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## UKRAINE – THE EUROPEAN UNION



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***THE EU IS CONFUSED BY THE VICTORY OF EUROMAIDAN, AND ITS RESPONSE IS LATE AS USUAL.***

**The EU has shown during the events in Ukraine a dangerous practice of being late by at least two steps.**

For three months Ukrainian politicians and civil activists had called on the EU to fulfill European legislation concerning money-laundering, blocking bank accounts of corrupt Ukrainian officials, and introducing visa sanctions. The fear of losing capital and opportunities to spend time in Europe could have prevented the government and the oligarchs from the bloody scenario which took place. And vice versa, confidence in their impunity pushed them to bloodshed. ***On February 17 Angela Merkel said once again that there would be no sanctions; and the next day Ukrainian authorities launched the Maidan assault with deadly weapons.*** When dozens of the protesters were killed, and it was time to discuss the international peacekeeping operation, the European leaders finally decided to impose sanctions. But actually they were imposed only after Maidan's victory and Yanukovich's escape to Russia.

**The European Parliament resolution of 27 February 2014 on the situation in Ukraine** also proved the EU's practice of being late<sup>1</sup>. ***The EP reminded Moscow of its obligations under the Budapest Memorandum, despite the fact that Russian military forces had already shown its attitude to the security guarantees for Ukraine – by occupying the Crimean*** Parliament and Government and taking military control over the peninsula.

In the same resolution, the European Parliament mentioned that sometime in the future Ukraine "may apply to become a Member of the Union", and that the Association Agreement / DCFTA may be signed "as soon as the new government is ready to do so". The next day, acting Foreign Minister of Ukraine Andriy Deshchitsa said that the Ukrainian government was ready to sign the Agreement. On March 1, Yulia Tymoshenko called for the immediate signing of the Agreement. **The signing of the Agreement might strengthen Ukraine's position on preventing Russia's aggression. But previous experience of time-wasting by the Europeans makes us skeptical about their willingness to act quickly in this case also.**

The Ukrainian crisis has also highlighted **the institutional and personnel weaknesses of the EU**. It is obvious that the High Representative of the EU for

<sup>1</sup> European Parliament resolution of 27 February 2014 on the situation in Ukraine. - <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2014-0170+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton does not have enough influence to maintain EU positions and to defend its partners. Neither of Ms. Ashton's visits to Kyiv had positive results. Vice versa, after meetings with her, Mr. Yanukovych usually took tough decisions concerning the protesters, confident of the 'toothless' EU's position.

**On February 20, having understood the senselessness of the EU's missions to Kyiv, the Foreign Ministers of Germany, France and Poland came to Kyiv.** They managed to persuade Viktor Yanukovych to sign a peace agreement with the leaders of the opposition. The success of the Weimar Triangle against the backdrop of the EU's failures clearly indicated the need to improve the extremely inefficient EU mechanisms. Whilst recognizing the role of the mission of German, French and Polish Foreign Ministers, we have doubts that they realized the unwillingness of Yanukovych to fulfill the peace agreement (he had never fulfilled his obligations). The scenario of the withdrawal of the security forces from their positions had been coordinated with the Kremlin, whose media rushed out to report the 'seizure' of Parliament by 'armed extremists'<sup>2</sup>. But since the Parliament had not been occupied, and Mr. Yanukovych had escaped from Kyiv, the confused security officials decided to withdraw from the public authorities' building and to disperse to their usual locations outside Kyiv.

**It seems that the victory of EuroMaidan confused the EU leaders. Instead of strong support for the new Ukrainian government, the European leaders together with Barack Obama tried to outdo each other in assuring Vladimir Putin that Ukrainian events had not been directed against Russia. Moscow usually interprets gentleness as a weakness; and the decision to start a military intervention was made.** Elmar Brok's words that the new Ukrainian government should not provide their 'big neighbor' with any reason to interfere<sup>3</sup>, indicated a complete misunderstanding of the nature of the Russian government. It's hard to understand what Mr. Brock meant by this statement, made on February 25, when Russian military forces had already taken control of Sevastopol, albeit in the absence of any provocation by the Ukrainian authorities.

