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## Topics:

- Ukraine – European Union
- Foreign and Defense Policy of Ukraine
- The course of the Russian-Ukrainian war

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## Ukraine – European Union

- *THEME ANALYSIS: Security agreement and the start of EU membership negotiations: what preferences and challenges await Ukraine?*



*Photo: Office of the President of Ukraine*

On June 25, 2024, in Luxembourg, the European Ministers of all EU member states and the Ukrainian government delegation announced the start of official negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the EU. This event, according to standard EU rules, has more symbolic than practical significance. At this stage, no specific compromises or agreements are reached, but the legal process is launched, which should ultimately lead to Ukraine's full membership in the European Union.

Simultaneously with the launch of the negotiations, Ukraine was forced to negotiate a trilateral compromise with the European Union and Hungary. Hungary, which has a pro-Russian government and is a member of the EU but often acts at odds with the common European position on Ukraine, was a major obstacle before the talks began. **In order to get the green light, Ukraine had to enshrine in its legislation 11 requirements put forward by Hungary that discriminate against the Ukrainian education system.**

However, both Kyiv and Brussels have shown great interest in launching accession talks, which has been known for a long time. Last year, Ukrainian officials and diplomats hoped that the process could be launched at the end of 2023. However, Hungarian resistance prevented this. In December 2023, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban expressed his intention to block Ukraine's European integration, but under pressure from other EU countries he was forced to back down, which led to the legendary scene when he "went out for coffee" and did not veto the vote on Ukraine. This allowed EU leaders to make a decision in principle to start accession talks, although the exact date remained open. Kyiv had expected the process

to start in March-April, but these dates were pushed back due to political circumstances.

There are reports that the new postponement was supported by various political players. Oliver Varghese, the European Commissioner from Hungary, along with his supporters, blocked the necessary procedures, but finally a compromise was reached.<sup>1</sup> As the EU was preparing for the European Parliament elections in the spring, the start of the Ukrainian negotiations was postponed until after the vote, but with the condition that it should happen by the end of June. On July 1, Hungary took over the presidency of the EU Council, which would have made it much more difficult to start negotiations with Ukraine under its leadership. Ukraine used all possible resources to lobby for the launch of the process in June and eventually succeeded.

However, **the Hungarian threat has not gone away**. *"Unfortunately, Hungary has already made it clear that it will not prioritize Ukraine's European integration. It has already announced its priorities for the presidency, and we are not there,"* Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze<sup>2</sup>, chair of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the EU, told Ukrinform. This was confirmed by Hungary's official representative to the EU, Balint Odor. At a briefing on June 18, he said that Budapest would closely monitor developments in Ukraine and "include all necessary aspects on the agenda if necessary."

Nevertheless, it can be observed that **other European countries are ready to continue negotiations and accelerate Ukraine's accession process, so they will look for ways to circumvent the Hungarian factor**. Further accession negotiations for Ukraine within the European Union will be based on meaningful reforms in the areas of justice, democracy and public administration. An important aspect of this process is the ongoing monitoring of progress, which will be carried out through the establishment of indicators and benchmarks. The EU reserves the option to suspend or resume negotiations in case of serious violations of standards and values. The EU's goal is to successfully implement the entire plan, which should result in Ukraine's accession to the EU, while ensuring flexibility in case of unforeseen events.

But the development of Ukraine's ***European perspective does not end there***. On June 27, 2024, it signed security agreements with Lithuania and Estonia, as well as a general agreement with the EU. The agreement is divided into two parts. ***The first part*** concerns military assistance, defense industry support, and intelligence for Ukraine. ***The second part*** is more focused on humanitarian aid, including demining, support for Ukrainian refugees in Europe, strengthening of anti-Russian sanctions, and the demands of an international tribunal against Russia. This agreement is important for Ukraine, especially in light of its complicated relations with Hungary. **The main goal** of the agreement is ***to ensure stable and lasting support for Ukraine, given the current political context, where support for far-right forces and those who support Russia may increase***. Thus, the signing of this agreement and similar ones is important **to ensure sustainable support for Ukraine, as their denunciation would require much more effort and the consent of all 27 EU member states**. This makes such a development much more unlikely.

