ukraine, which exceeds the previous waves of migration flows to Europe. The Kremlin's ongoing hybrid is another destabilising factor, which includes interference in domestic political processes, exports of corruption, disorientation of public

opinion, inspiration of disagreements between European states, support for right-wing radical and nationalist movements, espionage, sabotage and subversion, and the like.

The situation in the Balkan region remains complicated, with internal political crises, escalating instability in Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the ongoing inter-ethnic conflict between Serbia and Kosovo.

The situation around Transnistria remains tense due to Russia's attempts to destabilise Moldova. Lukashenka's aggressive and unpredictable dictatorial regime in Belarus should be considered a danger and a challenge for Europe. Georgia is facing an internal political crisis. The ongoing confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan is accompanied by political and diplomatic demarches, territorial claims and mutual threats.<sup>2</sup> In the Middle East, where the interests of the United States, China, and Russia clash, the aggressive Iranian regime is a key destabilising factor. The long-lasting armed conflict in Syria remains unsettled, with the threat of escalation.

It is clear that this list does not exhaust the overall picture of local conflicts around the world, including the Asia-Pacific region, the African continent, and so on.

<sup>1</sup> For more detail, see the Razumkov Centre's analytical publication «Political, economic and structural consequences of Russian aggression for Ukraine and the international community». Kyiv, 2023, p.12-25 – [https://razumkov.org.ua/images/2023/04/21/2023\\_04\\_consequences\\_of\\_the\\_war\\_for\\_ukraine.pdf](https://razumkov.org.ua/images/2023/04/21/2023_04_consequences_of_the_war_for_ukraine.pdf) (in Ukrainian), <https://razumkov.org.ua/images/2023/04/21/2023-ECONOM-VIDNOVL-ENGL.pdf> (extended summary in English).

<sup>2</sup> Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry calls on Armenia to realise the realities of the second Karabakh War. Interfax-Ukraine, 20 March 2023, <https://interfax.com.ua/news/political/898572.html>.

*The West-Russia confrontation caused by the Kremlin's aggression against Ukraine.* Since the onset of the Russian aggression in February 2014, a group of Western nations, including the EU members, the US, Canada, the UK, as well as Japan, Australia and other states, have demonstrated solidarity with Ukraine and support for its territorial integrity. These countries (a) condemn Russian aggression, not recognising the annexation of Crimea and the «accession» of the occupied Ukrainian territories to Russia; (b) provide military assistance to Ukraine, financial, economic and humanitarian support; (c) step up and extend sanctions policy against the aggressor; (d) provide protection and assistance to Ukrainian refugees; (e) promote reforms in Ukraine, etc. Gradually, a strong coalition of states has been formed to oppose the aggressor.

Ukraine's allies support and promote pro-Ukrainian resolutions and decisions within the UN GA, PACE, OSCE, IAEA, G7, G20, and BSEC; contribute to Moscow's political isolation; and foster international recognition of Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism. The Russian intervention, on the one hand, has given a powerful impetus to strengthening ideological solidarity and consolidating the collective West. On the other hand, it has deepened the confrontation between the world's major players, global division and polarisation of the international community.

*Escalation of the US-China confrontation.* The confrontation between key global players – the United States and China – is escalating. To this end, the creation of the US-UK-Australia military and political alliance (AUKUS) in September 2021 to confront China in the Indo-Pacific region is worth mentioning. The visit of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan in August 2022 increased tensions between Washington and Beijing. Against the backdrop of China's militarisation, ever-increasing military budget,

and intensifying anti-American rhetoric, further escalation of the conflict over Taiwan poses a threat of a violent US-China conflict with unpredictable consequences.

Moreover, the US-China conflict has signs of a systemic global crisis. This sharp political, trade and economic confrontation draws individual countries and entire regions of the world. The countries of South-East and Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America are increasingly becoming the targets of this rivalry.<sup>3</sup>

*Polarisation of the international community, global divide of the democratic world and authoritarian states.* Russian aggression has become a catalyst for a dangerous deepening of the global divide – political, economic, ideological – between the civilised, democratic world (the US, EU, NATO) and the camp of countries dominated by totalitarian tendencies, the cult of personality, and the disregard for human rights (Russia, China, North Korea, Belarus, Syria).

In March 2023, the ongoing process of global polarisation, that is, the consolidation of the democratic world and the unification of authoritarian countries, became quite clear. There are enough reasons to believe that this «democracy-authoritarianism» confrontation will determine the peculiarities and dynamics of global trends in the near future. Moreover, it is the political and security factor that will be decisive in the further division and polarisation of the modern world.

Such lines of geopolitical confrontation will largely determine the course of Ukraine's foreign policy, its goals and priorities on the world stage, and the circle of strategic partners. Official Kyiv should take into account the positions and interests of partner countries in different regions, and coordinate actions at the regional and global levels.

<sup>3</sup> For more detail, see «Ukraine's role and place in the future European and Euro-Atlantic Security Systems», the Razumkov Centre, 2022, p.4-9, [https://razumkov.org.ua/images/2022/11/16/2022\\_SUNGUROVSKY\\_01.pdf](https://razumkov.org.ua/images/2022/11/16/2022_SUNGUROVSKY_01.pdf).



