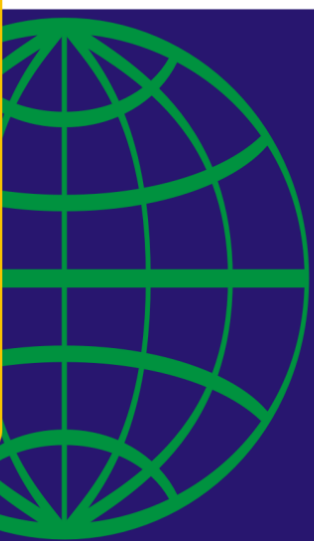


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UKRAINE – THE EUROPEAN UNION



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

YES-2015 ANNUAL MEETING REFLECTED BOTH POSITIVE AND PROBLEMATIC ASPECTS OF UKRAINE'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION

The 12th annual meeting of Yalta European Strategy (YES) held on September 10-12, 2015, reflected successes and problematic aspects of Ukraine's international positioning. Both the theme of the meeting ("At Risk: How New Ukraine's Fate Affects Europe and the World") and the place where YES-2015 was held (in Kyiv, instead of Yalta) indicated the existence of serious problems and risks. Three main topics were discussed at the meeting: Ukraine's security in the context of Russian aggression; the reforms; and Western support for Kyiv.

Wide presence of international leaders at the meeting should be considered as a positive signal to Kyiv, for it indicated that Ukraine did not fall off the world community's agenda. Among more than 350 guests from two dozens of countries one could mention such prominent figures as former European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso; European Commissioner for Neighborhood Policy Johannes Hahn; the OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier; former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen; former IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn; Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland; former Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott; former U.S. Ambassadors to Ukraine Steven Pifer and John Herbst; former CIA Director David Petraeus; former Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski; former Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski; former Swedish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, and many others. The Ukrainian side was presented by President Petro Poroshenko, Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin, and a number of other current and former top-level officials.

Special interest to the views of the YES-2015 guests was caused by the fact that the majority of them were former officials, who kept ties with the ruling circles, but acted as experts not being burdened with requirements of the official diplomatic etiquette.

The results of interactive polls indicated that the majority of the YES-2015 participants did not expect a quick resolution of the conflict in Donbas: 58% of foreign guests and 53% of Ukrainian participants believed that in three years, Ukraine would have frozen conflict; however, it would not prevent Ukraine from the economic growth. Only 22% of foreign visitors and 29% of Ukrainian participants considered that Crimea and East would become closer to solution in the next three years. 17% of foreign guests and 14% of Ukrainian visitors considered that ceasefire would be uneasy, and the survival of Ukraine would depend on international support. 3% foreign and Ukrainian participants believed that Ukraine will continue

losing territories.¹ The warning fact is that foreign guests proved to be more pessimistic than Ukrainian participants of the YES-2015. That may indicate that the first ones better know the limits of Western readiness to help Ukraine withstand Russia's pressure.

President of the Brookings Institution **Strobe Talbott** voiced an opinion that the current breather in Donbas is caused by Vladimir Putin's attempt "to divert the attention of Western politicians" on the eve of the UN General Assembly session and of the EU decision on the extension of sanctions. After Putin's objectives are achieved, Russia may escalate again.²

Two of the three scenarios voiced by **Alexander Kwasniewski**, were far from being optimistic: "The negative scenario – and we have to be ready for it – is that Russia continues its aggressive policy with the main aim to put all of Ukraine into its sphere of influence, not just a part of it. ... The second scenario is more positive – Russia is ready to soften its position and to change its policy because of some unpleasant circumstances, which Putin did not expect. ... The third scenario – frankly, we do not know what Putin will do, his policy is completely unpredictable." It should be noted that **even the "positive" scenario voiced by Kwasniewski, does not envisage Ukraine's full freedom in foreign policy choice – it may integrate with the EU, but not with the NATO**: "The majority of NATO member states are not ready to accept Ukraine's joining now. Therefore, we have to propose some other safeguards system for Ukraine. I believe that we, together with the U.S., Russia and Europe, can talk about some guarantees for Ukraine to preserve its sovereignty, stability and security, to exclude the risk of being attacked some other day by "big brother" to annex a part of its territory."³ But the problem is that Kyiv has tested already the reliability of such other "guarantees," granted under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994.

