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Friedrich Naumann  
STIFTUNG  
FÜR DIE FREIHEIT



## UKRAINE – THE EUROPEAN UNION



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***STEPPING-UP RUSSIAN AGGRESSION REQUIRES MORE DECISIVE AND SYSTEMATIC EU POLICY***

During the ten months of Russian aggression against Ukraine the European Union has not elaborated a clear strategy with effective mechanisms to deter Moscow from escalating the hostilities. The EU continues symptomatically responding to the crisis, reacting only to the most dramatic deteriorations. The on-going expansion of supplies of Russian heavy weapons and trained 'volunteers' to Donbas neither caused the increase of pressure on Moscow, nor prevented some EU high officials from starting discussion about the gradual lifting of the existing sanctions. European consolidation is being undermined by double games of some EU capitals, which are trying to separately minimize the negative economic impact of the deterioration of relations with Russia. The strong statements of the European Parliament traditionally make a dissonance with the cautious half-measures of the EU executive bodies.

**In its Resolution of 15 January 2015 the European Parliament demonstrates the political will to call a spade a spade:** it condemns the daily violations of ceasefire by the separatists and Russian forces, as well as the acts of terrorism, committed by separatists; it recognises that Russia's aggressive and expansionist policy constitutes a threat not only to Ukraine, but to the EU also; and it condemns Russia's "undeclared hybrid war against Ukraine", noting the basic components of the latter. ***The Resolution emphasises that there is no justification for the use of military force in defence of so-called 'compatriots living abroad'***, thus indicating the illegality of the corresponding Moscow's argument concerning Ukraine, the Baltic States and other post-Soviet countries.

***The European Parliament calls for the continuation of the current EU sanctions regime as long as Russia does not fully respect its Minsk obligations***, including the withdrawal of all Russian troops and armed groups from Ukraine, the exchange of all prisoners including Nadia Savchenko, and the restoration of Ukraine's control over its whole territory, including Crimea. In the case of any further Russian actions destabilizing Ukraine, the Resolution invites the European Council to take up further restrictive measures and broaden their scope, by covering the nuclear sector and by limiting the ability of Russian entities to conduct international financial transactions. The European Parliament actually calls on the member states to help Ukraine with the defensive arms, recalling that there are no legal restrictions for such

assistance. The Resolution also urges the EU Member States to ratify the Association Agreement with Ukraine before the Riga summit.<sup>1</sup>

However, the resolutions of the European Parliament are not binding, and ***Moscow pays more attention to such steps as the loyalty visit of French President Francois Hollande to Moscow in December 2014; the offers of the Italian Federica Mogherini on the gradual restoration of relations with Russia in January 2015 (against the background of escalating aggression); and Putin's invitation to visit Hungary in February 2015.*** Such a ***double-dealing*** politics together with the victory of the Euro-sceptics in Greece parliamentary elections in January 2015 gives ground to the Kremlin's expectations that sanctions will not be strengthened and even may not be continued, for it will be enough to have just one vote against. The new government of Greece or the current government of Hungary may technically implement the reluctance of strong players like France and Italy to continue sanctions.

**The Volnovakha and Mariupol tragedies would not happen if Russia clearly knew what price it would have to pay for the escalation of aggression.** However, the EU has not elaborated the mechanisms of preventive diplomacy. On the eve of the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting of 19 January 2015 everybody knew that tighter sanctions would not be even discussed. Although the initial idea of Federica Mogherini to normalize relations with Russia lost the chance to be supported after the escalation of military actions by Russia-backed separatists, but the very attempt to discuss the easing of pressure under the circumstances when Russia had failed to fulfil any provision of the Minsk agreements, resulted in the increase of Moscow's confidence in its impunity. The same effect was caused by the absence of the EU clear official reaction to the massive assaults of Russian troops and separatists in Donetsk Airport, as well as by the soft and inconcrete statement of the Federica Mogherini's Spokesperson on shelling the bus with civilians near the Volnovakha town.<sup>2</sup>