DEMOCRATIC WORLD	AUTHORITARIAN STATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ On 10 March, the United States and the European Commission issued a joint statement in support of Ukraine and declared joint measures to counter Russian aggression in Europe.</li> <li>✓ On 20 March, Canada proposed an initiative to create a quadripartite partnership with Japan, South Korea, and the United States to jointly counter the influence of China and Russia.</li> <li>✓ On 23 March, the European Council adopted a resolution reaffirming its unwavering support for Ukraine and strongly condemning the ongoing military assistance to the aggressor by Iran and Belarus.</li> <li>✓ On 28-30 March, the second global Summit for Democracy 2023 was held at the initiative of the United States, with the participation of leaders from 120 countries. The event was dedicated to promoting democracy in the world and countering authoritarianism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Self-proclaimed president of Belarus Alyaksandr Lukashenka paid visits to China (2 March) and Iran (13 March), signing a number of strategic documents with the leadership of these countries.</li> <li>✓ On 15 March, Bashar al-Assad and Vladimir Putin met in Moscow to strengthen the Russia-Syria partnership.</li> <li>✓ On 21-22 March, China's Xi Jinping visited his Russian counterpart. The two leaders signed a package of 14 bilateral statements and strategic agreements.</li> <li>✓ Tehran announced plans to purchase Russian Su-35 fighter jets and jointly build a drone production plant in Russia.</li> <li>✓ The navies of Russia, China and Iran held Security Belt 2023 joint exercises in the Gulf of Oman.</li> </ul>

## 2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF KYIV'S WAR DIPLOMACY

The goals and objectives of Ukraine's foreign policy during the war were generally formulated in statements, speeches and decisions of the country's leadership for the domestic audience and at international platforms, including the UN GA session, the EU-Ukraine Summit, the G7, the European Council, etc. The most detailed outlook of the country's war diplomacy priorities was given in the President's speech at the Conference of Ambassadors in December 2022.<sup>4</sup>

Some priority areas of Kyiv's foreign policy include the following:

*Attracting the necessary resources (military, financial, economic, logistical) to*

*resist Russia's armed expansion.* This is the basic task and priority of the country's foreign policy. One of key achievements was the creation of the Ukrainian Defence Contact Group (UDCG-Ramstein) in April 2022 bringing together more than 50 countries.<sup>5</sup> Partners supply Ukraine with a wide range of weapons and military equipment.

In particular, during the year of the large-scale war, the allies provided more than 4,000 armoured vehicles, artillery pieces and other weapons systems.<sup>6</sup> The leaders here are the United States, as its military aid to Ukraine in 2022 totalled more than \$28 billion.<sup>7</sup> The US Congress has approved an additional \$45 billion for 2023, of which monthly security assistance is already being disbursed. In particular, in April 2023, the Pentagon announced another \$2.6 billion military aid package for Ukraine.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Every day you should feel that people's lives and the situation in our country depend on your work – President's speech at the Conference of Ambassadors of Ukraine, 23 December 2022, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/shodnya-vi-mayete-vidchuvati-sho-vid-vashoyi-roboti-zalezhit-80041>.

<sup>5</sup> This group operates at the United States' Ramstein Air Base in Germany. The Defence Ministers' meetings are attended by representatives of more than 50 countries allied to Ukraine, including EU and NATO countries, as well as countries from Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific.

<sup>6</sup> Ukraine Seeks Weapons to Beat Back Russia: Here's What It's Got. – Bloomberg, 15 January 2023, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-01-15/ukraine-seeks-weapons-to-beat-back-russia-here-s-what-it-s-got>.

<sup>7</sup> In particular, military assistance amounted to \$19.5 billion under the Presidential Drawdown programme, \$8.595 billion under the USAI programme, and \$225 million under the FMF programme. See: «The US is the undisputed leader in providing assistance to Ukraine: Markarova named the figures» – Ukrinform, 24 February 2023, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-economy/3674680-ssa-e-bezumovnim-liderom-z-nadanna-dopomogi-ukraini-markarova-nazvala-cifri.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Biden Administration Announces Additional Security Assistance for Ukraine. – Department of Defense, April 4, 2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3350958/biden-administration-announces-additional-security-assistance-for-ukraine/>.

The total amount of military assistance to Ukraine from the EU, including through the European Peace Facility (EPF) is estimated at close to €12 billion.<sup>9</sup> An important step is also the launch of the European Union Military Assistance Mission Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) to train 30,000 Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel in 2023.<sup>10</sup> Other partners' support is also very important. For example, Canada sent 3,500 tonnes of military aid to Ukraine worth more than \$1 billion and trained 35,000 Ukrainian defenders as part of Operation UNIFIER.<sup>11</sup>

**However, the problem of regular and timely supply of weapons to Ukraine in the required quantity and nomenclature remains acute.** Unfortunately, the long delay in supplying tanks, air defence systems, modern aircraft, and long-range missile equipment has, on the one hand, led to massive human and material losses in Ukraine, and on the other hand, complicated and slowed down the offensive actions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

*Accumulating external financial support to stabilise the domestic socio-economic situation.* This is another key area of Ukrainian diplomacy. The country suffered huge human, financial and economic losses during the aggression.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, Kyiv has to keep a large military contingent on the 1,000-km-long Russia-Ukraine front and constantly increase funding for military needs.<sup>13</sup> The war has turned Ukraine into a major recipient of external donor aid, and financial contributions from partners cover

about one-third of Ukraine's budget expenditures.<sup>14</sup> Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal, while presenting the budget for 2023, noted that «we expect to cover the budget deficit of \$38 billion mainly thanks to the support of our international partners. In particular, the European Union, the United States and the IMF».<sup>15</sup>

