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UKRAINE – THE EUROPEAN UNION



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

WILL THE WEIMAR TRIANGLE MANAGE TO ELABORATE AN EFFECTIVE EU POLICY TOWARDS UKRAINE?

The activity of Germany, France and Poland over the resolution of the Ukrainian crisis has increased in recent weeks. Let us recall that the foreign ministers of the Weimar Triangle tried in February 2014 to convince the ex-President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovych to compromise with the opposition for the sake of peace in the country. That time (as well as now) European leaders had to deal with the sly position of Russia, which pretended to be the intermediary, while in fact it was a participant in the conflict. **Seven months ago, Germany, France and Poland failed to promote the peaceful resolution of the political crisis in Ukraine largely due to their reluctance to recognize officially the full-scale involvement of Russia in the events in Ukraine.** The success or failure of the new peacekeeping attempts of the Weimar Triangle largely depends on the Kremlin's ability to impose again its rules of the game on European diplomacy.

Germany and France have a major role in encouraging the OSCE to fulfill its obligations, instead of playing along with the Kremlin. **On 15 October 2014, at the meeting in Berlin, the Foreign Ministers of Germany and France, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Laurent Fabius, said that they expect a quick response from the OSCE for their proposal to provide drones for the monitoring mission in Ukraine.** Actually, the OSCE delaying on this issue looks like sabotage in favor of Moscow, because the lack of drones allows Russia to continue uncontrolled movement of its troops and weapons through the Ukrainian border. Russian militants continue their attacks on the positions of Ukrainian forces, while the OSCE is not able to note these violations of the Minsk agreements without drones and at the same time does not hurry to receive such devices.

Germany and France proposed also to send their soldiers (200 Germans and 150 French) to defend the OSCE missions and the staff to service the drones, but the OSCE has not agreed despite its constant complains about the lack of security, which prevents the observation missions from full-scale carrying out of their duties. The OSCE has also not expressed its principal consent to **the request of the Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to increase the mission to 1,500 observers** and to increase the use of modern technologies. **The scope of the OSCE work on the Ukrainian-Russian border was criticized by the U.S. Ambassador to the organization Daniel Baer, who called "largely inadequate" the mandate of the OSCE observation missions at only two checkpoints on the Ukrainian-**

Russian border.¹

The German and French foreign ministers called on Russia and Ukraine to fully implement the Minsk agreements, including the release of prisoners, ensuring the security of the OSCE border monitoring mission, and creation of a security buffer zone in the border areas.² Thus Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Laurent Fabius admitted de facto that Russia is a participant in the conflict in Ukraine, and Europe requires the implementation of the peace agreements directly from Russia and not from its puppet separatist republics.

On 9 October 2014 German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Polish Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz said at their meeting about the necessity to fulfill the Minsk agreements. The head of the Polish government also mentioned the need to help Ukraine with reforms in the fields of finance, economics, government, and education – in the context of Ukraine's preparation for future EU membership. **A week earlier, on 2 October 2014, in Berlin, the foreign ministers of Germany and Poland called for the implementing of the Minsk agreements.** Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Grzegorz Schetyna named the following priority issues: the establishment of effective control over the border with Russia; the creation of a buffer zone in Eastern Ukraine; and the withdrawal of foreign militants and heavy weapons from Ukraine (in fact this refers to the Russian troops). German Chancellor Angela Merkel in a telephone conversation called on Vladimir Putin to start performing the conditions of the armistice, signed four weeks before.

It should be noted that despite the significant economic interests in Russia **Germany consistently supports sanctions against Moscow.** After the refusal of Angela Merkel and several German NGOs to attend the German-Russian forum 'Petersburg Dialogue', scheduled for the end of October, the organizers decided to postpone the event. **French Ambassador to Russia Jean-Maurice Ripert confirmed that the position of his country on 'Mistrals' remains unchanged,** and Russia will not receive them until the Minsk agreements are fulfilled and peace is established in Ukraine.³ The new **Foreign Minister of Poland Grzegorz Schetyna said that Warsaw would insist on tougher sanctions against Russia if the latter does not change its policy towards Ukraine.**⁴

It is obvious that at the Milan talks with Vladimir Putin, scheduled for 17 October, Petro Poroshenko will mostly reckon on the support of Germany and France.

