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UKRAINE – THE EUROPEAN UNION



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

POLISH PRESIDENT VISIT TO UKRAINE AFFIRMS THE COURSE ON DEEPENING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

On 8-9 April 2015 Polish president Bronislaw Komorowski paid an official visit to Ukraine. This event was an important gesture of support for Kyiv against the background of the recent cancellation of the visits of European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker and EU high representative for foreign affairs Federica Mogherini.¹

In Kyiv Bronislaw Komorowski declared full support for Ukrainian positions on all key issues of foreign and domestic policy, including the initiative to invite an international peacekeeping mission for Donbas; the continuation of sanctions against Russia; granting visa-free travel regime for citizens of Ukraine from 1 January 2016; Kyiv's right to claim for the full EU membership in future; and support for the reforms in Ukraine.

Polish President confirmed the Warsaw's decision on €100 million loan to Kyiv, a half of which is to be spent on development of Ukraine-Poland border crossing points, and another half is to provide the reconstruction of CHP plants to work on Ukrainian and Polish coal grades instead of anthracite, for Kyiv has lost the access to the anthracite mines due to the Russian occupation of the corresponding areas of Donbas. Abovementioned loan is a good example of mutually beneficial cooperation, as both parties are interested in improving the border crossing points and in making Ukrainian CHP plants able to work on the Polish coal.

On 9 April 2015 the Polish president made a speech in Ukrainian parliament, for the first time ever. He called on Ukrainian and Polish nations for the mutual forgiveness for historical injustices, recognized the fact of Russia's war against Ukraine (besides him, only leaders of the Baltic states did it) and noted that the Ukrainians are fighting not only for their own independence, but for the safety of the whole of Europe as well. ***It is important to note that in his speech the Polish president mentioned that the Ukrainian people had previously been called "Rus".² This emphasis should be considered in the broader context of Poland's recognition of the true interpretation of Ukraine's history as a successor-state to the Kyivan Rus.*** It is worth recalling that earlier this year the Polish authorities noted the role of Ukrainian soldiers in liberating Poland from the Nazi invaders. Those statements triggered a wave of indignation in the Kremlin, which used to usurp the victory over Nazism as well as the history of Kyivan Rus. **Thus Warsaw**

¹ <http://fpri.kiev.ua/?p=19370>.

² <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2015/04/9/7032765>.

provides Kyiv with important assistance in countering Russian propaganda, which continues to impose Stalin's and Putin's version of history.

As important symbolic moment should be considered the co-laying of wreath by two presidents in the National Historical Memorial 'Bykivnia Graves', where Ukrainian and Polish victims of Stalinist repression are buried. It is worth noting in this context that this month the Polish senate speaker Bogdan Borusewicz refused from the provocative proposal of the Russian Federation Council to jointly condemn the historical heritage of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army.³ These events indicate that Warsaw is aware of the importance of partnerships with Kyiv, given the existence of real common threat, which historically comes from Russia.

At the meeting with Polish counterpart the Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko called Poland "a key strategic European partner."⁴ Generally speaking, Poland is now the only true strategic partner of Ukraine, as the key geopolitical interests of two countries coincide. Under all governments Warsaw devoted special attention to maintaining Ukraine's independence and its European aspirations.

At the same time, due to the insufficient geopolitical weight of today's Poland and its lack of capacities to help Ukraine withstand the Russia's aggression, Kyiv gives the top priority to relations with Washington before Warsaw. The new draft National Security Strategy of Ukraine defines as "key priority" (besides the EU membership) the "deepening of strategic partnership with the U.S. as a guarantor of international security in the Euro-Atlantic area." Herewith Poland and Great Britain are the first in the list of "privileged partnership" countries.⁵ It is also significant that without evident resistance of Kyiv, Warsaw was excluded from the participation in peaceful settlement of Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the European Union is represented in 'Normandy' format negotiations only with Berlin and Paris, which are more convenient for the Kremlin.

Poland's key partner is not Ukraine, but Germany, which accounts for a quarter of Polish foreign trade at about \$90 billion annually, while the total amount of Poland-Ukraine export-import operations is 15 times smaller, at about \$6 billion. It should be mentioned as well that the willingness of Polish society to support Ukraine is not too strong – according to the polls, only 26% of the Poles support sending military instructors to Ukraine,⁶ and only 37% support arms supplies to Kyiv.⁷ So far the existence of objective and subjective obstacles prevents Ukraine and Poland from full-scale strategic partnership.