In view of this, the number one task for Ukraine's foreign policy is to intensify and expand financial and economic assistance and humanitarian support, initiate new grant programmes, loans, credits and humanitarian supplies. It is worth recalling that in 2022, direct budgetary support to Ukraine from the United States in the form of non-refundable grants totalled \$13 billion, and more than \$1.9 billion in humanitarian aid. In 2023, the respective inflows from the US will amount to \$9.9 billion and \$1.1 billion in aid for Ukraine's energy needs, as well as \$1.5 billion for programmes to stabilise the national economy and to launch the initial phase of reconstruction.<sup>16</sup>

The total assistance provided to Ukraine by the EU and its member states is currently around €50 billion, including financial, humanitarian, emergency, budgetary and military support. In December 2022, the EU Council approved a plan to provide Ukraine with regular macro-financial assistance in 2023 of up to €1.5 billion every month, for a total of €18 billion.<sup>17</sup> In total, from February through December 2022, the EU delivered more than 77 thousand tonnes of humanitarian aid to Ukraine.<sup>18</sup> The EU also provides access to

<sup>9</sup> Joint statement following the 24<sup>th</sup> EU-Ukraine – Presidential Administration of Ukraine, 3 February 2023, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/spilna-zayava-za-pidsumkami-24-go-samitu-ukrayina-yes-80765>.

<sup>10</sup> EUMAM Ukraine will operate on the territory of EU member states and will have its operational headquarters in Brussels. The Mission's mandate will initially last for two years, with a financial support of EUR 106 million for this period.

<sup>11</sup> Canada has already delivered more than 3.5 thousand tonnes of military aid to Ukraine – Ukrinform, 2 March 2023, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3676880-kanada-dopravila-v-ukrainu-vze-ponad-35-tisaci-tonn-vijskovo-dopomogi.html> (in Ukrainian).

<sup>12</sup> For more detail, see European Integration in Times of War: Challenges and Prospects. Analytical Report of the Razumkov Centre. p. 3. <https://razumkov.org.ua/images/2022/12/28/2022-MATRA-IV-KVARTAL-7.pdf>. (in Ukrainian).

<sup>13</sup> Budget 2023: Army, Roads and Marathon – LB.ua, 5 November 2022, [https://lb.ua/economics/2022/11/05/534879\\_byudzheth23\\_armiya\\_dorogi\\_marafon.html](https://lb.ua/economics/2022/11/05/534879_byudzheth23_armiya_dorogi_marafon.html) (in Ukrainian).

<sup>14</sup> Financial assistance from international partners: how much did Ukraine receive as of 1 October? – «Ekonomichna Pravda», 6 October 2022, <https://www.epravda.com.ua/news/2022/10/6/692303> (in Ukrainian).

<sup>15</sup> Budget 2023: Shmyhal unveils key indicators – Slovo i Dilo, 3 November 2022, <https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2022/11/03/novyna/finansy/byudzheth-2023-shmyhal-oprylyudnyv-osnovni-pokaznyky> (in Ukrainian).

<sup>16</sup> The US is the undisputed leader in providing assistance to Ukraine: Markarova named the figures – Ukrinform, 24 February 2023, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-economy/3674680-ssa-e-bezumovnim-liderom-z-nadanna-dopomogi-ukraini-markarova-nazvala-cifri.html>.

<sup>17</sup> EU Council approves €18 bn aid to Ukraine – Interfax, 10 December 2022, <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/877618.html> (in Ukrainian).

<sup>18</sup> The European Union has sent over 77,000 tonnes of aid to Ukraine since February – Ukrinform, 27 December 2022, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-uarazom/3641783-evrosouz-vid-lutogo-nadislav-v-ukrainu-ponad-77-tisac-tonn-dopomogi.html> (in Ukrainian).

essential goods and services both in the EU and in Ukraine for civilians affected by Russian aggression.<sup>19</sup>

*Asserting the Ukrainian agenda in the European and global discourse and promoting the country's interests on international platforms.* Since the onset of Russia's intervention in February 2014, the world's leading nations and international institutions have clearly defined and consistently pursued a course of supporting Ukraine in its confrontation with the aggressor.

In 2014–2023, the UN General Assembly, PACE, OSCE, EU, NATO and G7 adopted a number of resolutions demanding to stop the Russian intervention, withdraw the occupation forces and ensure the territorial integrity of Ukraine. In October 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted a historic resolution «Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations», which condemned illegal «referendums» in the occupied territories of Ukraine and demanded that Russia reversed the annexation and withdrew its military forces from the territory of Ukraine.<sup>20</sup>

*Ensuring international isolation of the Putin regime and political and legal condemnation of Russian aggression.* At the initiative of Ukraine and its partners, the process of political and diplomatic isolation of the aggressor country, large-scale restrictions on its participation in humanitarian contacts, scientific and cultural exchanges, sports competitions, etc. intensified in 2022. Through Ukraine and partners' joint efforts, Russia was stripped of its membership in the UN Human Rights Council, expelled from the Council of Europe, the UN World Tourism Organisation, the governing board of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), deprived of the chairmanship of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, and expelled from other international organisations.

The process of Russia's political and legal qualification as a terrorist country has spread worldwide. In autumn 2022, the PACE, the European Parliament and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly declared Russia a state sponsor of terrorism. At the same time, several European parliaments have recognised the Russian regime as a terrorist regime and the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism.