So, after several months of not too successful attempts of Germany to coordinate on its own the EU policy concerning the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, it was decided to return to the Weimar Triangle format. This time the dominance of Germany in this format is unquestionable, given that the new Polish Government is less ambitious than its predecessors, and France is traditionally passive in Ukrainian issues. At the same time, it is important for Berlin to enlist the support of Paris, which is influential in Western Europe and from Warsaw, which is the leader of Eastern Europe; for the political unity of the EU is significantly undermined by Moscow's economic blackmail and bribery of a number of European politicians and parties.

¹ Посол США в ОБСЕ критикує обсяги роботи місії на кордоні України та РФ. - http://www.bbc.co.uk/ukrainian/news_in_brief/2014/10/141009_or_usa_osce

² Німеччина і Франція вимагають реалізації мінських домовленостей в Україні. - <http://www.dw.de/німеччина-і-франція-вимагають-реалізації-мінських-домовленостей-в-україні/a-17997511>.

³ Франція поки не бачить можливостей для поставки "Містралів" до Росії. - <http://www.euointegration.com.ua/news/2014/10/10/7026707>.

⁴ Schetyna: po wyborach na Ukrainie wizyta Kopacz w Kijowie. - <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/schetyna-po-wyborach-na-ukrainie-wizyta-kopacz-w-kijowie/q2q39>.

UKRAINE – NATO



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

THE PRIORITIES OF NEW NATO SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE PROSPECTS FOR NATO-UKRAINE COOPERATION

On 1 October 2014 the new NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg officially assumed duties. Given the challenges which NATO faces as a result of many factors, including the years of obsequiousness to Russia and the loss of political solidarity in the Alliance, it would be logical to assume that the new NATO Secretary General had to be chosen on the basis of strong-willingness and managerial qualities which should help him to consolidate the Allies around solving the current problems, namely:

- 1) Current Russian aggression against a NATO partner country (Ukraine) and potential threat of aggression against NATO member states – the Baltic States, Poland and Romania;
- 2) Reduction in defense spending of European NATO members and consequently the submarginal conditions of their armed forces and their unpreparedness to fight off potential aggression without the help of the United States;
- 3) The lack of political unity and solidarity within the Alliance; financial dependence of political elites in a number of NATO member states on the main antagonist (Russia); and decline in the prestige and credibility of the Alliance in the world;
- 4) The need to complete the mission in Afghanistan, which demands tremendous resources, but is almost doomed to fail in the medium term.

It is not a secret that NATO military capacity depends on the U.S., and it is also not a secret that **due to the lack of leadership qualities of the current American President, the Alliance has been ticking over for several years, surrendering one position after another.** The control over the situation in the Middle East is lost, and half of Iraq has been captured by the 'Islamic State', which is much more aggressive than Saddam Hussein was. Apparently, the fate of Afghanistan would be similar soon after the withdrawal of the allies' troops. Concessions on the issue of the Ballistic Missile Defence System did not improve relations with Moscow; on the contrary, Russia launched military interventions against one of the most active NATO partners and is preparing for the invasion of the Baltic States.

Lithuanian Minister of Education Dainius Pavalkis said that **Lithuanian youth of Russian origin undergo military and 'patriotic' training in the Russian 'Soyuz' paramilitary training camps.**⁵ Given the constant statements by Russian

⁵ Министр: обучение литовской молодежи в российских военных лагерях недопустимо. - <http://ru.delfi.lt/news/live/ministr-obuchenie-litovskoj-molodezhi-v-rossijskih-voennyh-lageryah-nedopustimo.d?id=66072766#ixzz3FiVqdaiz>.

leaders (including Mr. Putin) on the so-called 'fascist threat' and 'oppression of the Russian-speaking population' in the Baltic States, it is clear that Moscow is preparing for Lithuania the scenario of 'rebellion' and hybrid war worked out in Eastern Ukraine. Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister Eugen Carpov said that in recent months **Moldovan border guards had prevented several dozen Russian soldiers from illegal entry to the country.**⁶ Therefore, Romania has reasons to fear that the Donetsk scenario may be repeated in neighboring Moldova.