Only after the massive shelling at the residential areas of Mariupol, resulted in the dozens of killed civilians, ***Federica Mogherini*** recognised in her statement that Russia-backed separatists "bluntly refuse to observe the cease fire", and warned that "it would inevitably lead to a further grave deterioration of relations between the EU and Russia".<sup>3</sup> President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz made a similar statement.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, these European high officials, as well as ***Angela Merkel***<sup>5</sup> ***called on Russia to use its considerable influence over separatists, while the EU leaders knew that in fact the attacks on Ukrainian position were made at the order of Russian military command, and that was the actual result of Russia's 'influence' over separatists.*** Moscow supplies weapons to separatists and it decides when and how to use it.

European officials did not succeed in using the diplomatic tactic of not recognizing the direct Russia's involvement to the conflict, aiming at leaving for Vladimir Putin a room for manoeuvre and a possibility to stop the war with preserving

<sup>1</sup> European Parliament resolution of 15 January 2015 on the situation in Ukraine (2014/2965(RSP)). - <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2015-0011+0+DOC+XML+Vo//EN&language=EN>.

<sup>2</sup> Statement by the Spokesperson on the death of civilians in eastern Ukraine. - [http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150113\\_01\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150113_01_en.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the attack on Mariupol. - [http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150124\\_01\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150124_01_en.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Schulz on the rebels' attack against civilians in Mariupol. - [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/en/press/press\\_release\\_speeches/press\\_release/press\\_release-2015/press\\_release-2015-january/html/schulz-on-the-rebels--attack-against-civilians-in-mariupol;jsessionid=3694F91657C9AE208C2CB174F200AAF6?webaction=view.acceptCookies](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/en/press/press_release_speeches/press_release/press_release-2015/press_release-2015-january/html/schulz-on-the-rebels--attack-against-civilians-in-mariupol;jsessionid=3694F91657C9AE208C2CB174F200AAF6?webaction=view.acceptCookies).

<sup>5</sup> Bundeskanzlerin Merkel hat heute Telefonate mit den Staatspräsidenten der Ukraine und Russlands geführt. - <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Pressemitteilungen/BPA/2015/01/2015-01-25-telefonat-merkel-putin-poroschenko.html>.

his face. On the contrary, Russia dramatically increased its military support to separatists, who started blatantly artillery shell attacks on residential neighbourhoods of Ukrainian cities. So it is high time to stop playing along with Moscow, pretending as if separatists act not under the Kremlin's guidance, and **to start the negotiations directly with the aggressor state, which has to understand that it will have to bear the full international legal and financial responsibility for the further hostilities.**

Simultaneously the EU has to extend by many times its support to Ukraine, both financial and with defensive weapons (as the European Parliament's Resolution of 15 January calls on), because the Ukrainian army is literally defending the security of the whole Europe. If Russian aggression achieves its objectives in Ukraine, then very soon the Baltic States and maybe Poland and Romania will suffer the same fate. And then the EU countries will have to care not for the money and weapons, but for the lives of their soldiers and civilians.



## UKRAINE – NATO



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### **UKRAINE IS A KEY COUNTRY FOR THE SECURITY OF NATO'S EASTERN BORDERS**

On 26 January 2015, at the briefing after the extraordinary meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg described as "nonsense"<sup>6</sup> the statement of Russian President Vladimir Putin about the "NATO's foreign legion" fighting in Donbas (instead of Ukrainian army) with a geopolitical goal to contain Russia.<sup>7</sup> NATO Secretary General rightly said that the only foreign troops in Ukraine are Russian.

But despite the absurdity of Putin's statement, we have to pay a proper attention to it, because it may indicate the Kremlin's logic of further evolution of the conflict:

**Firstly**, the Putin's statement may give start to **a new phase of Russian public opinion shaping, preparing it to the massive attack of regular Russian troops** as a 'response' to the alleged NATO aggression with aim to 'protect' the brotherly Ukrainian people from the NATO 'invaders.'