The decision of the International Criminal Court judges of 17 March 2023 to issue arrest warrants for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Children's Ombudsman Natalia Lvova-Belova for the illegal deportation of children from Ukraine was an event of geopolitical significance. This decision cannot be ignored applies by 123 countries party to the Rome Statute and has a significant moral and psychological effect on the international community.

*Applying sanctions against the aggressor.* Reinforcing and expanding the international sanctions front against the aggressor is one of the main components of Kyiv's war diplomacy. Since day one of the Russian aggression in 2014, the collective West and various international organisations have imposed sanctions, including a) a set of restrictive measures against various sectors of the Russian economy (industry, energy, banking, military-industrial complex, etc.); b) trade sanctions; c) personal sanctions against the Russia's state and political establishment; d) visa restrictions.

Sanctions packages imposed by countries and international organisations are being updated and expanded. In particular, in April 2023, the US Department of State and the US Treasury imposed new sanctions restrictions on more than 120 individuals and legal entities in more than 20 countries in connection with Russian aggression against Ukraine. In late February 2023, the EU introduced its 10<sup>th</sup> package of sanctions against 121 individuals

<sup>19</sup> The EU continues to provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to Ukraine – European Integration Portal, 29 September 2022, <https://eu-ua.kmu.gov.ua/novyny/yes-prodovzhuye-nadavaty-neobhidnu-gumanitarnu-dopomogu-ukrayini>.

<sup>20</sup> Importantly, the resolution was supported by 143 countries, and only five countries – Russia, Belarus, Syria, North Korea and Nicaragua – voted against it. This is a record-breaking level support for Ukraine in its confrontation with Russian aggression since 2014. The UN General Assembly's decision demonstrates the growing global solidarity with Ukraine and the increasing political isolation of the aggressor.

and legal entities of the Russian Federation, which includes a ban on technology exports worth €11.4 billion.<sup>21</sup>

The sanctions policy against the aggressor has an important «deterrent» effect, significantly affecting the state of the Russian economy and the social sentiment of citizens.

Unfortunately, the sanctions remain limited in nature, as the West has not dared to impose a full-scale embargo on Russian energy or disconnect the Russian banking system from SWIFT. The current sanctions policy towards Russia, at least so far, has not caused economic problems that would force the Kremlin to change its aggressive foreign policy and stop the large-scale aggression in Ukraine.

Therefore, Ukraine's priority is to maintain and strengthen the solidarity of the sanctions policy of its allies.

*Attracting external resources to restore the destroyed socio-economic and energy infrastructure.* This is a strategic objective for the country's domestic and foreign policy alike. The Ukrainian government has put forward a number of initiatives, carried out a series of actions, and adopted a package of relevant decisions. In particular, in July 2022, Lugano hosted an international donor conference on Ukraine recovery, attended by more than 40 countries and 20 international organisations. Later, Ukraine introduced the international charity platform United24, joined by representatives of 110 countries. In September 2022, Ukraine presented a Fast Recovery Plan for the country as a whole and for individual affected regions. In October, speaking at an international conference on Ukraine's recovery in Berlin, President Zelenskyy called on partner countries to establish a «financial Ramstein» for restoring, rebuilding and modernising Ukraine.

In turn, the government of Ukraine has established a number of special funds: the Small and Medium Business Support Fund, the Economic Recovery and Transformation Fund, the Destroyed Property and Infrastructure Restoration Fund, the Humanitarian Fund, etc.<sup>22</sup>

Various countries and international organisations have joined Ukraine's recovery projects. In particular, the G7 plans to provide financial assistance of more than \$5 billion.<sup>23</sup> Financial support is also coming from the United States, Japan, Iceland, the Netherlands, etc., as well as from international organisations, private businesses, and others. The EU also plans donor assistance worth €1 billion for Ukraine's recovery. According to the Government, as of February 2023, more than UAH 17 billion had been accumulated on the special account for Ukraine's fast recovery.<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately, the current external financial assistance is still local and limited and not comparable to the large-scale tasks of Ukraine's post-war recovery. In this regard, the issue of developing the legal framework for the confiscation of the aggressor's financial assets frozen in different countries worth €300 billion<sup>25</sup> is particularly relevant.

*Protecting the rights of Ukrainian citizens abroad.* Extensive hostilities and massive shelling of Ukrainian territory caused an outflow of civilians, mostly women and children, abroad. According to the UN, more than 8 million Ukrainians stayed in European countries as of March 2023.<sup>26</sup>

Supporting and protecting the rights of our compatriots is a priority for Ukrainian diplomacy, particularly for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its network of embassies and consulates. The EU promptly activating the mechanism of temporary protection for refugees from Ukraine was vital, as it granted

<sup>21</sup> EU adopts 10<sup>th</sup> package of sanctions against Russia: what's included – DW, 25 February 2023, <https://www.dw.com/uk/es-uhvaliv-10j-paket-sankcij-proti-rf-so-v-nomu/a-64819743> (in Ukrainian).

<sup>22</sup> Funds for the Restoration of Ukraine – Government Portal, <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/gromadskosti/fondi-vidnovlennya-ukrayini>.

<sup>23</sup> France, Germany and the UK to provide additional support to Ukraine worth over \$5 bn – Interfax, 15 April 2023, <https://interfax.com.ua/news/economic/904130.html> (in Ukrainian).

<sup>24</sup> Shmyhal: UAH 17 billion already on special account for Ukraine's recovery – Ukrinform, 16 February 2023, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-economy/3671021-na-specrahunku-dla-vidnovlennya-ukraini-vze-e-17-milardiv-smigal.html> (in Ukrainian).