The question is whether the new NATO Secretary General considers these threats real enough, or whether he believes (like Obama) that Russia would not dare to make any further interventions? Probably, the answer lies in **Jens Stoltenberg's words that his experience as Norwegian prime minister will help "to develop a working relationship with Russia".**⁷ The new NATO chief said also that he wants "to build a constructive relationship with Russia", but NATO "cannot and will not compromise on the principles on which our Alliance, and the security in Europe and North America rest. We will continue our full support for an independent, sovereign and stable Ukraine."⁸ **How much time will Jens Stoltenberg need to understand that Moscow does not want constructive relations,** that the Kremlin considers NATO as an enemy and seeks the return of Russian Empire borders?

The statements of NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow indicate that he is aware of who is responsible for the failure to fulfill the Minsk peace agreements: "...The separatists, with continuous Russian military support that is flowing across the uncontrolled international border, have been escalating their attacks on Donetsk airport. ... The ceasefire is not holding in some areas and there could be a serious deterioration in the coming days".⁹ Hence, the new NATO Secretary General should also be well aware of Russia's 'readiness' for a 'constructive relationship'; and the need for his diplomatic curtsies is rather questionable at a time when war is so close to the Alliance's borders.

On 6 October 2014, at the time of his visit to Poland, Jens Stoltenberg said: "NATO's most important task is to protect and defend our nations against attack. We will defend our Allies, all Allies".¹⁰ At the same time, he did not comment on the call of Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski to go on with building the Ballistic Missile Defense System, the main elements of which are to be placed in Poland and Romania. Mr. Stoltenberg's statement that the issue of establishing new rapid reaction forces will be considered at the NATO meeting next year indicates that the Alliance's leadership overestimates the amount of time it has before the Russia's probable hybrid war against the member states.

During the first two weeks in the office of the new Secretary General there was not any significant activity in NATO-Ukraine cooperation. Excuses that Jens Stoltenberg is just getting into the swing of work are unlikely to be relevant, because six months ago the whole world already knew who would be the next NATO Secretary General. Hence, Mr. Stoltenberg had enough time to think over some plans. The absence of activity indicates that the new NATO Secretary General (as well as his predecessor) has no clear vision of policy towards Ukraine. Mr. Stoltenberg is probably waiting for a corresponding signal from Washington.

⁶ "Зеленым человечкам" запрещен въезд в Молдавию. - <http://www.dw.de/зеленым-человечкам-запрещен-въезд-в-молдавию/a-17988181>.

⁷ New NATO chief touts relationship with Russia as he takes office. - <http://amanpour.blogs.cnn.com/2014/10/02/new-nato-chief-touts-relationship-with-russia-as-he-takes-office>.

⁸ Press conference by incoming NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. - http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_113488.htm.

⁹ Deputy Secretary General: NATO would beat 'Islamic State' should it cross into Turkey. - <http://www.dw.de/deputy-secretary-general-nato-would-beat-islamic-state-should-it-cross-into-turkey/a-17985431>.

¹⁰ NATO will defend every Ally, NATO Secretary General stresses in Poland. - http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_113578.htm?selectedLocale=en.

However, Ukraine should not count on positive signals from Barak Obama. **President of 'Freedom House' David Kramer, who is close to American governmental circles, said that it had been Obama's personal decision to deny Ukraine's request for weapons, and Ukraine had dropped off from Obama's list of priorities.**¹¹ American experts consider that U.S. policy towards Ukraine may change for the better only if Republicans win the Senate election.¹² Now the U.S. and Russia are discussing the Ukrainian issue simultaneously with the issues of the "Islamic state", Syria and Iran – such was the agenda at **the meeting of Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Paris, on 14 October 2014.** Mr. Kerry reminded Mr. Lavrov of the need to implement the Minsk agreements, in particular, concerning the release of hostages, withdrawal of Russian troops and vehicles from Donbas, and the accountability of the Ukrainian-Russian border to the OSCE mission. But it is clear that Washington's insistence in the Ukrainian issue will depend on Moscow's position on Syria and Iran.