**Secondly**, the statement is designed **to mobilize the public opinion and most importantly the 'volunteers' for the increase of Putin's military adventure**, because there are much more Russians willing to struggle against NATO than those who want to fight against Ukraine.

**Thirdly, Mr. Putin needs a 'great' victory**, which can make him a favourite Russian leader for a long time and for which he will be forgiven for all the economic difficulties. Only a victory against the NATO forces can help to achieve this goal, even the cooked-up 'victory'.

**Fourthly, by his statement Vladimir Putin publicly enhance the conflict to the level of the NATO-Russia confrontation, actually recognising the Alliance as the aggressor**, whose troops are allegedly fighting against Russian geopolitical interests from Ukrainian territory. **Thus the average Russian citizen is forced to believe that Russia and NATO are de facto at war, and the Alliance is the aggressor.** This idea should legitimize in the eyes of Russian citizens any possible future 'defensive' military action of Russian forces against the territory, aircrafts, submarines and troops of the NATO countries (most likely against the Balts, Poles and Romanians).

**Thus, despite the willingness of NATO chiefs to avoid by any price the confrontation with Russia over Ukraine, Mr. Putin has actually named the**

<sup>6</sup> NATO Secretary General statement on the extraordinary meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission. - [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\\_116862.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_116862.htm).

<sup>7</sup> Putin calls Ukrainian army 'NATO legion' with geopolitical aim to contain Russia. - <http://itar-tass.com/en/russia/773395>.



**Alliance a party to the military conflict in Donbas.** Therefore the extreme caution of the NATO on the issue of arm supplies to Ukraine has completely lost its sense, for in Russian parallel reality it is not about the arms, but already about the NATO troops, who are allegedly fighting in Ukraine against Russian interests.

**Currently the NATO is responding to Russian aggression with enhancing the security of its Eastern European members.** The commander of U.S. Army forces in Europe Lieutenant-General Ben Hodges predicts that within a few years Russia will be capable to conduct several military operations against the neighbouring states at once on the scale of its present aggression against Ukraine.<sup>8</sup> So it was decided to establish NATO international headquarters in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, and to deploy there a new rapid-reaction force, whose major contributing countries will be Germany, the Netherlands and Norway. It is possible that some military hardware from the U.S. base in Germany will be located in the territory of the Eastern European members. Besides, Poland buys precision cruise missiles and new submarines, and the Baltic States increase their defence spending.

However, even if all the planned measures are successfully implemented, the defence of the Baltic States will still remain critically vulnerable to the possible Russian aggression, especially in the areas with high proportion of ethnic Russian population. Of course, this does not negate the need to strengthen the defence, but the main emphasis should be made on **creating the conditions under which the probability of Russian aggression will be reduced to the minimum.** This goal can be achieved only by depriving the Kremlin's leadership of the temptation to continue using military adventures as a mean of raising the political rating and consolidating the power inside Russia.

**The probability of Russian aggression against the Baltic States much more depends on the outcome of Putin's Ukrainian campaign than on the measures of strengthening the defence capabilities of NATO eastern members.** If Vladimir Putin succeeds with his military adventure in Ukraine, he will definitely be tempted to repeat this experience in the Baltic States. One should not cherish an illusion that Putin would not dare to launch an aggression against a NATO member state: *firstly*, he is convinced that the threat of nuclear war will prevent the U.S. from interference; *secondly*, he does not believe in the solidarity of European NATO members and in their military capacity to resist Russia; *thirdly*, in his parallel reality Mr. Putin is **already** at war with NATO in Ukraine, and he considers that he fights successfully.

**So the failure of Russian military campaign in Ukraine may be the only real safeguard against the future Russian invasion into the NATO countries.** Successful defence of Ukraine will forth the Putin's regime to seek other, non-military means to extend its rule (perhaps via the return to the economic growth, which would require the removal of economic sanctions and therefore the reconciliation with the West).