<sup>25</sup> EU found a way to transfer frozen Russian reserves to Ukraine – Radio Svoboda, 26 January 2023, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-es-ukrajina-rezervy-rf/32241287.html> (in Ukrainian).

<sup>26</sup> The UN has calculated the number of Ukrainian refugees in Europe – Glavkom, 1 March 2023, <https://glavkom.ua/country/society/v-on-porakhuvai-skilki-ukrajinskikh-bizhentsiv-perebuvaie-u-jevropi-911766.html>.



the right to stay in member states and provided access to the labour market, housing, social security, medical care, and education for millions of Ukrainians.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, EU and Ukrainian telecom operators introduced affordable / free roaming between the EU and Ukraine. Fees for money transfer to Ukraine, as well as fees for euro or hryvnia exchange rates, have been reduced. Today, the issue of protecting the rights of Ukrainian refugees is part of the strategic task of ensuring security, social and economic conditions for returning our citizens to Ukraine, that is, for preserving the national human capital.

### 3. FEATURES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS OF UKRAINIAN DIPLOMACY IN TIMES OF WAR

The war accelerated the pro-Western evolution of Ukraine's foreign policy, shaped its goals, objectives and strategic priorities on the world stage, and improved the content, nature and tools of diplomacy. These transformations acquired a new quality and magnitude during the large-scale Russian intervention. It is about implementing the «khaki diplomacy» tasked to ensure external conditions for resistance to Russian intervention.

When assessing the specifics and peculiarities of Ukraine's foreign policy in the context of war, the following important aspects deserve attention.

**First. A noticeable increase in the activity and initiative of foreign policy.** Ukrainian diplomacy has gradually become offensive and preventive. The war has dramatically sped up external processes and events, increased the number of permanent threats and challenges that require a prompt response. At the same time, a circle of partners in solidarity with Ukraine has been formed, and, accordingly, the quality of international contacts

at various levels has improved. The political and diplomatic struggle against the aggressor and its partners has intensified, both directly and elsewhere in the world, on international platforms, and so on.

Importantly, the Ukrainian side speaks to the international community with «one voice». The Russian aggression has united the positions of civil society institutions, government agencies, pro-government and opposition parties, the media, and all branches of government. Now it is a single consolidated position of Ukraine on the world stage. The current foreign policy course, aimed at countering Russian aggression and accelerating the country's movement towards the EU and NATO, is positively assessed and supported by most citizens of Ukraine.

#### Citizens and expert assessments<sup>28</sup>

The majority of Ukrainian citizens appear to appreciate the Ukrainian government's foreign policy in the context of the war. In particular, 38% assess it positively, 40% – rather positively. The experts' positions are similar, as 58% of them assess the country's foreign policy positively, and 33% – rather positively.

Ukrainian diplomacy has become proactive. Official Kyiv launched a number of important international actions and events that were widely supported by the international community. In particular, Ukraine organised the Crimea Platform Summit in August 2021, which brought together 43 countries and international organisations;<sup>29</sup> many countries and international institutions supported the «Ukrainian Peace Formula», which President Zelenskyy unveiled at the G7 summit in October 2022; the Ukrainian humanitarian initiative Grain from Ukraine to purchase food for Africa and Asia, supported by more than 30 countries, gained wide global

<sup>27</sup> According to the UN, as of January 2023, 4.8 million refugees from Ukraine were granted temporary protection in Europe. See: The number of refugees from Ukraine in Germany with temporary protection status decreased by 140 thousand, which took their total number in Europe away from 5 million – UN. Interfax-Ukraine, 4 February 2023, <https://interfax.com.ua/news/economic/889059.html> (in Ukrainian).

<sup>28</sup> The survey was conducted by the Razumkov Centre's sociological service from 22 February to 1 March 2023 on government-controlled territories of Ukraine and not subject to hostilities. 2,020 respondents aged 18+ were interviewed. The theoretical sampling error does not exceed 2.3%. The expert survey was conducted by the Razumkov Centre's sociological service from 26 February to 15 March 2023. 40 experts (members of research institutions and organisations, university professors, international relations specialists of regional administrations, specialists of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Office of the President) were interviewed.

<sup>29</sup> In October 2022, the Crimea Platform Parliamentary Summit was held, attended by parliamentary delegations from 55 countries from across the world, from the EU to Japan, Canada and New Zealand.

resonance. In December 2022, Kyiv launched international conferences «UA: Human Rights in Dark Times» dedicated to the role of international organisations in protecting human rights in the current context. Ukraine has also initiated the Dialogue Group, an international coordination mechanism to bring to justice those responsible for crimes committed in Ukraine by the Russian occupiers. 36 countries have already joined the plan to establish an international tribunal to investigate Russian crimes.

**Second. The unprecedented intensity and level of international contacts in the history of Ukrainian diplomacy.** A new political and diplomatic reality gradually emerged around warring Ukraine, as high-level contacts with the leadership of top countries and reputable international institutions became a daily practice. Since the onset of the large-scale aggression, there has been a consistently high level and intensity of political dialogue with partners. In particular, according to Volodymyr Zelenskyy, between 21 December 2022 and 23 January 2023, more than 30 rounds of negotiations (including non-public ones) with the leaders of partner states took place.<sup>30</sup> The list of high-level contacts for February 2023 alone is truly impressive.

#### HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS AND CONTACTS IN FEBRUARY 2023

- ✓ Joint meeting of the Government of Ukraine and the European Commission.
- ✓ Two rounds of talks with the EU leadership.
- ✓ Visits of the Prime Ministers of Sweden, the Netherlands, Italy, and Spain to Kyiv.
- ✓ Meetings and high-level talks with the Presidents of France, Poland, Turkey, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Cyprus, the Philippines, Pakistan, Uganda, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Chancellor of Germany, the Prime Minister of Norway, etc.
- ✓ Participation in a meeting of the European Council.
- ✓ Visit of the US President Joe Biden to Kyiv.
- ✓ Meeting with IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.
- ✓ Visits of delegations from the US Congress, the Israeli Knesset, and the Dutch Parliament.
- ✓ Participation in the G7 leaders meeting.

On the one hand, such an active diplomatic marathon reinforces and expands political, economic, military, technical and humanitarian cooperation with various states around the world. In particular, joint statements and declarations of support for Ukraine's progress towards the EU and NATO have recently been signed with a number of EU countries at the highest level.

On the other hand, active international dialogue helps strengthen the atmosphere of trust and friendly personal contacts with many national leaders and key politicians. There are reasons to believe that relations have improved, including at the personal level, with the leadership of Poland, the Baltic States, other EU member states, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Japan, and the heads of EU institutions, NATO, the United Nations, PACE, the OSCE, etc.

Intensive international contacts also contribute to the promotion of Ukrainian narratives globally and the widening group of countries in solidarity with Ukraine. Active diplomatic work has led to a gradual increase in international support for Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression. In particular, in February 2023, 141 countries supported the UN General Assembly resolution «Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine».

**Third. Introduction of new public diplomacy instruments.** *Direct public addresses by the Ukrainian authorities at the higher and highest levels to the public in various countries* became an effective innovation. It is important to tailor such speeches to different foreign audiences, such as politicians, scientists, cultural figures, mayors, businesspeople, farmers, students, etc. In particular, during the year of war from February 2022 to February 2023, President Zelenskyy spoke 12 times to students from

<sup>30</sup> In January 2023 alone, online talks and face-to-face meetings were held with the Presidents of France, Finland, Turkey, Germany, the UAE, Poland, Lithuania; the Prime Ministers of Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK, Canada, Norway, Luxembourg; as well as NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, President and Vice-President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen and Frans Timmermans, respectively.

different countries, including Europe, Australia, Chile, Japan, etc., and addressed the participants of the Cannes and Venice Film Festivals, the Lithuanian Film Awards, the Cannes Lions and Glastonbury festivals. In total, the President of Ukraine spoke more than 170 times to foreign audiences.<sup>31</sup>

*Addresses to parliamentarians* from around the world is another power tool, which was actively used by Ukrainian diplomacy. In particular, in 2022, the Ukrainian President addressed 33 foreign parliaments, including both houses of the US Congress and the UK Parliament. Apart from that, there has been a noticeable increase in the intensity of inter-parliamentary exchanges between Ukraine and other countries.

Another important feature of Ukraine's influence on the global political establishment has been the *increased participation in various international events, conferences, summits and meetings*. Last year alone, the Ukrainian side took part in more than 80 events at the higher level.<sup>32</sup> In particular, Ukrainian interests have been promoted at various international platforms – from the UN General Assembly and the G7 and G20 summits to the Bloomberg New Economy Forum, the Halifax International Security Forum, the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress of Mayors and Heads of Municipalities of France, and many others. At the same time, a number of international events were organised specifically to support Ukraine, such as the high-level conference «Standing with the Ukrainian People», the international symposium «The European Idea», the Ukraine-Oxford 2023 summit «European Horizons for Ukraine», etc. The 4<sup>th</sup> International Forum «Creative Ukraine:

The Power of Resilience» aimed at popularising and promoting Ukrainian culture in the world also deserves attention.<sup>33</sup>

Ukraine's active involvement in international platforms has strengthened its position in the world, helped promote pro-Ukrainian initiatives, improve the country's international image, and develop bilateral and multilateral contacts.

**Fourth. Attempts to expand and build up political and diplomatic presence in «challenging» regions.** In 2022, Ukraine's MFA began implementing new African and Asian Strategies. In 2023, the Latin American Strategy is to be adopted and put into practice.<sup>34</sup> At the December 2022 Conference of Ambassadors of Ukraine, President Zelenskyy noted among the key geographical areas of foreign policy «those regions and continents where our interests are so far represented less than we need for the good of Ukraine and our protection against Russian aggression. In particular, this is Africa... Ten countries have already been determined where new embassies of Ukraine in Africa will be opened». Latin America, India, other Asian countries, Southeast Asia were also mentioned.<sup>35</sup>

The intensity of high-level contacts and negotiations with the leadership of African and Latin American nations increased significantly in 2022-2023. In particular, President Zelenskyy met and talked with the leaders of a number of African countries, also lobbying for the idea of holding a Ukraine-Africa summit in Ukraine. Our country's initiative to provide humanitarian aid to Africa under the Grain from Ukraine programme also had a positive response. Negotiations were held with the

<sup>31</sup> The power of the word. Zelenskyy has spoken more than 560 times since the start of the war. How his speeches have influenced Ukraine and the world – Forbes-Ukraine, 24 February 2023, <https://forbes.ua/war-in-ukraine/sila-slova-zelenskiy-vistupav-z-pochatku-viyni-ponad-560-raziv-yak-yogo-promovi-vplinuli-ukrainu-ta-svit-24022023-11965>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Also, the awarding of international prizes to Ukraine representatives and their victories in popular ratings contributed to improving Ukraine's image and spreading its fame around the world. In particular, in December 2022, Ukraine received the Madeleine K. Albright Democracy Awards and The Hillary Rodham Clinton Awards of the Georgetown Institute of Peace and Security. Ukraine's leadership was also recognised by reputable media outlets such as Time, Politico, and The New York Times.