However, **the geopolitical realities and common threat encourage Kyiv and Warsaw to deepen cooperation.** This year's visits to Ukraine of prime-minister Eva Kopacz and president Bronislaw Komorowski indicate their awareness of the importance of relations between the two countries. Kyiv should more actively take advantage of the opportunities provided with Warsaw's support, in particular to initiate the involvement of Polish representatives to negotiating peaceful settlement in Donbas and to Ukraine-EU-Russia consultations on the implementation of the DCFTA Agreement, scheduled for the second half of April. Although the Warsaw's geopolitical weight is substantially less than those of Berlin and Paris, but Kyiv can be always sure that Poland's voice is in favour of Ukraine and that Warsaw is not playing into the hands of the Kremlin.

³ <http://www.polradio.pl/5/38/Artykul/202142>.

⁴ <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32648.html>.

⁵ http://www.niss.gov.ua/public/File/2015_analit/strategiya_2015.pdf.

⁶ <http://polska.newsweek.pl/szkolenie-ukrainskich-zolnierzy-w-polsce,artykuly,360515,1.html#fp=nw>.

⁷ http://www.cbos.pl/EN/publications/reports/2014/134_14.pdf.

UKRAINE – NATO



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

A NEW DRAFT NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF UKRAINE ENVISAGES A COURSE FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP

On 9 April 2015, a year after the Russian aggression, the **National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine presented a new draft National Security Strategy** (hereinafter – Strategy), designed for implementation by 2020.⁸ Despite the several shortcomings, the new Strategy compares favourably with previous editions due to the clear definition of key threats (including Russia's aggressive policy) as well as the consistency of planned policies in the sphere of national security with focus on future NATO membership as "the only reliable external security guarantee."

The Strategy defines the "aggressive policy of Russia" as the major threat to the national security. The document determines Crimea and Russia-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions as the "temporarily occupied territories." The following threats are also named in the Strategy: inefficiency of the national security system of Ukraine; corruption and inefficient system of government; economic crisis, depletion of financial resources and decline in living standards; threats to the energy security; threats to the information security (including the "information war against Ukraine", however the aggressor is not specified); threats to the cyber security and information resources; threats to the security of critical infrastructure; threat to the ecological safety.

Among the main objectives of the Strategy are the following: to minimize threats to the national sovereignty and to create conditions for the restoration of territorial integrity; "to provide the integration of Ukraine to the European Union and to create conditions for NATO membership." It is obvious, that the difference in emphasis in reference to the EU (to *provide* integration) and NATO (to *create conditions* for joining) are caused by the previous statements of Ukrainian president and prime minister that NATO membership should be a subject to the national referendum (although neither the Ukrainian legislation nor the norms of the Alliance envisage such requirement).

The main directions of the national security policy of Ukraine are listed in the fourth section of the Strategy and include:

4.1. Restoration of territorial integrity;

4.2. Creating an effective defence and security sector, including the involvement of NATO instructors to implement an integrated system of education, military and special training; improving the defence budget policy in accordance with the NATO experience;

⁸ http://www.niss.gov.ua/public/File/2015_analit/strategiya_2015.pdf.

4.3. Increasing the national defence capability, including the providing of maximum possible interoperability of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with the armed forces of NATO member states; maintaining the Special Operation forces and bringing military intelligence and counterintelligence to the NATO standards; deepening of defence industrial and military-technical cooperation with the EU and NATO member states;

4.4. Reforming and developing of the intelligence, counterintelligence and law enforcement agencies, including strengthening their cooperation with the intelligence agencies of NATO member states;

4.5. Public administration reform and the new quality of anti-corruption policy;

4.6. Integration into the European Union;

4.7. **Distinctive Partnership with NATO.** It is declared that "Ukraine considers membership in NATO as the only reliable external guarantee of state sovereignty and territorial integrity". It is also stated that "The priority is to implement the NATO standards and to provide the interoperability of forces and resources of Ukrainian security and defence structures with the relevant structures of the NATO member states, **that will provide for the future membership in the North Atlantic Alliance**" (emphasis added);

4.8. Ensuring national security in the sphere of foreign policy. It is noted: "Rejecting the policy of non-alignment, which did not secure the territorial integrity, **Ukraine in the medium term will rely on its own capabilities and reserves the right to choose participation in the systems of collective security and defence** as a way to guarantee the state sovereignty and territorial integrity" (emphasis added). This point is to some extent inconsistent with the p.4.7, which clearly refers to the future membership in NATO, instead of the abstract "right to choose participation" in the unnamed "systems of collective security and defence";

4.9. Ensuring economic security, among other measures includes "**preventing the control of the aggressor state's capital over the strategic sectors**". This point is correct, but it would be logical to specify clearly the aggressor to avoid any difficulties in future implementation of this provision.

