



საქართველოს სტრატეგიისა და საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობების კვლევის ფონდი
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Security Review

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**Positions, Role and Activity of the International Community
in the War Waged by Russia against Ukraine**

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The positions of the international community regarding a full-scale war by Russia against Ukraine are radically different in all respects from those in the first days of the war and before. This drastic change in the positions was conditioned by many factors but the first and foremost is the dedication and self-sacrifice of the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Moreover, the already legendary President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, and his highly competent team work very effectively on the formation of international opinions and decisions.

Let us follow the course of events. For example, before in the first days of the war, the attitude of diplomats, politicians and experts on [disconnecting](#) Russia from the international payment system - SWIFT - was quite skeptical and the [suspension of the North Stream 2](#) gas pipeline was also considered unlikely. The basis for the formation of such an attitude towards the gas pipeline was the voiced position of the German authorities themselves. German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, and certain members of his coalition cabinet have been very cautious about blocking the Russian gas pipeline in the context of the start of the war. Even tougher was their position [on arms sales to Ukraine](#). The German government was categorically opposed to the sale of arms to Ukraine by NATO member states, especially those made from German parts. In private conversations, virtually everyone ruled out the imposition of sanctions on Putin personally. In all of these cases, we saw what happened in just a few days, but before that ...

According to the [intelligence services](#) of NATO member states, Kyiv would fall to Russia in 96 hours. The leaders of international partners further openly confirmed that the Ukrainian president, his family and members of his team had been offered evacuation and timely [departure from the country](#). That there was no doubt about the inevitability of the fall of Kyiv is further confirmed by the fact that virtually all countries evacuated their embassies to western Ukraine before the start of the war and some did so within days of the start of the war. Along with diplomats, Individual NATO members also withdrew military instructors who were in Ukraine for years and were helping Ukrainians master a new defensive weaponry.

I will also say that the tone of the rhetoric of the Russian propaganda machine has also changed drastically. Their loud speeches, sarcasm and self-confidence in the first hours of the war were gradually replaced with confusion as well as anger caused by failure and the severity of the sanctions.

To sum up, everyone was anticipating the second largest and “most powerful” army in the world to stage the blitzkrieg across Ukraine and rapidly end the war by overthrowing the legitimate government in Kyiv, replacing it with a puppet one. Everyone, that is, except the Ukrainian people, the Ukrainian Armed Forces and their leader.

No matter how the processes unfold and end (according to the latest polls, [93% of Ukrainian](#) citizens are convinced that it will end in their victory. I have no reason not to believe the heroic Ukrainian people A.P.). Besides amazing courage in the war, Ukraine showed the world that:

- After the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the start of hostilities in eastern Ukraine, the Ukrainian Armed Forces were practically formed anew, gained very serious combat experience and, despite the significant advantage of the enemy in numbers, did not allow it to occupy the capital, other major cities and key settlements. Moreover, it achieved very serious success in a number of directions and, after repelling the initial mass attack, began to destroy invading Russian weaponry;
- Along with the Supreme Commander and the military, the executive government was also exemplary in managing the country in a state of war. During the war, information from the front was immediately accompanied by the government's decisions on customs, tax reform, business incentives and attracting investment and this process continues to this day;
- Particularly noteworthy is the local self-government. In addition to setting an example for their citizens, regardless of the strength of the Russian attack on a city or administrative unit, virtually across the country the local self-government has performed and continues to work as outstandingly as it should in peacetime;
- Ukraine has prevailed in the information campaign and shattered the myths about the "invincibility" of the Russian armed forces as well as the almighty Russian propaganda machine;
- The unification of pro-Western, state-minded political forces in the face of the greatest threat to the country has played a very serious role in strengthening the nation's resilience and, ultimately, in the successful fight against the Russian aggression;
- And last but not least, one of the most important conclusions the world has made in the face of Ukraine's heroic resistance and willingness to negotiate, on the one hand, and Putin's unhinged aggression, crimes against civilians and his propaganda rhetoric, on the other, is that the world is finally convinced that this is not a war for Donbass, nor for Ukraine, or about stopping Ukraine from joining NATO (who, if not NATO, knew best that Ukraine and Georgia did not have a chance to be invited into the alliance in the near future, something which was repeatedly openly communicated to Vladimir Putin). Rather, this is a war against the civilized world, this is a war against a liberal democratic order and this is a war against core values.