Jose Manuel Barroso and William Hague in their statements on March 1 condemned the violation of the sovereignty of Ukraine by Russian troops, but they said nothing about the possible EU steps to defend Ukraine. It is not about military support, but **economic sanctions could also be effective. The Russian economy, as well as Putin's regime, critically depends on gas sales to Europe. Let's hope that the EU is not going to hesitate with sanctions against Russia until the bloodshed comes**, as it has done with respect to the Yanukovych administration.

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<sup>2</sup> Російські ЗМІ наперед збрехали про "захоплену Верховну Раду". - [http://espresso.tv/new/2014/02/20/rosiyski\\_zmi\\_napered\\_daly\\_informaciyu\\_pro\\_zakhoplenu\\_verkhovnu\\_radu\\_skrin\\_shot](http://espresso.tv/new/2014/02/20/rosiyski_zmi_napered_daly_informaciyu_pro_zakhoplenu_verkhovnu_radu_skrin_shot).

<sup>3</sup> Не можна давати «великій сусідці» підстав для втручання в Україну – Брок. - <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/articleprintview/25276463.html>.

## UKRAINE – NATO



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***NATO DEMONSTRATES INABILITY TO PROTECT ITS PARTNERS***

The decline of NATO influence has been shown by the defiant disregard by former Ukrainian Minister of Defense Pavlo Lebedev of the Alliance's position on the inadmissibility of illegal involvement of the army in suppressing the protests in Kyiv. Despite the repeated calls of the NATO Secretary General and of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Mr. Lebedev ordered the Armed Forces to take part in an 'anti-terrorist operation' against EuroMaidan. Military forces did not eventually participate in suppressing the uprising only due to the unexpectedly quick fall of Yanukovych's rule.

**Further events indicated the weakness of the preventive aspect of NATO activity, including intelligence and analytics.** Instead of preventing the aggravation in Crimea by bringing the NATO Fleet to the Black Sea, the Defense Ministers of the Alliance adopted on February 26 the statement about their adherence to the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine. Herewith the main part of the Defense Ministers meeting was dedicated to discussing the future of the Afghanistan mission. **Thus, instead of considering the prevention of a possible World War III, the NATO Defense Ministers discussed stability in Afghanistan, while the latter, generally speaking, might be a question of Russia's concern.**

On February 27, at the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission in Brussels Anders Fogh Rasmussen "urged Russia not to take any action that could escalate tension or create misunderstanding."<sup>4</sup> On the same day the **Supreme Allied Commander Europe General Philip Breedlove actually revealed the incompetence of the Alliance's leadership, saying that NATO had not developed any plans in the context of the Russian aggression in Crimea<sup>5</sup>.** The question arises about the value of a military-political Alliance, which does not develop a plan of actions under the conditions of possible war on its very borders? The Russians interpreted such passivity and confusion of the NATO leadership as good conditions for active actions, and the same day the Russians occupied the government buildings in Simferopol, overthrowing the legitimate government of Crimea.

The United States also tried to 'appease' Russia. Barack Obama stated that the U.S. did not interpret the events in Ukraine as a struggle for influence against Russia; and **Zbigniew Brzezinski proposed a 'Finland option' for Ukraine in his article**

<sup>4</sup> NATO-Ukraine Commission stresses continued engagement. - [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_107520.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_107520.htm).

<sup>5</sup> У США і НАТО немає плану на випадок вторгнення Росії до Криму. - <http://www.unian.ua/politics/890828-ussha-i-nato-nemaє-planu-na-vipadok-vtorgnennya-rosiji-do-krimu.html>.

in 'The Financial Times'<sup>6</sup>; namely: a rapprochement with the EU, but maintaining a policy of non-alignment. However, the politics of 'appeasement' only encourages the Kremlin to escalate the aggression. And it seems that Washington is starting to understand this.