As for the energy security, the p.4.10 clearly defines the goal of "overcoming of dependence on Russia in supplying energy resources and technologies."

The final provisions of the document states that the budgeting of the Strategy implementation is **a major priority of the country's fiscal policy and the funding for security and defence sector is set at the annual level not less than 5% of GDP**. This is an important point, because previously the defence was funded at nearly residual principle, depriving of the possibility to implement the plans.

Thus, a new draft National Security Strategy is focused on Ukraine's preparations for the future NATO membership as the only guarantee against Russian aggression. Herewith, a membership in the North Atlantic Alliance is envisaged only in the long term, while in the mid-term Ukraine plans to "rely on its own opportunities." If the mid-term refers to the period of the implementation of this Strategy, i.e. the period by 2020, then we can assume that Kyiv plans to prepare in five years for applying the NATO membership. However, it would be better if this issue and definite term is prescribed more clearly, and if the p.4.7 is names "Preparing for NATO membership" instead of current "Distinctive Partnership with NATO."

It is worth noting that this spring **about five hundred military trainers from the NATO member states, namely the U.S., Britain and Canada, are to come to Ukraine** to assist in training the troops of Ukrainian Armed Forces and of National Guard. Herewith the international military exercise 'Fearless Guardian' to take place at the Yavoriv Training Ground reminds the prototype of continuous training mission, since it is to last intermittently, in three stages, from April to November 2015.

It is planned that 290 U.S. military trainers share experience with Ukrainian colleagues, including the measures of localization and cleaning specified areas from terrorists. It would be useful to hold such training missions on continuing basis, fully expanding the practical cooperation and preparation for the future membership in NATO.



FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

BERLIN AND PARIS PLAY INTO THE MOSCOW'S HANDS, TRYING TO PERSUADE KYIV TO AGREE TO 'PEACE' ON KREMLIN'S TERMS

On 13 April 2015, in Berlin another round of the foreign ministers meeting in 'Normandy' format took part. The text of the Agreed Statement of the Chair as well as the comments of participants to the meeting make it clear that the negotiations were held at Moscow scenario, while the initiatives of Kyiv were ignored.

Previously the Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko said that the issue of international peacekeepers for Donbas would be the main topic of the Berlin meeting in 'Normandy' format.⁹ But actually the peacekeepers were not even mentioned in the text of the Agreed Statement, and according to the DW report, this issue "was not substantively discussed."¹⁰ ***It is known that Ukrainian minister Pavlo Klimkin raised this topic during the meeting, but it seems that his German and French colleagues were more interested in the agenda proposed by Russian minister Sergei Lavrov.*** At least, the Agreed Statement calls on "to urgently finalize an operational concept on the working groups within the Trilateral Contact Group as soon as possible. We agree that the four working groups on security; political process; humanitarian issues; and economic affairs and rehabilitation must be launched as soon as possible."¹¹

The "political process", economic and humanitarian issues are exactly the requirements on which Russian side insisted the previous weeks, implying the amendments to Ukrainian Constitution with the legitimization of self-proclaimed separatist 'republics' in Donbas and the restoration of their funding by Kyiv. Including of the main Kremlin's requirements to the Agreed Statement even without causing them with the full implementation of ceasefire, gives grounds to believe that Berlin and Paris put a pressure on Kyiv persuading it to agree on those points. So it is not surprising that Sergei Lavrov was pleased with the results of the meeting, calling it "useful",¹² while Ukrainian minister Pavlo Klimkin described the meeting as "difficult".¹³

Russia should be also pleased with the position of the OSCE

⁹ <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32648.html>.

¹⁰ <http://www.dw.de/крихкі-мінські-домовленості-й-жорсткі-берлінські-суперечності/ a-18380102>.

¹¹ http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/sid_6C5F952BEF24328BEC98B8B72C47ECEB/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2015/150413-Ukraine_ErklaerungVorsitz.html.

¹² http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/newsline/C64664E191CAD60843257E270026D340.