The combination of the aforementioned factors, together with Ukraine's very successful aggressive/proactive diplomacy, has played a crucial role in shaping the positions of the international community. These changes affected both the political positions and the practical decisions regarding military or other types of assistance. Clearly, the atrocities committed by Vladimir Putin and his regime against the Ukrainian people and humanity, especially the killing of civilians (children, women, the elderly), the destruction of non-military infrastructure (schools, kindergartens,

maternity wards, hospitals, theaters, and commercial facilities) left no other moral choice for the West but to introduce sanctions previously unprecedented in history, supply state-of-the-art weaponry and virtually entirely isolate Russia.

It all started with the closure of airspace for Russian civilian aircraft, continued with the demand to return 90% of the fleet leased to Russia and today we already have only a handful of companies still operating on the Russian market (I cannot write specific names as when this review is published, those companies may no longer be there) contrary to the hundreds of the world's largest companies whose operations in Russia, as it became apparent, actually ensured the viability of the country. The departure of the largest oil and gas companies and the removal of their technologies has actually paralyzed the process of oil extraction in Russia. The departure of transnational automakers, besides actually causing daily problems for Russian car owners, has also caused significant damage to the process of assembling Russian weaponry. In this regard, the introduction of sanctions against Russia by South Korea and Taiwan was also crucial, leaving Russian equipment without chips in space, air, sea or land.

The decisions of the President of the United States of America and his administration, both in terms of unprecedented military assistance and the crucial financial and economic actions against Russia, will go down in history. The United States, together with the United Kingdom and Canada, and later the European Union, almost unanimously and simultaneously decided to virtually completely disconnect the Russian banking system from the [SWIFT system](#). They froze the significant portion of Russia's foreign exchange [reserves abroad](#) as well as properties and accounts of leading Russian banks, the largest companies, Putin's immediate entourage and Russian oligarchs. We are talking about hundreds of billions of dollars as well as billions of dollars in property owned by corporations and individuals. The [decision to ban](#) the purchase of Russian oil was also unprecedented. A significant number of EU member states have joined this sanction but unanimity has not been reached on the matter.

From the very first hours of the war, British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, along with his Cabinet, emerged as a leader of the international democratic community in his efforts to stop the Russian aggression, punish Putin's brutal criminal regime and fully support the Ukrainian people fighting for freedom. Together with the American javelins, the supply of British anti-tank weaponry played a crucial role in the destruction of hundreds of Russian tanks of the latest modification as well as thousands of Russian armored and combat vehicles. Credit goes to Boris Johnson for the destruction of "Londongrad," the largest center of Russian financial capital, created over the years in the British capital.

Invaluable was, is and will continue to be the role of Poland in dealing with the Russian aggression. All large-scale initiatives, military and financial support was and still is spearheaded by the Polish leadership. The active engagement of both the Polish President and the Prime Minister made it

possible to supply practically all weaponry and ammunition to Ukraine through the territory of Poland. About 1.5 million Ukrainians have been sheltered by the Poles in such a way that not even refugee camps were opened. Poland's role was very important in initiating the discussion in an expedited manner on the issue of EU candidate status for Ukraine.

The Baltic states also play an important role. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia did everything possible so that Ukraine would receive ammunition and armaments on time. They did their best to inflict maximum damage to Russia. One of the most important was their decision not to allow Russian ships into the ports of the Baltic states. Moreover, the parliaments of the three countries also revitalized the issue of "closing the skies" of Ukraine. I believe that it was the activity of Great Britain, Poland and the Baltic states that led to the decision to supply air defense systems to Ukraine in exchange for the introduction of a no-fly zone and the supply of fighter jets.

The [speech](#) of the German Chancellor, Social Democrat Olaf Scholz, in the Bundestag will also go down in history. It has been a long time since anyone mentioned North Stream 2 and the issue of arms supply/non-supply. Moreover, according to various sources, German veterans are fighting alongside American, Canadian, British, Polish, Georgian and other European volunteers. As for the pipeline, the [calls to suspend](#) the first North Stream project are becoming louder. Both Germany and other EU member states, and the EU as a whole, are taking active measures and decisions to reduce their dependence on Russian energy sources. For example, Germany has [negotiated with Qatar](#) for the purchase of liquefied natural gas. [Bulgaria](#) has declared it will no longer buy Russian gas from 2023. The European Commission has decided to build gas reservoirs of different sizes in the shortest possible time to supply the member states with gas.

While there is widespread opinion that sanctions are insufficiently effective in ending the war, it is safe to say that in the medium to long term, the combination of these sanctions will have devastating consequences for Russia.