<sup>34</sup> Kuleba: This year, Latin America will be our priority.» Interfax, 4 January 2023, <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/882485.html> (in Ukrainian).

<sup>35</sup> Every day you should feel that people's lives and the situation in our country depend on your work – President's speech at the Conference of Ambassadors of Ukraine, 23 December 2022, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/shodnya-vi-mayete-vidchuvati-sho-vid-vashoyi-roboti-zalezhit-80041>.

Presidents of Chile, Brazil, Argentina, and some other countries. In October 2022, Ukraine's Foreign Minister made the first ever tour of the African continent.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, the MFA leadership held a series of talks with diplomats and officials from Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Saint Lucia, and others. In February 2023, for the first time in the history of bilateral relations between Kyiv and Riyadh, a delegation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Ukraine.

The strategic significance of intensifying Ukrainian diplomacy in these regions is explained by (a) the importance of promoting Ukraine's trade and economic interests, realising its potential in agricultural production, machine building, energy, IT, etc.; (b) countering Russian expansion in these regions; (c) ensuring that countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America support Ukrainian interests on international platforms, primarily within the UN General Assembly.

It should be noted, however, that the effectiveness of Ukrainian diplomacy in these directions, even in peacetime, was limited by a lack of resources and personnel. These problems became even more urgent during the war.

#### **Fifth. Concentration of key areas of foreign relations at the presidential level.**

A review of Kyiv's political and diplomatic practice in wartime suggests that the process of developing decisions and launching initiatives and actions in the foreign policy sphere is largely concentrated in the Presidential Office.

In this context, it is worth recalling that in late December 2021 – on the eve of the large-scale invasion – the Presidential Decree «Issues of coordination of the foreign policy activities of the state» entered into force, according to which the MFA «ensures coordination of the activities of state bodies in the field of foreign relations», «provides

methodological, advisory, and informational assistance to state bodies on relevant issues», that is, directs and controls the actions of the executive branch on the world stage.<sup>37</sup>

However, amidst large-scale aggression, martial law and the country's and its public administration system's transition to war footing, Ukraine's foreign policy activity tends to concentrate at the presidential level. In particular, the main communication with strategic partners – the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Turkey, Japan, the leading EU countries, etc is done through the Presidential Office, which also oversees the processes of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, and maintains contacts with leading international institutions (UN, EU, NATO, G7, G20, IAEA, etc.).

While noting certain dominance of the presidential team, one should not oversee the significance and contribution of the Verkhovna Rada to the implementation of the country's foreign policy, as it adopts important pro-European laws, decisions on the country's Euro-Atlantic integration, legal acts and statements in the field of foreign relations, etc. The intensification of interparliamentary contacts at the bilateral level and on international platforms (European Parliament, PACE, OSCE PA, PABSEC, etc.) is also very important, such as the joint meeting of the Verkhovna Rada and the European Parliament in April 2023.

In turn, relevant ministries and agencies at the governmental level continue to carry out multilevel practical activities globally to attract resources necessary to resist intervention and maintain internal stability, as well as to develop cooperation with partner countries and international institutions. Recent examples include a joint meeting of Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers and the European Commission (February 2023), and the completion of negotiations between the heads of government of Ukraine and Canada on a new free trade agreement (April 2023).

<sup>36</sup> In particular, Dmytro Kuleba met with President of Senegal Macky Sall and opened a Ukrainian-Senegalese business forum in Dakar. He also held talks with the President of Ghana and the leadership of Côte d'Ivoire, where he took part in a business forum of more than 20 Ukrainian and Ivorian companies. Unfortunately, the tour was interrupted by a massive missile attack on Ukraine on 10 October 2022.

<sup>37</sup> See the Decree of the President of Ukraine No.671 of 22 December 2021 «Issues of coordination of the foreign policy activities of the state», <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/6712021-41005>.



**Sixth. Personnel transformations.** Switching the MFA and the system of more than 110 Ukrainian diplomatic missions around the world to «war mode» is one of the components of resistance to external aggression. It is clear that in wartime, the diplomatic service should be reasonably militarised, mobile, not burdensome for the budget and focused on the war diplomacy priorities. The latter equally applies to the specialised units of the central apparatus, the system of embassies and representative offices of Ukraine, and the Council of Exporters and Investors under the MFA.

In this context, the dismissal of the Ukrainian ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco on 31 March 2022 due to failure to adequately pursue the security interests. President Zelenskyy commented on this first personnel decision as follows: «If there are no weapons, no sanctions... then look for another job».<sup>38</sup> This has de facto introduced a rigorous matrix for assessing the effectiveness of diplomatic missions and the MFA as a whole in wartime. Generally speaking, it is about the integral goal of Kyiv's war diplomacy – ensuring proper external conditions for resisting Russian expansion.