One should also pay attention to **the unnerving forecasts by Jose Manuel Barroso and David Petraeus on the Crimea issue**. Both of them believe that Ukraine should not expect a quick return of the peninsula, and former CIA chief is not sure that it will happen ever.⁴

Leonid Kuchma, being the Ukraine's representative to the Trilateral contact group, urged "to prevent the soft-peddalling of what is going on in Ukraine." The ex-President noted: "Some would want this to happen. We hear the voices of those directly participating in the Normandy format talks. We are worried! The whole situation is moving in the direction of making this a frozen conflict with neither peace, nor war. This meets the interests of our neighbor, above all." Mr. Kuchma also rightly noted that **peace talks should involve "all the countries which signed the Budapest Memorandum, including the USA and Great Britain. I would also add the People's Republic of China** as it has also committed to ensure the territorial integrity of Ukraine after it gave up nuclear weapons."⁵

The foreign and Ukrainian participants of the YES-2015 expressed similar positions concerning the tools to force Russia stop aggression. **Petro Poroshenko⁶ and Victoria Nuland⁷ mentioned the possible strengthening of sanctions**, if Russia continues violating the Minsk agreement. They also stressed that sanctions should not be lifted, until Russia returns Crimea to Ukraine. **Arseniy Yatsenyuk and Radoslaw Sikorski focused on power factor to deter Russia**. Ukrainian Prime

¹ <http://yes-ukraine.org/en/Yalta-annual-meeting/12th-yalta-annual-meeting/rezultati-interaktivnih-opituvan>.

² <http://apostrophe.com.ua/article/society/2015-09-13/na-donbasse-est-dva-stsenariya-odnogo-ya-boyus---diplomati-iz-ssha/2255>

³ <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2015/09/12/7081097>

⁴ <http://yes-ukraine.org/ua/news/zahid-nikoli-ne-viznaye-aneksiyi-krimu-zhoze-manuel-barrozu>

⁵ <http://yes-ukraine.org/en/news/perevedennya-konfliktu-na-donbasi-v-zamorozheniy-nepripustimo-leonid-kuchma>

⁶ <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vistup-prezidenta-ukrayini-petra-poroshenka-na-12-j-shorichn-35956>

⁷ <http://ukrainian.voanews.com/content/us-ukraine-russia-nuland/2961143.html>

Minister urged the U.S. to transfer defensive weapons to Ukraine: "I agree when they say that there is no military solution to the conflict. But at the same time **there is no solution to the conflict without the military component**."⁸ Mr. Sikorski rightly noted: "President Putin is a very practical man. Language of values and common sense is unfamiliar to him. He finds more convincing the language of Abrams tanks, F-22 and javelins on the NATO border and, perhaps, even closer to Russia."⁹ **Anders Fogh Rasmussen** said that if the truce is violated, "it means that it's time for the Western powers to consider the possibility of transferring weapon to Ukraine."¹⁰

The 27th President of Harvard University **Lawrence Summers** called on the **U.S., the EU and the World Bank to provide more financial aid to Ukraine, stressing that "it is not the charity, but investment in security"**: "There is no better investment in American, European and global security than the provision of additional \$5-10 bn. a year to support Ukraine – provided that serious reforms continue." With this, it should be noted that Mr. Summers considers that **"European governments are incredibly interested in Ukraine as a buffer in terms of security."**¹¹

The YES-2015 meeting confirmed that the international community is concerned with Ukraine's problems and is ready to support Kyiv; but Western assistance would not go beyond the EU and the U.S. own security interests. **If Kyiv wants to count on something more than a frozen conflict in Donbas and the role of "security buffer" for Europe – it has to prove its rights** with effective reforms and with ability to defend own interests – economically, politically, diplomatically, and by force if needed.



⁸ <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2015/09/12/7081041>

⁹ <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/interview/2015/09/16/7038343>

¹⁰ <http://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2015/09/11/7038111>

¹¹ <http://nv.ua/ukr/publications/jakshcho-shcho-to-v-ukrajini-pide-ne-tak-%E2%80%93-vsim-dovedetsja-zaplatiti-nabagato-bilshe-samij-perekonanij-spich-yes-pro-groshi-i-ukrajinu-68455.html>

UKRAINE – NATO



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

UKRAINE IS ON ITS WAY TO PREPARE FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP

On September 2, 2015, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (NSDC) approved **a new draft Military Doctrine of Ukraine, which defines Russia as military adversary of Ukraine; and confirms the abandonment of non-alignment policy, and restoration of the strategic course on Euro-Atlantic integration.**¹² The new doctrine assumes the high probability of large-scale use of military force against Ukraine as the major threat to national security in the military sphere. At the NSDC meeting, President Petro Poroshenko noted that the previous military doctrine was based on false expectation of the attack from the West. The new doctrine sets a task to redeploy military units and formations and to **establish proper military infrastructure in eastern and southern regions**. The document also **shifts the emphasis to the complex use of military and non-military instruments in so called "hybrid war."**