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal announced that Ukraine has signed 20 security agreements with allies, including the EU and the US. This opens up wide opportunities for defense cooperation and creates a foundation for future peacetime security, which is extremely important. The financial support of \$60 billion per year for the next 4 years will significantly contribute to all aspects of strengthening national security, including military support, reforms, and the fight against corruption. These agreements also play the role of intensifiers of the European integration process, as they depend on the fulfillment of international

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<sup>1</sup> ЄС відкрив сторінку історії. Що дають Україні переговори про вступ та які виклики попереду. 25.06.2024. <https://www.euointegration.com.ua/articles/2024/06/25/7188893/>

<sup>2</sup> Переговори про вступ України в ЄС почались: чому це так важливо до 1 липня. 25.06.2024. <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/c511p8zlnxpo?xtor=AL-73-%5Bpartner%5D-%5Bukr%5D-%5Bheadline%5D-%5Bukrainian%5D-%5Bbizdev%5D-%5Bisapi%5D>

requirements and standards.

At the same time, with regard to the Russian Federation, it is worth noting that even with sanctions in place, it earns significant amounts of money, most of which it spends on military spending, including missile production and information and psychological operations. In this regard, comparison with Russia's resources remains a challenge. Nevertheless, our efforts and international support are key to strengthening national security and geopolitical stability in the region.

In addition to these aspects of security and cooperation, the term "*long-term support*" is of particular importance in these agreements. Each signing of such agreements also includes financial assistance to Ukraine. Theoretically, it is possible to renounce the commitments, but this would require fundamental changes in each partner country. Kyiv and the military and political leadership are actively working to "cement" all agreements with our partners by concluding bilateral agreements at the level of the EU and other international institutions.

The importance of these agreements is confirmed by agreements with countries such as Japan, Canada, and especially the United States. Political analyst Dmytro Zhmaylo is more optimistic about the results of these agreements, as each country has already made specific financial commitments. For example, Estonia has promised to spend 0.25% of its GDP to help Ukraine, which is a good example of sustainable support. Further results will soon be seen on the front line, where timely delivery of weapons and armaments will be a particularly important indicator of the effectiveness of these agreements.<sup>3</sup>

So, in general, **Ukraine has managed to overcome the main challenge - the start of negotiations for the Budapest presidency. And also to add a security agreement to it in a positive way.** All of this, of course, secures a guarantee of Ukraine's European future. But now the question has changed from "If?" to "When?" And it is not inferior in seriousness, because we can see that there is no maximum time limit, and this process may well be frozen for a long time. Therefore, Kyiv will now face the task of maintaining and accelerating it. It will have to overcome obstacles such as the Hungarian factor and the potential rise to power of pro-Russian forces in Europe, but at the same time, it will have to show its political will. This includes maintaining a dialog and faithfully complying with the requirements that will ensure Ukraine's European integration. However, **overall, the prospects for today are very positive.**

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<sup>3</sup> Безпекові угоди наблизатимуть Україну до членства у ЄС і НАТО — Дмитро Жмайло. 01.07.2024.  
<https://ukr.radio/news.html?newsID=104698>

## Foreign and Defense Policy of Ukraine

- *THEME ANALYSIS: Peace Summit in Switzerland: results and prospects for ending the war*



*Source: Office of President of Ukraine*

The Peace Summit in Switzerland ended on June 16 with statements by the leaders of the countries and the publication of a joint communiqué. The joint statement on the summit's outcome states that the event was held to "enhance high-level dialogue on the path to a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace for Ukraine." The participants reached a common vision in three key aspects.

**First**, the communiqué emphasizes that Ukraine's nuclear power plants, including Zaporizhzhia NPP, must operate safely and securely under "full sovereign control of Ukraine and in accordance with the principles of the IAEA and under its supervision." **Secondly**, the summit participants emphasized the "crucial importance" of ensuring free, full and safe commercial navigation in the Black and Azov Seas, as well as access to seaports. "Attacks on merchant ships in ports and along the entire route, as well as on civilian ports and civilian port infrastructure, are unacceptable," the document says. Food security should not be used as a weapon. Ukrainian agricultural products should be safely and freely supplied to interested third countries, the communiqué states. **Third**, all prisoners of war should be released through a full exchange. All deported and illegally displaced Ukrainian children, as well as other illegally detained Ukrainian civilians, must be returned to Ukraine.

In turn, the UN Charter, including the principles of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states, will serve as the basis for a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace in Ukraine, the communiqué emphasizes. "This summit has shown that international support for Ukraine is not weakening, but on the contrary, it is strong," President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy said at the final press conference, answering questions from the BBC.<sup>4</sup>

However, *the final communiqué was not supported by all the countries* that participated in the summit. The document was signed by 80 countries and four international organizations. However, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the Vatican, Thailand, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Brazil, the United Arab Emirates, Armenia, and Libya abstained from joining. China did not participate in the peace summit at all. Zelenskyy noted that some countries are still considering joining the communiqué and should hold internal consultations before making a decision. The document remains open for accession, and the President of Ukraine expects the number of countries supporting it to increase. The President also commented on the position of China and Brazil, which, according to some reports, have their own plan for peace talks to end the war in Ukraine. "We will be happy to hear their opinions, even if they do not coincide with the opinion of the majority of the world," Zelenskyy said. He emphasized that he does not consider China an enemy and would like the country's authorities to help Ukraine and respect its territorial integrity. "I would like China to be a friend of Ukraine," he added.