**The situation around Ukraine indicated the end of the 'reset' policy**, which had been unsuccessfully offered by Barack Obama for so long, making one concession to Vladimir Putin after another. On February 28 the U.S. President warned that "there will be costs for any military intervention in Ukraine."<sup>7</sup> On March 1, in the phone conversation with Putin, Obama elaborated on what he had meant by 'costs', saying that due to "Russia's clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity" ... "the United States will suspend upcoming participation in preparatory meetings for the G-8". And "going forward, Russia's continued violation of international law will lead to greater political and economic isolation."<sup>8</sup>

**In a joint statement On March 2, the U.S., Canada, UK, Germany, France, Italy, Japan and the EU "condemned the Russian Federation's clear violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine" and "noted that Russia's actions in Ukraine also contravene the principles and values on which the G-7 and the G-8 operate".<sup>9</sup>** This should be taken as a warning about the possible exclusion of Russia from the influential global institution of G-8. **On the same day the North Atlantic Council adopted a statement to condemn Russia's "military action against Ukraine", which "is a breach of international law and contravenes the principles of the NATO-Russia Council and the Partnership for Peace".** Recalling that "Ukraine is a valued partner for NATO", the Allies promised to "support Ukrainian sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and the right of the Ukrainian people to determine their own future, without outside interference"<sup>10</sup>. However, the Allies did not specify any concrete measures of support, while a couple of NATO destroyers in the Black Sea would have much more effect than a dozen non-binding statements.

Let's hope that during John Kerry's visit to Kyiv, dated to March 4, a set of more effective measures will be elaborated on, not just another statement of "condemnation". However, the NATO and the U.S. activity since the Russian aggression in Georgia in 2008, leaves little reason for optimism. It seems that we will hear once again about moral support, visa sanctions against minor Russian officials, and very limited economic sanctions.

<sup>6</sup> Russia needs a 'Finland option' for Ukraine. - <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/7f722496-9c86-11e3-b535-00144feab7de.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Statement by the President on Ukraine. - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/02/28/statement-president-ukraine>.

<sup>8</sup> Readout of President Obama's Call with President Putin. - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/01/readout-president-obama-s-call-president-putin>.

<sup>9</sup> G-7 Leaders Statement. - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/02/g-7-leaders-statement>.

<sup>10</sup> North Atlantic Council statement on the situation in Ukraine. - [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_107681.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_107681.htm).



## FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE INCAPACITY OF THE EU, NATO AND THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL, RUSSIA HAS BEGUN ARMED AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE***

Almost daily phone calls of Barack Obama, Angela Merkel, David Cameron and Herman Van Rompuy to Vladimir Putin lead to only one result: the Russian dictator became finally convinced that in case of the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, the Western response would be as sluggish as it had been in 1930s during the German invasion of Central and Eastern European countries. The heads of the leading powers preferred to 'believe' Putin's promises to respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

On February 28, 2014 at the UN Security Council, Russia's spokesman Vitaly Churkin made it clear that Russia considers the events in Crimea as its internal affairs, and wouldn't allow any 'imposed' international mediation. **The UN Security Council turned out to be incapable of situations when its permanent member (Russia) is the aggressor.** Moreover, the members of the Security Council didn't even try to bring to a vote a resolution to put on Moscow at least moral responsible for the aggression against a sovereign state of 46 million people.

**The Russian authorities have also refused to hold consultations in the framework of the security guarantees for Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum.** Thus Moscow has confirmed publicly that these 'guarantees' are worthless, and not only on the behalf of Russia, but on the behalf of the U.S. and the UK also, as well as France and China, who had provided similar 'guarantees' for Ukraine. **Disregard for the security guarantees for Ukraine may lead to a new round of nuclear arms race in the world,** because now all countries, especially Iran, realize that only own nuclear forces can protect against external aggression. The greatest ambition of Barack Obama in the field of nuclear disarmament has been buried.

**The inadequacy of the activity of the new Ukrainian government, the EU and NATO (while no one really expects any efficiency from the OSCE and the UN) is especially obvious, given the predictability of the invasion scenario, which had been previously worked out by Russia in Georgia (2008), and by Germany in the Sudetenland (1938).** Despite the repeated warnings by famous American, European, Russian, Ukrainian politicians and experts, not one step has been taken to prevent this scenario in Ukraine. The international observers' mission in Crimea has not been established in due time; government buildings and major roads have not been taken under protection; nothing has been done to prevent the penetration of the Russian raiders, whose mission was to occupy

government buildings in Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine.