Although the doctrine recognizes that in the medium term, Ukraine will primarily use its own capacity, but the document sets a task **to ensure full compatibility of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with respective NATO forces by 2020**. President Poroshenko ordered that the final version of doctrine "must provide for the achievement of not only criteria, but also **full NATO membership.**"¹³

As for the practical implementation of the Euro-Atlantic integration course – on September 2, 2015, it was reported that **Ukraine renews its participation in NATO Planning and Review Process**. The main attention will be paid to the measures to strengthen interoperability between Ukrainian Armed Forces of and NATO forces.¹⁴

Five NATO Trust Funds at €5.4 mln. are to start working in Ukraine in the near future: €2.09 mln. to be spend on modernization of communications; €1.2 mln. to reform the system of logistics and standardization; €0.85 mln. on physical rehabilitation of wounded soldiers; €0.82 mln. on cyber-security; and €0.41 mln. on social adaptation of soldiers.¹⁵

From August 31 to September 12, in Odesa and Mykolaiv regions and in the northwestern part of the Black Sea, the Ukrainian-American military training "Sea Breeze – 2015" took place, involving 1.5 thousand troops from 12 countries, 18 warships, including the U.S. Navy destroyer "Donald Cook" and Ukrainian

¹² <http://www.rnbo.gov.ua/en/news/2253.html>

¹³ <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/nova-voyenna-doktrina-vihodit-z-trivalosti-zagrozi-z-boku-ro-35907>

¹⁴ <http://nato.mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/news/39655-ukrajina-vidnovlyuje-uchasty-u-programi-nato-proces-planuvannya-ta-ocinki-sil>

¹⁵ <http://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2015/09/08/ministerstvo-oboroni-ukraini-gotuetsya-to-startu-roboti-v-ukraini-pyati-trastovih-fondiv-nato-na-zagalnu-sumu-5-4-miliona-evro-->

Navy frigate "Hetman Sahaidachny," as well as 14 planes and helicopters, and 25 armored vehicles. Military trained their skills in aerial reconnaissance, landing troops, and operations to protect important objects of the coastal infrastructure – that is especially important due to the potential threat of Russian saboteurs' attacks.

On September 14, at the International Peacekeeping and Security Center located in Yavoriv (Lviv region), the Ukrainian-Canadian military training course "Operation Unifier" started. Within 18 months, two hundred Canadian instructors will teach Ukrainian militaries on tactical military medicine and military support, to defend the roadblocks and to neutralize explosive devices. **On September 15, in Yavoriv training area, the third stage of Ukrainian-American exercises "Fearless Guardian – 2015" started,** providing training for the instructors of the National Guard of Ukraine, who will transfer the acquired skills in their respective units later. Top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Jack Reed said that American instructors would train the soldiers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine as well. Senator suggested the possibility of deploying the U.S. weapons in Ukrainian training areas – to let Ukrainian soldiers study how to use it.¹⁶ In fact, it could be the first step towards the transfer of American weapons to Ukraine.

By the way, it was reported in September, that the **American company "Aerovironment" is to supply small reconnaissance drones RQ-11B Raven for the Armed Forces of Ukraine.** The relevant contract was signed with the U.S. Army at \$9.05 mil. to be paid by special fund of the U.S. defense budget.¹⁷

From September 14 to October 21, in Hungary, Ukrainian troops will take part in NATO exercises "Brave Warrior – 2015." The exercises will involve army units from 14 countries, including Hungary, the U.S., Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia and Ukraine, as well as 150 pieces of military equipment, and the U.S. military aircrafts.

On September 7, at NATO Headquarters, the meeting of Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg was held. The sides discussed NATO-Ukraine cooperation after the Wales summit, and outlined plans for the NATO Secretary General's visit to Ukraine, scheduled for September 21-22. Kyiv puts high hopes on this visit. It is planned that Jens Stoltenberg will take part in the meeting of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine; the official diplomatic status of the Alliance Mission to Ukraine is to be enlarged, and the road map for the cooperation in the field of strategic communications is to be signed.

So, after a long period of "stagnation" lasting from the times of Viktor Yanukovych presidency till the end of the previous year, the **NATO-Ukraine relations have gain a new momentum.** It was preceded by the following prerequisites: Kyiv clearly made decision to move towards NATO membership; Ukrainian Armed Forces demonstrated increasing combat abilities and readiness for reforms; and the Alliance's leadership realized the hopelessness of the "appeasement" policy towards Russia.

¹⁶ <http://thehill.com/policy/defense/253209-dem-senator-us-military-to-soon-begin-training-ukrainian-military-forces>

¹⁷ http://dt.ua/UKRAINE/amerikanska-kompaniya-postavit-ukrayini-veliku-partiyu-malih-bezpilotnikov-184758_.html

FOREIGN POLICY OF UKRAINE



KEY THEME ANALYSIS

CAN THE SYRIAN CARD HELP PUTIN TO IMPLEMENT HIS SCENARIO IN DONBAS?