Zelenskyy noted that the further action plan after the summit includes working meetings with representatives of the countries, and subsequently **a plan to end the war will be developed, which will be presented at the second peace summit, where Russia is also expected to participate.** *"Their (Russia's) presence there will testify to their decision to end the war,"* the president said. *He also noted that negotiations between the countries could begin earlier if Russia withdraws its troops from Ukraine.* Zelenskyy pointed out that on the eve of the summit, Vladimir Putin made a mistake by demanding that Ukraine leave the controlled territories as a condition for the start of "peace talks." This statement, according to Zelenskyy, greatly changed the opinion of many world leaders.

But despite this, the communiqué concludes with the need for **"engagement and dialogue between all parties."** *This means that Russia also needs to be involved in the dialogue, although it is not specifically mentioned.* Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, now NATO Secretary General, said at the Burgenstock meeting: "This meeting is perhaps an even stronger signal to Putin. I want to tell him that many around this table believe that Russia should have been here today. We need Russia to be involved. But the powerful message that is being sent today is **that peace is only possible if Russia adheres to the basic norms and values that concern us all.**

**There are currently virtually no signals that the Russian leadership understands this.** Before the Swiss peace summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin said at a meeting at the Russian Foreign Ministry that he was ready for peace talks, but that Ukrainian troops should withdraw from four regions that are currently partially occupied-Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson. He also talked about guaranteeing that Ukraine would not join NATO and repeated his old theses about the "demilitarization" and "denazification" of Ukraine. On June 16, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Putin did not rule out talks with Ukraine, but *"wants guarantees."*

Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council Dmitry Medvedev called the summit in Switzerland such that "none of the participants of the 'peace forum' knows what they are doing there and what their role is." Ukraine deliberately did not invite Russia to the Swiss summit, nor to the four meetings of political advisers. **The entire strategy of Ukraine and its partners is to first develop principles and foundations for a just and sustainable peace, create a framework agreement, and only then engage Russia. The goal is to put pressure on Moscow by the international community to accept a peace that is fair to Kyiv, especially given that neither Russia nor Ukraine is making progress on the frontline, and the war is exhausting both sides.**

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in Burgenstock that the

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<sup>4</sup> Саміт миру в Швейцарії: які його результати і що буде далі.16.06.2024.  
<https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/articles/cjqqqevxnjlo>

summit was not a peace negotiation because "Putin is not serious about ending the war, he insists on capitulating and seizing Ukrainian territory - even the territory that is not occupied today." However, Russia may still be involved. According to Swiss President Viola Amgerd, the world should prepare the ground for direct talks between Ukraine and Russia. ***"If we want to inspire the process towards peace, Russia must also be included at some point in the future,"*** she said, adding that the question remains: how to include Russia in the peace process?<sup>5</sup>

**China** could also play an important role, although it did not participate in the Swiss summit. According to the British press, President Vladimir Putin asked Xi Jinping not to participate during his May visit to Beijing. China has participated in only one event to implement the "Peace Formula" - a meeting of advisers in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in August 2023. However, China recently unveiled a new plan with Brazil after its first "peace plan" of February 2023. Observers believe that if anyone can influence Moscow from the outside, it is primarily China, and that the influence is exerted through Western sanctions against Russia and military and financial assistance to Ukraine. Zelensky advised Beijing to communicate its peace initiatives directly with Kyiv, not through the media.

Meanwhile, the working groups will continue their activities, developing an **Action Plan**. According to President Zelensky, the Second Summit will be held afterwards. Its date is still unknown. Perhaps, as the Austrian Chancellor noted, another conference will be held before the second summit, possibly a meeting of political and security advisors. Earlier it was assumed that the second summit could take place this fall, and that Russia could be invited. In Burgenstock, President Zelensky expressed his desire for the Second Summit to record a real end to the war, which is point number 10 in Ukraine's "Peace Formula." The head of Swiss diplomacy suggested that the next summit or peace conference could take place before the US presidential election scheduled for November. In other words, the Summit is in fact only the first step in a complex and lengthy process. For this reason, it can be considered a **diplomatic success**. Ukraine has at least begun to be an element in the context of the political discourse of the Global South, but it has not been able to make the world completely pro-Ukrainian.