On the other hand, Washington also has reasons to be disgruntled with the inconsistent policy of Kyiv, which has not introduced sanctions against Russia, is not rushing to conduct reforms and seems to be more concerned with parliamentary elections than with Russia's military invasion. It is likely that **Deputy Secretary of State Victoria Nuland's three-day visit to Ukraine (6-8 October 2014)** was focused on clarifying these issues. Besides the meetings with officials, she also donated equipment to strengthen the Ukraine border worth \$10 million. During the visit Victoria Nuland said that the U.S. would lift part of the sanctions on Russia only if the 'Minsk agreements' are fully implemented. But if Russia fails to fulfill its obligations, the sanctions will be strengthened.¹³

Victoria Nuland made an important statement at the U.S.-Central Europe Strategy Forum in Washington on 2 October 2014, emphasizing the inadmissibility of attempts of some Central European countries to bargain with Moscow over Euro-Atlantic values. Ms. Nuland called on the countries, which "sleep under your NATO Article 5 blanket at night", not to deviate from liberal democracy values, and "to remember their own national history, and how they wished their neighbors had stood with them", while considering the Ukrainian issue.¹⁴ ***It is obvious that Victoria Nuland's criticism was primarily for the Presidents of Hungary and the Czech Republic and the Prime Minister of Slovakia, who demonstrate loyalty to the Kremlin while being hidden under the NATO umbrella, and try to 'sell' the sovereignty of Ukraine, forgetting that their own safety from Russia is actually being paid for by the citizens of the United States.***

On 8 October 2014, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin met with new NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at NATO headquarters in Brussels. The parties agreed on the schedule for dialogue and primary goals for cooperation in the fourth quarter of 2014; on the provisions of the Annual National Program of Ukraine-NATO cooperation – 2015; agreed that the practical implementation of the trust funds to strengthen Ukraine's defense would start at the meeting of NATO foreign ministers in December 2014. Actually, all issues belong to the routine aspects of cooperation, and Ukraine will not receive from NATO any immediate assistance. But Kyiv could hardly claim for such assistance, given the fact that **on the**

¹¹ Не давати Україні американську зброю вирішив особисто Обама – експерт. - <http://ukrainian.voanews.com/content/article/2478761.html>.

¹² A Republican Senate Can Help Send U.S. Weapons to Ukraine. - <http://www.forbes.com/sites/paulroderickgregory/2014/10/10/a-republican-senate-can-help-send-u-s-weapons-to-ukraine>.

¹³ США зніме частину санкцій з РФ лише за повного виконання "мінської угоди". - <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2014/10/7/7026604>.

¹⁴ US diplomat lashes out at Hungary's Orban. - <http://euobserver.com/foreign/125881>.

eve of Klimkin's meeting with Stoltenberg, the Ukrainian Parliamentary Committee on National Security and Defence blocked the issue of abolishing the non-alignment status. The Committee decided that this issue should be considered by the next composition of Parliament (parliamentary elections are scheduled for 26 October).

So, the first weeks of the new NATO leadership in office did not bring any intensification of the Alliance's activities and of its cooperation with Ukraine. **Kyiv should not count on the special preferences from the new NATO Secretary General who is aimed at establishing a "constructive relationship" with Russia. Kyiv has to promote itself the initiatives, aimed at strengthening and reforming the Ukrainian armed forces to meet NATO standards.** Kyiv has to intensify its cooperation with Washington and European capitals to promote the appropriate NATO decisions on enhancing cooperation and assistance.



FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

WILL UKRAINE MANAGE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE TRUCE AS EFFECTIVELY AS RUSSIA DOES?