**In this context, the military assistance to Kyiv is of vital importance for the security of Ukraine as well as of the NATO members themselves.** Lieutenant-General Ben Hodges said that during the 'ceasefire' Russia has doubled the number of heavy weapons, provided to Donbas separatists.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the allies of Ukraine do not hurry to supply even the promised non-lethal weapons, such as reconnaissance drones, fire-control radars, protected command systems and combat

<sup>8</sup> Russia could soon run multiple Ukraine-sized operations: U.S. general. - <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/16/us-nato-russia-idUSKBN0KP1F620150116>.

<sup>9</sup> Американський генерал про російську зброю на Донбасі. - <http://ukrainian.voanews.com/content/us-general-russian-weapons-in-donbas/2607764.html>.

networks.<sup>10</sup> Even the advocate of "Finlandisation" and neutrality of Ukraine Zbigniew Brzezinski and the likely next presidential candidate from the Democratic Party Hillary Clinton call on to increase the military assistance to Kyiv,<sup>11</sup> not to mention the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services John McCain, who continues to strictly criticise the White House for the refusal to provide lethal weapons to Ukraine.

**Barack Obama's position is the sticking point in this issue. The U.S. President continues to ignore the need to assist Ukraine with arms**, despite the fact that both Republicans and Democrats support the idea. Under such circumstances the issue of necessary weapons supplies to Ukraine could be discussed at the bilateral level with other NATO members, such as Canada, Britain or Poland; while the United States could act as a financial guarantor of the transactions. Simultaneously Kyiv should continue working with those U.S. partners from both Republicans and Democrats, who support the military assistance to Ukraine; a particular important task is to ensure that this issue is among the topics of the upcoming presidential primaries.

It is important for Kyiv to help its NATO partners realise that **security of the Eastern European Allies and security of Ukraine are closely related by the common threat**. Effective resolving of their security problems requires close and mutually beneficial practical cooperation, regardless of the Brussels and Kyiv's estimations concerning the prospect of Ukraine's joining NATO de jure. Especially since the constitutional majority of Ukrainian Parliament abolished the non-aligned status on 23 December 2014 and thus removed all legal barriers to the comprehensive deepening of cooperation with the North Atlantic Alliance.



<sup>10</sup> У США назвали види озброєння, яке Україна може отримати від Вашингтона. - <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/26803472.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Hillary Clinton urges more financial, military aid to Ukraine. - <http://www.politico.com/multimedia/video/2015/01/hillary-clinton-urges-more-financial-military-aid-to-ukraine.html>.

## FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE



### KEY THEME ANALYSIS

#### ***MOSCOW SEEKS TO FORCE KYIV, BRUSSELS AND WASHINGTON TO AGREE TO ALL ITS DEMANDS***

After the unsuccessful attempts to force Ukraine to agree to Russian conditions of peace talks, including the funding of occupied territories by Kyiv and the recognition of territorial conquests, made by separatists during the 'armistice', Moscow disrupted the Astana Summit, scheduled for 15 January 2015 in 'Norman' format (with the participation of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France); and Russian and separatists forces renewed the massive shelling on Ukrainian positions.

**The Foreign Ministers talks in 'Norman' format, held in Berlin on 12 January**, were accompanied with the severe Russian attacks at Donetsk airport and finished without success. The next day separatists shelled the checkpoint of Ukrainian arm forces near **Volnovakha**, killing 11 and wounding 17 civilians. On 16 January the leaders of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk 'peoples republics' Alexander Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky ignored the OSCE invitation to take part in Minsk peace talks, while their representatives did not have sufficient powers for the negotiations.