A significant decrease in the intensity of hostilities in Donbas, starting from August 31, 2015, caused talks about possible readiness of Vladimir Putin to abandon his previous plan for Donbas and to search for some compromise. On September 9, in "Normandy" format telephone conversations it was agreed to hold a meeting of foreign ministers in Berlin, on September 12, and to hold a "Normandy" summit in Paris, in early October. Western politicians and experts put high hopes on this summit, and believe that a ceasefire in Donbas is the first step towards a lasting peace.

However, the present breather in Donbas looks like Russia's tactical move on the eve of Vladimir Putin's trip to the UN General Assembly session, for he wants to present himself as a peacemaker, not as an aggressor. The readiness of Western leaders to deceive themselves over the Russian "peacekeeping" initiatives is well-known (the Minsk agreements proof it), and Moscow hopes that the illusion of peace in Ukraine will undermine the chances of diplomatic initiatives on creating the international tribunal on Malaysian Boeing MH-17 and on depriving Russia of the veto right in the UN Security Council.

One should admit that Russia's tactic successfully influences its recipients. French President Francois Hollande already promised to speak in favor of lifting the sanctions, if the peace process succeeds; and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier described the Berlin meeting of "Normandy" foreign ministers of September 12 as "less confrontational and more successful."¹⁸ It should be noted that Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin described the same Berlin talks as "traditionally difficult," stressing the remaining different approaches of the parties to the majority of the issues.¹⁹

As soon as the Russian side began to adhere to armistice in Donbas, Moscow renewed its attempts to shift on Kyiv the responsibility for the failure of the Minsk agreements. When visiting the annexed Crimea, on September 12, Vladimir Putin said that all the issues of political settlement, including the constitutional

¹⁸ http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2015/150912_BM_AM_Treffen_Normandie_Format.html

¹⁹ http://www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/news/klimkin_rozbignosti_mig_storonami_peregovoriv_zalishayutsya_mayge_z_usih_pitan_2094654

amendments and local elections, should be addressed by Kyiv in "direct contact" and "with approval" of the self-proclaimed authorities of Donetsk and Luhansk. Putin also hinted that the implementation of Minsk II may be postponed to 2016.²⁰ The very same day, the representative of the so-called "DPR" Denis Pushilin said also about the need to postpone the implementation of Minsk II, accusing Kyiv of disrupting the timing of agreements.²¹

Another Moscow's tactical move was to increase its military presence in Syria. **Being aware of how sensitive the Syrian issue is for the U.S. and the EU, Russia decided to put them before a difficult choice.** Escalation in Syria threatens with greater flow of refugees to Europe, increases security risks for the U.S. allies in the Middle East, and causes political tensions among the Western allies over the ways to resolve those problems. On the other hand, the migrants from Donbas cause problems just for the Ukrainian economy solely; and the balance of foreign policy priorities of the current White House Administration is not in favor of Ukraine. Thus, Putin hopes that the EU and the U.S. will find the Syrian issue more urgent for their own interests, and will agree to concede in Ukraine, in particular, to put pressure on Kyiv over the constitutional amendments and separatist's "elections."

Moscow wants the Syrian issue to overshadow the Ukrainian one at the UN General Assembly session. Thus, Russia hopes to be treated not as an aggressor, but as a member of the antiterrorist coalition, interpreting its military presence in Syria as assistance for Bashar al-Assad in his fight against the "Islamic state." Moscow has already reached some progress in that direction – at the Berlin meeting of foreign ministers Sergei Lavrov discussed with his German and French colleagues not only Ukraine, but Syria also. And the White House spokesman Joshua Ernest did not rule out the possibility of Barack Obama's meeting with Vladimir Putin on the Syrian issue.²²

The absence of real intentions in Moscow to stop its aggression against Ukraine is eloquently indicated by separatists' refusal to abandon plans of their own "elections," as well as by the beginning of construction of a large Russian military base in the Belgorod region, near Ukrainian border.²³

Russia has not changed the course of its policy; it continues relying on such tools as manipulation, blackmail and military force. If Moscow manages to persuade the EU and the U.S. to concede in Ukraine for the sake of mythical Kremlin's concessions in Syria, then Putin will become even more sure in the efficiency of his foreign policy course, and will continue applying his favorite methods in different regions all over the world.

²⁰ <http://tass.ru/en/politics/820671>

²¹ <http://ria.ru/world/20150912/1246375919.html>; <http://tass.ru/en/world/820646>

²² <http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/2261882>

²³ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/09/us-ukraine-crisis-exclusive-idUSKCN0R924G20150909>