The withdrawal of some Russian regular troops from Donbas and from the Russian-Ukrainian border in Rostov region should not mislead Ukrainian officials and politicians. Some of them hurried already to declare the "de-escalation of Putin's military venture in Donbas."¹⁵

In fact, Russia did not stop arming its militants in Donbas, and they did not stop shelling Ukrainian positions, e.g. on 14 October the suburbs of Mariupol were shelled with the multiple launch 'Grad' rocket system, the incident being recorded by the OSCE mission. Almost every day several Ukrainian troops and civilians are killed and wounded. **Separatists' leaders say that during the month of 'truce' they managed to capture 38 Ukrainian towns and villages.**¹⁶ Their words comply with the daily maps, publishes by the Information Analysis Center of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (NSDC). It is easy to notice that during the 'truce' Ukraine has lost control over a large area of its territory.¹⁷ The commander of the 'Azov' Battalion Andrii Biletskii said that **during the 'truce' pro-Russian militants captured a 40-kilometer area near Mariupol, which had to be demilitarized**, but in fact only Ukrainian troops had been withdrawn.¹⁸

The Information Analysis Center of the NSDC and independent experts inform that **Russia is replacing its regular troops, withdrawn from Donbas, with militants who have taken special training in Russian military camps**. Russia continues reconnaissance flights of its drones over Donbas, providing intelligence support for the militants. At the same time, there are reports of the so-called 'uncontrolled' separatist groups, which refuse to submit to the self-proclaimed Luhansk and Donetsk 'Peoples Republics' (LPR/DPR) and refuse to perform the Minsk peace agreements. It is likely that these separatist groups really do not submit to the LPR/DPR, but it is evident that they are armed and controlled by the Kremlin. **It is Moscow's 'stratagem': once Kyiv makes concessions and concludes a peace agreement with the self-declared LPR/DPR, some new, so-called**

¹⁵ Луценко: "Путін згортає військову авантюру на Донбасі". - <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/10/13/7040586>.

¹⁶ Начальник Донбасса. - http://expert.ru/russian_reporter/2014/39/nachalnik-donbassa.

¹⁷ Мапи. Інформаційно-аналітичний центр РНБО. - <http://mediarnbo.org/category/maps>.

¹⁸ Бойовики "з'їли" 40 кілометрів під Маріуполем після проголошення перемир'я, — "Азов". - http://24tv.ua/home/showSingleNews.do?boyoviki_zyili_40_kilometriv_pid_mariupolem_pislya_progoloshennya_peremirya_azov&objectId=493746.

‘independent’ separatist groups appear. They are armed with Russian tanks and rockets and do not consider themselves to be obligated to any peace agreements. It is possible that these new separatist groups have the task of provoking a new round of military confrontation, and, perhaps, to begin attacks on Ukrainian positions. Moscow will continue pretending that it is not involved, and will demand from Kyiv to establish ‘dialogue’ with these new militants and to make further concessions to them.

One should not pin too many hopes on the meeting in Milan, scheduled for 17 October, when Petro Poroshenko will meet with Vladimir Putin in the presence of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande, British Prime Minister David Cameron, European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and Italian Foreign Minister Federica Mogherini. ***Moscow has not complied with any of the previous agreements*** and the cynical rhetoric of the Russian authorities leaves no doubt that the new agreements will not be implemented.

Under such circumstances, Ukraine has to convince Western partners to conduct a more realistic policy. **First of all, it should be officially admitted that Russia is a part of the conflict and is a responsible party to the negotiations.** This should provide a legal basis to demand from Moscow the implementation of the agreements. It is possible that to this end, the areas of Donbas controlled by separatists should be officially provided with the status of "temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation". Such decision will not really affect the sovereignty of Ukraine over these territories (de facto Ukraine does not control them), but it will provide a legal basis for **building the effective defense system along the areas of Donbas controlled by Ukraine, and thus to prevent the probable further aggression of Russian-separatist forces** (which is probably planned under the guise of the initiative of the ‘uncontrolled’ separatist groups).

It is reasonable **to officially invite international troops (under the aegis of the UN or the OSCE) to take control over those 300 miles of the Ukrainian-Russian border** which are controlled by Russian troops and militants now. One should not have illusions that Moscow will let Ukrainian border guards retake control over this part of the border. **Kyiv should also work out the option to invite to the occupied areas of the border missions from China or other ‘third’ countries**, which can’t be accused by Moscow of being partial.

If Kyiv desires more realism and more practical support from its Western partners, it has to act more realistically, pragmatically and efficiently itself.