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UKRAINE – THE EUROPEAN UNION



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

DECLARATION OF THE G7 SUMMIT AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT INDICATE CIVILIZED WORLD'S SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

The Group of Seven summit, held on 7-8 June 2015 in Germany disappointed Moscow, which hoped for the West's fatigue of Ukraine, lifting of sanctions and even for the return of Russia to this prestigious club of the most influential world powers.

Russia's officials try to downplay the significance of G7 saying that Moscow is not interest in this format, but it is surely not true. Although the G7 group has less combined economic potential than the G20, but the majority of advanced modern technologies are concentrated in the countries of Group of Seven, and Russia has lost access to them due to the economic sanctions. Moreover, the membership in G7 not only indicates a large amount of GDP, but is also a sign of belonging to modern, civilized and democratic world. Russia does not meet the values of this Group and is moving in a direction away from them, Angela Merkel noted on the eve of the summit.¹

In summit Declaration the G7 leaders condemn "the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation" and reaffirm their "policy of its non-recognition." However, noting the "illegal annexation," it was logical to call Russia an aggressor-state as well, but G7 leaders have not get ripe to such recognition yet. Even the part of the Declaration related to the Russian aggression was named ***"Finding a Solution to the Conflict in Ukraine."***² ***So, it is obvious that the G7 leaders are reluctant to recognize that it is not a conflict in Ukraine, but Russia-Ukraine war and Russian aggression against Ukraine.***

One should pay attention to the provisions of the Declaration on **full support for the Normandy format, the Trilateral Contact Group and "the OSCE's key role in finding a peaceful solution."** Actually, it means that Kyiv should not count on involving the United States to the peace talks and on return of the Geneva format of negotiations. It also seems hopeless to count on the deployment of the EU and the UN peacekeepers.

The leaders of G7 call on "all sides" to fully implement the Minsk agreements through the established Trilateral Contact Group and the four working groups, as well as to "to fully respect and implement the ceasefire." ***Appeal to "all sides" is alarming,***

¹ <http://www.dw.de/меркель-росія-за-останні-роки-віддалилася-від-g7/a-18499084>.

² http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/_Anlagen/G8_G20/2015-06-08-g7-abschluss-eng.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=5.

for thus G7 leaders actually play along with Moscow in its efforts to put on Ukraine and Russian militants equal responsibility for the violations of Minsk agreements and ceasefire. In fact, all significant violations were committed by Russian-separatist forces, which seized Debaltseve and do not hide their intentions to capture more Ukrainian cities.³ The fact that ceasefire violations are mainly provoked by the separatists is clear from the OSCE mission reports as well, and no one can suspect this organisation in too much loyalty to Kyiv.

The good news is **the readiness G7 to take further restrictive measures against Russia** and maintain sanctions until "Russia's complete implementation of the Minsk agreements and respect for Ukraine's sovereignty." However, it is unclear whether "respect for sovereignty" includes the return of Crimea to Ukraine or not?

Leaders of the Group of Seven also reaffirm their commitment to support providing of financial and technical assistance to Ukraine and ask the G7 ambassadors in Kyiv to establish a Ukraine support group. Besides, the G7 leaders reaffirm their commitment to bring the Chernobyl nuclear power plant Shelter Project to a successful completion.

It is probable that support for Ukraine in G7 Declaration could be more decisive. At the press-conference after the summit, the U.S. President Barack Obama clearly stated that "Russian forces continue to operate in eastern Ukraine, violating Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity."⁴ Apparently, the tougher Declaration was blocked by representatives of the European countries, which are more loyal to Moscow. Before **the G7 summit, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier spoke of the need to return as soon as possible to the G8 format**, for the West "needs Russia to settle the frozen conflicts in Europe, Syria, Iraq, and Libya and also in dealing with issue of the Iranian nuclear program."⁵ It remains unclear whether the German Minister pretends or he really does not understand that Russia promotes the conflicts he mentioned?

On the eve of G7 summit, Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Dzhentiloni said that the West "need to take into account the statement by President Putin that he does not have any aggressive intentions," and "Russia should get affirmations on one point, particularly that Ukraine's accession to NATO is not a realistic prospect."⁶ Unfortunately, the Italian minister did not provide any argument on why the West has to trust Putin's peaceful statements after the years of his total lies, e.g. about "NATO legion" fighting in Ukraine?⁷

One should note the active position of Ukrainian government, which made appropriate preparations at the eve of the G7 summit. President of Ukraine held personal meetings and phone talks with the G7 leaders, convincing them of the need to support Kyiv. It was good idea to arrange official visits to Ukraine of Japanese and Canadian Prime Ministers on the eve of the summit. Besides the \$1.5 billion loan and 1.5 thousand cars for Ukrainian police, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe brought to Kyiv a promise of support in Group of Seven, where Japan will preside over the next year. During his third visit to Kyiv in a year and a half, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper was thanked by Ukrainian side for loans and humanitarian aid at \$0.5 billion, as well as for the non-lethal military equipment and training of Ukrainian military.