Out of the NATO member states, the role of Turkey in supporting Ukraine should be underscored. While Turkey did not join the sanctions, it closed the Bosphorus Strait to Russian warships, it continuously delivers Bayraktar unmanned aerial vehicles to Ukraine for which the Ukrainians even dedicated a song. The burned Russian military convoys and destroyed equipment is precisely the doing of the Bayraktars. At the same time, as a mediator, the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has taken a number of steps to stop the Russian aggression. He himself is involved in the negotiation process and his Foreign Minister has made numerous visits to Kyiv and Moscow on his instructions.

The criminal actions of the Putin regime have led to the fact that after 200 years of neutrality, both Switzerland and Sweden have provided practical assistance to Ukraine. Switzerland, for the first time in its history, has expressed readiness to reveal the identities of Russian asset holders in Swiss banks while Sweden has provided ammunition to Ukraine. It should also be noted that due to the scale of

the Russian aggression and the threat posed by it, also neutral Finland has actively started discussing the possibility of NATO membership. A total of 60% of Finnish respondents supports the country's membership of NATO.

The French President, Emmanuel Macron, is hyperactive, holding intensive talks with both Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky. In addition, France froze EUR 22 billion of Russian state assets and EUR 850 million worth of funds and assets for various businesses and individuals.

The principled position of Japan is extremely important. It had its own problematic issues with Russia over the Kuril Islands and was always very careful vis-à-vis Russia but the situation changed dramatically after Russia launched a large-scale attack on Ukraine. Japan has joined the international sanctions, including cutting off Russia from the SWIFT system, and also imposed its own sanctions, leading to an additional frozen USD 115 billion of Russia's foreign exchange reserves. All major Japanese companies left the Russian market and closed their enterprises. In response, [Russia withdrew](#) from the negotiations format with Japan created after the World War II.

China's position is also interesting. While China has supported Russia in its stance against NATO enlargement to the east, it remains committed to respecting Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, expressing concern over crimes against civilians in Ukraine and, most importantly, refusing to supply arms to Russia. In addition, Chinese companies are well aware that the international sanctions can cause them serious harm. They are, therefore, refraining from active cooperation with Russia in a number of areas, including oil procurement, and at the same time Chinese financial institutions are refusing to conduct transactions with Russian banks under the sanctions.

I have repeatedly mentioned the diplomatic activity and the "aggressive" diplomacy of Ukraine in this article. I would like to end the discussion by talking about it again now. As you know, negotiations are underway with Russia along with the war which, at the very time of the talks, is ruthlessly bombing Ukrainian cities. Obviously, this does not happen by accident. In this way, Russia is trying to influence the Ukrainian position, which is very principled, based on national interests and, at the same time, focused on reaching an agreement. Volodymyr Zelensky himself has repeatedly called on Vladimir Putin to meet with him and reach an agreement on ending the war. Putin, obviously, is delaying this meeting because the situation on the fronts is not in his favor, most importantly, and dangerously, according to a universal assessment, Putin is planning to commit even more brutal and barbaric acts and this is why he is in no hurry to sit down at the negotiation table. In my opinion, he is not striving to reach any agreement since he himself has burned all the bridges connecting Russia to the free world. He knows this very well and so he is even more brutal against the Ukrainian civilians, especially the Russian-speaking population, and he and his accomplices are constantly appealing to the danger of the use of biological and chemical weapons by the Ukrainians. The international community fears that Putin requires this so-called "false flag" operation to use

biological, chemical or tactical nuclear weapons. Increasingly, his propagandists are threatening to use nuclear weapons in the case of necessary. Obviously, this is no accident.

Against this background, Zelensky and his team are very active on the foreign front. The Ukrainian President received a standing ovation from parliamentarians in Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, Israel and Italy, all this while his messages containing a mix of expressions of gratitude and help as well as criticism. During the war, the President of Ukraine chose a very interesting position regarding NATO membership and acquiring solid guarantees of security. While this unconventionally honest stance was accompanied by the risk of some sort of criticism from Western partners or the misuse of his proposals by Russia, here also Zelensky prevailed over Putin and, arguably, exposed him. It has become clear that Putin is not at all interested in negotiations and reaching an agreement. As for the West, they too were faced with a conundrum: Zelensky demands effective guarantees based on real commitments with the participation of NATO member states and identifies a single red line – territorial integrity and sovereignty will not be reconsidered. It is difficult to disagree when one obeys internationally recognized rules and it is unthinkable to agree when one is an international criminal and terrorist, in other words Putin!

Glory to Ukraine!

Glory to Heroes!