¹³ <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2015/04/14/7064630>.

representatives, who took part in Berlin meeting and stated that "both sides" violate ceasefire. Inexplicably they did not clarified which side was first to begin fire as well as what Ukrainian troops should do when being shelling by separatists. The OSCE representatives also 'forgot' to mention that separatists had opened fire towards the SMM patrol on the outskirts of Shyrokyne, near Mariupol, on 7 April 2015, as it was noted in Spot report by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission.¹⁴ Therefore the Berlin Agreed Statement "called on all sides to stop fighting", thus actually accusing both separatists and Ukrainian troops of the truce violations.

'Normandy' Foreign Ministers Quartet also called for the withdrawal of mortars and heavy weapons below 100 mm as well as all types of tanks. However, under the circumstances when the OSCE is unable to inspect the performance of prior agreements by Russian militants and separatists, it is clear that the purpose of this new claim was just to create an illusion of some progress, while actually there is no one.

As a signalling 'coincidence' might be considered the fact that only three days before the Berlin meeting the French side released a transcript of the parliamentary hearings of 25 March, when **director of French Military Intelligence (DRM) General Christophe Gómara said that his service did not revealed the presence of Russian troops in Donbas as well as the evidences of Russia's preparations for invasion.**¹⁵ It is hardly to suspect French intelligence in such blatant incompetence, and presumably such statements are politically motivated and playing along with Moscow.

In general the EU position on Russian aggression becomes increasingly weaker, thus provoking Moscow to continue the present course. Commenting on the possibility of arms assistance to Ukraine, the EU ambassador to Russia Vygaudas Ušackas called it a risky idea, adding that: "We must admit that we do not go to war and die for Ukraine."¹⁶ Being no longer burdened by diplomatic etiquette, former Polish president Aleksander Kwasniewski said that "any form of the EU military intervention is out of the question." Answering the question if the EU was ready to turn a blind eye to the annexation of Crimea, Mr. Kwasniewski said: "You are right, it is. This is a problem of compromise between values and real politics."¹⁷ **Speaking to the Sofia-based TV channel, Bulgarian prime minister Boyko Borisov has criticized Berlin and Paris for the "swallowing" the annexation of the Crimea** and not even mentioning this issue in Minsk agreements.¹⁸

It is likely that the regime of EU economic sanctions against Russia is coming to the end. **Being in Moscow, Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras called for the lifting of sanctions.** It is obvious that he was motivated by the hope of getting Russia's financial support and simultaneously attempted to blackmail the European Union, persuading it to provide Athens with additional credits. However, the position of Mr. Tsipras can benefit to those European capitals, including Berlin, Paris and Rome, which would like to lift the sanctions, but for political reasons are not ready to do it with their own hands.

The time is working against Ukraine, and therefore Kyiv should use it more efficiently by focusing efforts on the most important directions and abandoning the unpromising ones. In particular, it hardly worth expending efforts on promoting the idea of international peacekeeping mission for Donbas, given that Western partners lack the political will to send the EU mission without a UN mandate; and it is hopeless to count on positive decision of the UN Security Council due to the Russia's position. Therefore it makes sense to pay more attention to intensification the

¹⁴ <http://www.osce.org/node/150211>.

¹⁵ <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cr-cdef/14-15/c1415049.asp>.

¹⁶ <http://ru.delfi.lt/news/politics/posol-es-v-rossii-my-ne-pojdem-voevat-i-umirat-za-ukrainu.d?id=67633740>.

¹⁷ <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/interview/2015/04/9/7032776>.

¹⁸ <https://euobserver.com/beyond-brussels/128238>.

OSCE mission, including the extending of its mandate and increasing of its technical capacities and number of personal. Despite all the disadvantages, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission is currently the only possible option.

Kyiv should also keep in mind that **Berlin and Paris have neither capacity nor intention to study all the details of conflict development, and being the political guarantors of the Minsk agreement they do care for the formal aspect of its implementation. Moscow skilfully takes advantage of such situation** and assures its European partners as if separatists are fulfilling their obligations by officially declaring a cease-fire and reducing the intensity of shelling. At the same time the Kremlin insists as if Kyiv sabotages its commitments to the political and economic settlement of the conflict. Judging by the latest 'Normandy' Quartet's statement, Moscow has so far managed to impose its vision on Berlin and Paris.

Kyiv also needs to more actively remind Berlin of its promises to grant the financial assistance for Donbas, and to propose the Germans taking part in joint control over the targeted spending of their aid, if any, at the occupied territories.