One should note that **the Russians occupied Crimea step by step, taking into account the response of the international community. The failure of the latter to respond resulted in the increase of the Kremlin's appetite.** On February 23, at the demonstration in Sevastopol, Russian citizen Alexey Chaly was 'elected' as a 'People's Mayor'; at the same time Russian militaries blocked the entrance to the city. This might indicate the original intention of the Kremlin to occupy only Sevastopol. In four days (!) the Kremlin became sure that the Ukrainian authorities and the international community would not respond; so the Russian military continued the invasion, occupying the buildings of the Crimean parliament and government in Simferopol. Incidentally, these buildings were still not under protection! **In the presence of the Russian militaries, a puppet government of Crimea was formed from the members of the marginal pro-Russian party** (which had got only 4% of the votes of Crimeans at the elections). This 'government' appointed the referendum on changing the legal status of Crimea, and appealed to Putin for support. On March 1, at Putin's request, the Russian Parliament unanimously agreed to military intervention into Ukraine.

No appropriate measures were taken to prevent the spread of the Abkhazian / Crimean scenario to the other regions of Ukraine. **The Russian secret service organized the penetration of the Russian raiders into Ukraine as well as the arming of the local pro-Russian extremists.** From March 1, these armed forces started making attempts to seize power in Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson. The police did almost nothing to prevent their attacks. In Kherson only the activity of local civil activists prevented the seizure of the Regional State Administration building by the pro-Russian extremists.

Moscow's refusal to recognize the new Ukrainian government, and the statement of the Russian Parliament on the 'illegitimacy' of the forthcoming presidential election in Ukraine (dated for May 25), as well as the course of events in the Eastern and Southern regions indicate that **the Kremlin's ultimate goal is to destabilize the whole Ukrainian territory, and to bring so-called 'Russian peacekeepers' with a possible return to Kyiv of Yanukovych's puppet government.** The immediate Russian goal was to take control over Sevastopol, and it was fulfilled on February 23; and subsequently the whole of Crimea was occupied. Moscow's next steps depend on the effectiveness of Russian raiders together with pro-Russian separatists, as well as on the ability of the Ukrainian government and the international community to oppose the Kremlin's plans.

**The few days' pauses after each aggressive step indicates that Moscow is looking for the 'red line' which might lead to a concrete response from the West.** If there is no effective response, the Russians will move to the next Rubicon. On February 26 the Speaker of the Council of the Russian Federation Valentina Matviyenko denied the possibility of military intervention into Ukraine as 'impossible'. On March 1 the Council of the Russian Federation unanimously supported Putin's request to send troops to Ukraine.

**The sooner the U.S. and European countries respond with real actions (not with words) – the sooner Russia will stop the aggression.** It is absolutely clear that Putin will not dare to fight against NATO forces due to the huge disparity. American commentators believe that the entering of the U.S. navy into the Black Sea might have a chilling effect on Putin.<sup>11</sup> The EU's warning to reduce the purchases of Russian gas might also be an effective mechanism of influence, because the Russian economy is critically dependent on the gas revenues. **A sobering effect might be**

<sup>11</sup> Putin's Ukraine gambit. - [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/charles-krauthammer-putins-ukraine-gambit/2014/02/27/93ca1b26-9fe0-11e3-9ba6-800d1192d08b\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/charles-krauthammer-putins-ukraine-gambit/2014/02/27/93ca1b26-9fe0-11e3-9ba6-800d1192d08b_story.html).

**achieved by the promise to admit Ukraine and Georgia into NATO immediately. Let's recall that in 1952 Greece and Turkey were urgently admitted to the Alliance due to the threat of Soviet aggression.**

The world community needs to understand that Russia is fighting not against Ukraine, but against the whole system of Western values, which Ukraine is willing to join. **If the EU and NATO respond only with statements now, the Kremlin will invade the Baltic States in a year or two (because many ethnic Russians live there also). And then the NATO members will have to fight, according to Article Five of the Treaty.** At the present stage, it might be enough to bring limited international peacekeeping forces to Ukraine or at least to make a clear warning to do it – just to bring Putin down to earth, the dictator, who is rapidly losing common sense and is making a new World War possible.