As implementation of the G7 solutions can be considered the

³ <http://www.interfax.ru/world/444386>.

⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/06/08/remarks-president-obama-press-conference-after-g7-summit>.

⁵ <http://sputniknews.com/europe/20150604/1022927996.html>.

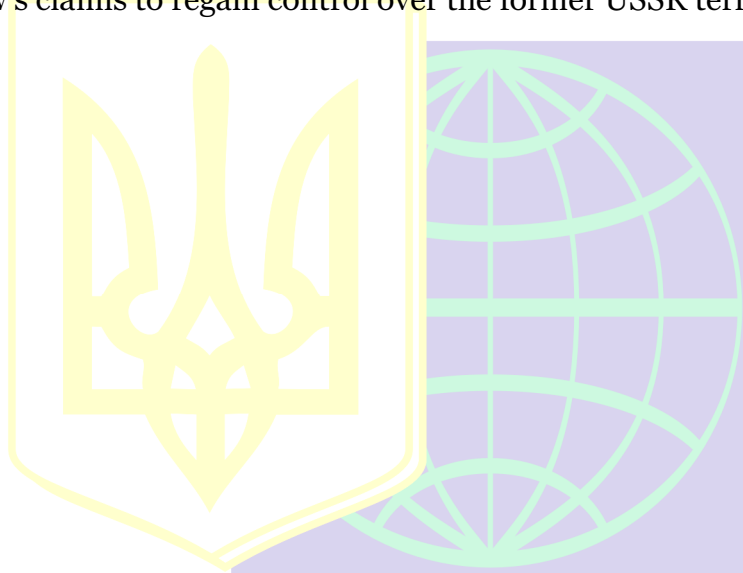
⁶ <http://sputniknews.com/europe/20150608/1023076170.html>.

⁷ <http://tass.ru/politika/1722618>.

European Parliament Resolutions adopted on 10-11 June 2015 – "on the state of EU-Russia relations"⁸ and "on the strategic military situation in the Black Sea Basin following the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia."⁹ The European Parliament emphasized the non-recognition of the Crimea annexation, condemned "waging an armed conflict against Ukraine," and reminded Russia of the occupation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. **The European Parliament decided that after Russia's actions in Crimea and in Eastern Ukraine, it "can no longer be treated as, or considered, a strategic partner."**

Following the G7 leaders, the European Parliament stressed that sanctions against Russia may be strengthened and their lifting depends on Russia's full implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Herewith, **the European Parliament Resolution has an important advantage before the G7 Declaration, for it emphasizes that "the sanctions related to the illegal annexation of Crimea will remain until the peninsula is returned to Ukraine."**¹⁰

Thus, despite the attempts of pro-Russian forces in Europe to soften the West stance on Russia, **the final Declaration of the G7 summit and the Resolutions of the European Parliament reaffirmed that the democratic, civilized part of the world is not going to bear with Russia's aggressive course**, and will not recognize Moscow's claims to regain control over the former USSR territory.



⁸ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2015-0225+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

⁹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2015-0232+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

¹⁰ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2015-0225+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>.

UKRAINE – NATO



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

U.S. ENHANCES SECURITY OF EASTERN EUROPEAN NATO ALLIES, BUT LEAVES UKRAINE OUT IN THE COLD

During her **June visit to Kyiv**, the **U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power** said that Russia had been responsible for the separatists' attack on Ukrainian town of Marinka in Donetsk region. Ms. Power promised not to abandon Ukrainians, but acknowledged the UN Security Council inability to perform its functions due to veto of the aggressor country.¹¹ The UNSC failure to carry out its functions was eloquently demonstrated at its emergency meeting of 6 June 2015, after Russian militants had shelled the town of Marinka. Despite the obvious responsibility of the Russian-separatist side for shelling, the UN Security Council 'responded' only with exchange of positions and abstract call for peace.

Kyiv does not have claims against Ms. Power personally, for her clear position in the UN Security Council is well known. At the same time, it is clear that Washington is not doing its best to help Ukraine. Even the issue of Russian veto could be solved if the United States used its influence to promote the official recognition of Russia as the aggressor country. But for some reason Washington does not do it.