Moscow's reasons to disrupt the negotiations became evident on 18 January 2015, when Russian Foreign Ministry issued the statement, in which it accused Petro Poroshenko of ignoring the **Vladimir Putin's 'peace' proposition of 15 January**. **In fact Russian President proposed to give the Donetsk airport to separatists and to recognize all their territorial conquests during the 'armistice'**. Kyiv reasonably responded with the proposition to perform the Minsk peace agreements, but Moscow did not answer.

The Russian vision of peace agreements 'implementation' was clearly shown during the **Berlin talks of 21 January 2015**. While Russian Foreign Minister in a joint statement with Ukrainian, German and French colleagues was calling for a ceasefire and for a withdraw of heavy weapons, Russian troops together with separatists were massively shelling and assaulting at the Donetsk airport, until completely destroyed it. A day later the leader of pro-Russian militants Alexander Zakharchenko said that he "will not make any attempts at ceasefire talks any more" and threatened Kyiv with attacks on three fronts simultaneously.<sup>12</sup> On 24 January 2015 the separatists defiantly shelled the

<sup>12</sup> Захарченко: ДНР больше не будет пытаться говорить с Киевом о перемирии. - <http://ria.ru/world/20150123/1043920345.html>.



residential neighbourhoods of **Mariupol**, killing 30 and injuring about 100 civilians. Simultaneously Russian militants stepped up attacks across the front line and escalated attack against the city of Debaltsevo, which is the important traffic centre. After the attack on Mariupol even usually cautious OSCE Mission stated that the shelling was carried out from the territory, controlled by the separatists.<sup>13</sup>

**The words of Russian Minister Sergey Lavrov indicate that the shelling at Volnovakha and Mariupol was a 'punishment' for Kyiv for its refusal to perform Putin's 'peace' proposals:** "...if the Ukrainian leadership had accepted President Putin's January 15 suggestion to urgently withdraw heavy weaponry from the line marked in the September 19, 2014 Minsk Memorandum, the tragedies of Volnovakha, Donetsk and Mariupol could have been avoided."<sup>14</sup>

**It is apparent that by intensifying the hostilities in Donbas, Moscow aimed at the following goals:**

- 1) To disrupt the Astana talks, dated for 15 January in the unfavourable for Moscow 'Norman' format with the participation of German and French leaders;
- 2) To force Kyiv to agree on revising the Minsk arrangements, in particular, to recognize the increase of separatists-controlled territory and to abandon the demand of regaining control over the Ukrainian-Russian border;
- 3) To force Kyiv to resume the funding of the occupied territories and to abandon the plans for mobilization;
- 4) To show Kyiv that for any rejection of Moscow's requirements it will be 'punished' with massive losses of soldiers and civilians;
- 5) To destabilize Ukraine, to distract Kyiv from implementing reforms, to prevent the economic recovery and attraction of investments;
- 6) To mobilize at war the disparate group of separatists in Donbas, who began fighting among themselves at the time of 'armistice.'

Realising that Moscow uses the negotiations just to win time and that Putin does not intend to perform any agreement and to seize the opportunity of ending war with preserving his face, **on 27 January 2015 the Ukrainian Parliament formally recognized the Russian Federation as the aggressor state**, and called on the international community to recognize the aggression against Ukraine and the occupation of its territory, and to tighten the demands to Moscow to return to the internationally recognized borders.

Now Ukraine has ground to demand depriving Russia of its veto right in the UN Security Council for the time when the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is considering, as well as to demand much stronger international sanctions against Russia as an aggressor state. A new perspective appears to transfer the negotiations into more open and honest format, in which Moscow will not hide behind its separatist proxies and will have to take its responsibility for the unleashing of war.

<sup>13</sup> Spot report by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), 24 January 2015: Shelling Incident on Olimpiiska Street in Mariupol. - <http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/136061>.

<sup>14</sup> Press release on Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's phone conversation with High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini. - [http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/brp\\_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/1118ee841ad3a50a43257dd9005463c8!OpenDocument](http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/1118ee841ad3a50a43257dd9005463c8!OpenDocument).