It should be added, however, that the war and the sharp intensification of diplomatic contacts have exacerbated the traditional problem of the Ukrainian MFA – the availability of competent personnel. Due to the shortage of professionals, the positions of ambassadors to China, India, Brazil, Iran and some other countries remained vacant for quite a while. Ukraine's diplomatic missions in a number of countries still have no heads. Because of this «staff shortage», the Foreign Minister announced an open competitive recruitment of ambassadors to 20 countries in different regions of the world on 13 March 2023 for the first time in the history of Ukrainian diplomacy.<sup>39</sup> Such an HR innovation seems rather ambiguous, given the political weight of the position of ambassador plenipotentiary

to a foreign country. Moreover, some personnel decisions have already stirred a rather negative response, such as the appointment of a new ambassador to Bulgaria. It is clear that the procedure for appointing heads of diplomatic missions needs to be improved, including through the involvement of the relevant parliamentary committees in the process.

## 5. UKRAINE'S FOREIGN POLICY: SOME CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summarising the features and specifics of Kyiv's war diplomacy, it should be noted that the wartime transformation of priorities, nature and means of Ukrainian foreign policy is also taking place against the backdrop and under the influence of the escalation of dangerous interrelated conflicts – the acute West-Russia clash caused by the Kremlin's aggression against Ukraine, the growing US-China confrontation and the global conflict between the democratic civilised world and the camp of authoritarian states.

During the large-scale war, Ukraine's foreign policy has gradually become proactive and offensive, and there is a noticeable increase in the initiative and efficiency of Kyiv's actions. One can observe an unprecedented intensity and scale of international contacts. The higher- and highest-level dialogue with the leadership of top countries and reputable international institutions, which has become a regular diplomatic practice, has deepened trust and brought a new quality to relations with partner countries.

An important feature is the use of new public diplomacy instruments. Direct public addresses by the Ukrainian authorities at the higher and highest levels to the public in various countries became an effective innovation. Despite the difficult conditions of war, the Ukrainian government is trying to strengthen its political and diplomatic presence in «challenging» regions of the world (Africa,

<sup>38</sup> Ukraine's ambassadors to Georgia and Morocco recalled because they do not work as they should – Zelenskyy – «Ukrayinska Pravda», 31 March 2022, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/03/31/7335915/> (in Ukrainian).

<sup>39</sup> Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine – Open call for ambassadors – <https://mfa.gov.ua/vacancies>.

Latin America, the Middle East, etc.), and to expand the coalition of countries in solidarity with Ukraine.

Another specific feature of war diplomacy is that the process of generating decisions, initiatives and actions is largely concentrated in the Presidential Office. However, the foreign policy activity of the Verkhovna Rada, the Cabinet and relevant ministries and agencies, especially the MFA, is equally important. It should be added that the war and intensified diplomatic contacts have exacerbated the traditional problem of the Ukrainian MFA – the availability of competent personnel.

Amidst the large-scale war, the national diplomacy's priority is to ensure a consolidated and strong policy of Ukraine and the coalition of partner countries aimed at resisting Russian aggression and strengthening partnership in the political, diplomatic, security, socio-economic, humanitarian spheres, etc. With this in mind, Ukraine should focus its efforts on the following areas.

✓ Strengthening military-technical cooperation with allies from all over the world both at the bilateral level and within the framework of international organisations (EU, NATO) and entities (Ramstein Group) to (a) ensure prompt and regular supply of weapons to Ukraine according to the required nomenclature; and (b) intensify the transition of the Ukrainian defence sector to NATO standards and establish joint ventures with partner countries in the defence industry.

✓ Effectively utilising the potential of bilateral contacts and the capabilities of international institutions (including within the established funds) to accumulate resources for further stabilisation of socio-economic situation inside the country and gradual restoration of the destroyed infrastructure.

✓ Using a high level and intensity of international contacts to promote national interests and establish a pro-Ukrainian agenda globally, specifically within the UN GA, OSCE, Council of Europe, EU, NATO. To this end, it would be expedient to engage regional formats of

cooperation, including BSEC, the European Political Community, the Lublin Triangle, the Ukrainian-Turkish Quadrilateral, and the newly created Ukraine-Moldova-Romania platform for dialogue, etc.; to strengthen international anti-Russian sanctions; to promote global isolation of the Putin regime and political and legal condemnation of the aggressor's crimes. In this regard, it is necessary to step up diplomatic efforts to reasonably defend and lobby for the idea of establishing a special international tribunal and to maximise the number of countries that support this initiative.

✓ Ensuring the necessary conditions for a new quality and level of relations with the EU and NATO. To do this, the Ukrainian side should do the following:

First, taking into account the results of the interim informal EU monitoring (May–April 2023), to ensure perfection and completion of already implemented set of relevant reforms, measures and initiatives within the framework of the European Commission's package of recommendations (judicial reform, fight against corruption and money laundering, implementation of the anti-oligarchic law, improvement of national media legislation, etc.) by October 2023. Completion of this «homework» will open up the possibility of launching negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU in late 2023 – early 2024. Moreover, Kyiv will be able to strengthen its positions by continuing its pro-European reforms to implement the provisions of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. In particular, efforts should focus on financial cooperation and anti-fraud, consumer protection, transport, transport infrastructure and other problematic areas.

Second, a strategic task is to intensify integration processes in the Euro-Atlantic direction in view of the approaching NATO summit scheduled for July 2023. In this context, it would be expedient to actively continue the practice of bilateral statements and declarations of support for Ukraine's NATO accession with the leaders of the Alliance members, which has been introduced by official Kyiv.