***The Washington Post* rightly calls US support for Ukraine "symbolic" and "paltry."**¹² Pentagon Chief Ashton Carter publicly acknowledges that purely economic sanctions have failed to get Vladimir Putin to reverse course, and the military response is needed as well.¹³ However, even the current economic sanctions are not properly working. *The New York Times* reported that, despite the sanctions, **Russian groups managed to successfully use American and European financial institutions to crowdfund Donetsk militants.**¹⁴ *The NYT* also reported about Pentagon's pressure on Congress to ease the sanctions against Russia concerning the use of Russian rocket engines for the U.S. space missions.¹⁵

As for the issue of arms assistance to Ukraine, it seems that one should forget about it. Previously the relevant process was hindered mostly by Barack Obama, but in June 2015 the congressmen joined him and supported the amendment to H.R. 2685 Department of Defense Appropriations Act,

¹¹ <http://ukrainian.voanews.com/content/samantha-power-in-kyiv/2817378.html>.

¹² http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/on-democracys-front-lines-in-ukraine/2015/06/10/585640d4-0f8c-11e5-9726-49d6fa26a8c6_story.html.

¹³ <http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/pentagon-chief-ash-carter-says-new-action-needed-on-russia-over-ukraine-769184>.

¹⁴ http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/12/world/europe/russian-groups-crowdfund-the-war-in-ukraine.html?_r=1.

¹⁵ http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/04/world/europe/pentagon-seeks-easing-of-ban-on-russian-rockets-for-us-space-missions.html?_r=0.

2016. They banned training of "Azov" regiment soldiers (as alleged neo-Nazi) and banned providing Armed Forces of Ukraine with shoulder-fired rockets (it is exactly about the Javelins, requested by the Ukrainian side). It is remarkable that Russian propaganda clichés about "neo-Nazis" were successfully used in the U.S. Congress to deprive the whole Ukrainian army of the opportunities to get the shoulder-fired anti-tank weapons, which could help a lot to restrain the Russian-separatist troops.

While refusing to provide weapons to Ukraine, the U.S. simultaneously reinforces NATO members in Eastern Europe. Polish and Baltic officials confirmed the information of the U.S. media about Washington's plans to deploy in these countries about 250 Abrams tanks, Bradley IFVs and other heavy equipment.¹⁶ Besides, due to Russia's threat, the U.S. plans to deploy in Europe its fifth-generation fighters F-22 Raptor.¹⁷

In June 2015, in Poland and the Baltic States the large-scale NATO military exercises Saber Strike began, involving more than 6 thousand troops from 13 NATO member states, tanks, combat aircrafts and other equipment. Simultaneously the BALTOPS Alliance military exercises are carried out in the Baltic Sea, while 2100 soldiers of the newly created NATO Very High Readiness Joint Task Force were deployed in Poland for the first time.

The scale of NATO's assistance to its members strikingly contrasts with the amount of support provided for Ukraine, depriving of the illusions that "distinctive" partnership can substitute the full membership.

In his annual address to the Ukrainian Parliament, President Petro Poroshenko said that two major obstacles remain on Ukraine's path to NATO: differences in attitude to this issue in Ukrainian regions, and the reluctance of some Alliance members to see Ukraine in its ranks. We should stress that it is possible to find solutions to both these problems, if conduct correct informational campaign, which will prove the benefits of NATO membership to Ukrainian citizens, and will convince the public opinion of NATO countries that they will live in safer environment together with Ukraine.

By the way, even now at average **57% of the population of large NATO countries support Ukraine's accession to the Alliance**, according to the *Pew Research Center's* poll of spring 2015.¹⁸ It is remarkable that even in France the majority (55%) supports Ukraine joining NATO, not to say about Canada (65%), the U.S. (62%), Poland (59%), the UK (57%) and Spain (57%). Only traditionally loyal to Moscow Germans (36%) and Italians (35%) do not support Ukraine's accession to the Alliance. By the way, these nations are also the most reluctant to use military force to defend their allies against possible Russian aggression (only 40% of Italians and 38% of Germans would support such help if needed). Probably, it is the fear of necessity to fight that deters Germany and Italy from supporting Ukraine's accession to the Alliance. So Kyiv has to do its best to convince the public opinion of these countries that Ukraine would become a contributor to their security and not an additional burden.

¹⁶ <http://www.dw.de/литва-готується-розмістити-на-своєї-території-важкі-озброєння-сша/a-18516698>.

¹⁷ <http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-air-force-to-boost-presence-in-europe-amid-russia-tensions-1434382394>.

¹⁸ <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/10/nato-publics-blame-russia-for-ukrainian-crisis-but-reluctant-to-provide-military-aid/>.

FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

IN HIS ANNUAL MESSAGE TO THE PARLIAMENT, PRESIDENT PETRO POROSHENKO DETERMINED KEY TASKS FOR UKRAINE'S EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL POLICY

On 4 June 2015 the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko addressed the Verkhovna Rada with his Annual Message "On the Internal and External Situation of Ukraine in 2015."¹⁹ It should be noted that, unlike the previous similar documents, this year's Message does not lack the clear priorities for foreign and domestic policy, linked with ***two strategic directions, namely the European integration and defence against Russian aggression.***

The President noted that **Ukraine has finally put an end to the policy of "the infamous multivector orientation," and clearly defined foreign and domestic orientation, namely the "unequivocal and irreversible course towards the EU membership and profound Europeanization of Ukraine."** Petro Poroshenko appealed to the Parliament with request to appoint to the Government a vice-premier responsible for the European integration.

As for NATO membership, the President noted that due to Russian aggression, the number of Ukrainians supporting the idea of joining NATO exceeded the number of opponents. But the issue still causes differences between the regions and there is a lack of corresponding good will among the NATO member states. However, **the President promised that Kyiv would not "look at Moscow in this issue," but would work to achieve all NATO membership criteria**, focusing on the goal of joining the Alliance, as it is noted in National Security Strategy of Ukraine.

Approach to the issue of Ukraine's defence has been radically changed as well. Petro Poroshenko announced the end of the "reckless policy of ***absurd pacifism***" and destruction of Armed Forces for the sake of Russia's interests, after which Ukraine found itself with only a bit more than 5,000 combat-ready troops in March 2014. Today, more than 50,000 Ukrainian troops are defending the country only in the ATO area, while the overall strength of the Armed Forces is 250,000 troops. Defence spending increased from 0.96% of GDP in 2013 to 5% of GDP in 2015. Ukraine also increased spending on weapons upgrading – from 1.5 to 19.2 bln. UAH.

It must be said that not everything in the modernization of the Armed Forces of Ukraine goes successfully, and in June 2015 the authorities dismissed the head of the

¹⁹ <http://www.president.gov.ua/news/shorichne-poslannya-prezidenta-ukrayini-do-verhovnoyi-radi-u-35412>.

Kharkiv tank plant named after Malyshev and the head of the Lviv armoured plant because of insufficient pace of production.

However, in general the Armed Forces became much stronger, and this fact was proved by **professional actions of Ukrainian military during repelling of Russian-separatist attack at the town of Marinka in Donetsk region on 3 June 2015**. The Armed Forces of Ukraine successfully repelled the attack of about one thousand militants and several dozens of armoured equipment. Thereat Ukrainian military did not forget to inform the OSCE mission of the need to temporary return to the line of contact the heavy equipment, which had been previously withdrawn. Thus Kyiv secured itself against the unfounded accusations of alleged violation of the Minsk agreements.

It is important that President recognized in his Message the fact that for many years ahead Ukraine would have to live under the risk of Russian invasion. The awareness of threats and the early preparation is the best way to avoid the aggression.

Petro Poroshenko emphasized the terms of peace plan for Donbas: withdrawal of Russian troops, weapons and equipment from the territory of Ukraine; establishing control over the border; and local elections by the Ukrainian legislation, in accordance with the standards of the OSCE and Europe. Recovering of all economic ties with the temporarily occupied territories is subject to the restoration of control over the external border as provided for in the Minsk agreements. Thus the President responded to the Moscow's attempts to impose its scenario, namely to legalize its proxy regimes and to restore Kyiv's funding of them while maintaining Russian military presence.

It is also important that the President is aware of the **potential risks, related to the local elections scheduled for the fall 2015**. Petro Poroshenko said that Ukrainian security services would be ready to resist Russia's attempts of rocking situation through its agents of influence. The President stressed that the decentralization in Ukraine had nothing to do with federalization: **"Ukraine was, is and will remain a unitary state!"**

The President mentioned such important achievement as reducing gas dependence on Russia. In 2014-2015 **the share of Russian gas in Kyiv's export decreased from 92% to 36%**. Large-scale gas reverse from the EU countries and negotiations with involvement of the European partners forced Moscow to make concessions in its price politics, and now Ukraine pay for Russian gas at market-value price (although officially Moscow considers such price a subject to quarterly discounts).

Strategically correct is President's decision **to define English learning a priority of state development strategy**. Knowledge of English would open for the Ukrainians the possibilities of full integration into the world community, including the information flows and scientific achievements. Thus the Ukrainians would break the limits imposed by Russian propaganda concept of the so-called 'Russian World.'

The President objectively assessed **the fight against corruption as the main task for the government**. In this context, Petro Poroshenko announced the course on deoligarchization, deregulation, decentralization and demonopolization, as well as reforming of the courts and the prosecution, and the introduction of electronic tender procurement. It should be noted that fight against corruption is really a major task, which will define the success of not only domestic but also foreign policy, and further support for the Government by both Ukrainian people and the international community will depend on the progress in this field.