Appealing to international law and consolidating a peace plan that meets Ukraine's interests is a critical task for the future. To do this, Kyiv needs to take its time and plan its steps carefully and strategically.

On Wednesday, July 3, 2024, the Institute of Foreign Policy Studies, with the organizational support of the State Enterprise "GDIP", held a round table on the topic: "The Peace Summit in Switzerland as a Test for Peace or World War III". Oleksandr Musienko, Head of the Center for Military and Legal Studies, noted that all countries strive for peace. However, each country, and in this case, the pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian blocs, understand it differently. Nevertheless, **the idea of a peace summit is important because it gives central importance to the Ukrainian vision of its own future**. And it makes sense to organize a large platform that can continue to become an important tool for international communication. And now, at a time of uncertainty about its Western partners, it is important for Kyiv to consider various scenarios. At the same time, the **decisive role remains in the field of battle**. Therefore, it is important for Ukraine to convince the world that even in a positional war, Kyiv will have an advantage, and the Ukrainian-Russian conflict is a decisive milestone in civilizational history.

Hryhoriy Perepelytsia noted that today all peace plans that include freezing the conflict will mean a long-term loss of Ukrainian subjectivity. **And the Peace Summit, like its second installation, will not lead to peace. After all, the Ukrainian-Russian war is a milestone in global contradictions, where a new system of international relations and world order will be built. And now Ukraine should build its strategy on new mechanisms to ensure**

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<sup>5</sup> «Міліметр за міліметром» до миру. Що далі після Саміту миру у Швейцарії?16.06.2024  
<https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/samit-myru-shveytsariya-ukrayina-viyna-analiz/32995413.html>.



**the triumph of the Western democratic world, because it is the winners who shape the future world order.**



Source: Army FM

### ■ Changes at the front

**Trend:** *Russia's creeping offensive continues along the entire front, which will have critical consequences for Ukraine.*

On average, in June, Russian troops fired over 3,300 times per day at Ukrainian troops' positions and populated areas using various types of weapons. The situation was the most intense in the Toretsk, Pokrovske and Kurakhove sectors. The Ukrainian military continues to resolutely repel Russia's attempts to advance deep into our territory, inflicting effective fire damage and depleting it along the entire front line.

*In the Kharkiv direction*, Russia's assault operations in the areas of Vovchansk and Hlyboke continue. The situation remained under control of the Defense Forces.

*In the Kupyansk direction*, Russians attacked in the vicinity of Stelmakhivka, Pishchane and Synkivka. All attacks were repelled.

*In the Lyman direction*, Russians have been trying to break through our defenses in the areas of Nevske, Makiivka, Terny and Torske for a month. 10 attacks were repelled, fighting continues. The situation is under control.

*In the Seversky direction*, the Ukrainian Defense Forces successfully repelled all Russian attacks near Spirne, Verkhnekamianske and Vyymka. The fighting continues.

***In the Kramatorsk direction***, Russians continuously stormed the positions of the Defense Forces in the area of Chasovyi Yar. The most intense fighting took place in Ivanivske and Klishchivka, south of the city. The Ukrainian Armed Forces counterattacked in Klishchivka and achieved tactical success there. Heavy fighting continues.

***In the Toretsk direction***. The situation in this sector has not changed significantly. Russia is conducting combat operations on the outskirts of Toretsk. All enemy assaults were repelled.

The situation in the ***Pokrovsk direction*** remains extremely tense. Russia continues to try to interfere with our combat formations in the areas of Prohres, Novooleksandrivka, Vozdvizhenka, Yevhenivka, Novoselivka Persha, Yasnobrodivka.

***In the Kurakhove direction***, Russian troops advanced in Krasnohorivka. Currently, according to British intelligence, they are likely to control most of the town, while the Ukrainian Armed Forces are present only in the north of Krasnohorivka. The defense forces are taking measures to strengthen the borders and prevent Russian advance.

***At the Vremivsk direction***, Russians put pressure in the areas of Vodiane, Urozhayne, Kostiantynivka and Makarivka. All attacks were repelled. The enemy was not successful.

***In the Orikhiv direction***, Russian attacks were repelled in the areas of Robotyne and Mala Tokmachka.

In June, the Ukrainian Armed Forces struck at more than 330 areas where personnel, weapons and military equipment were concentrated. In June, the aviation of the Defense Forces and units of missile forces and artillery struck more than 330 areas where personnel, weapons and military equipment were concentrated, 25 command posts, 62 air defense facilities, five bases and fuel and lubricant depots, and 20 ammunition depots.

In total, Russia's losses in June amounted to: 33,713 personnel, 352 tanks, 589 armored personnel carriers, 1,393 artillery systems, 22 MLRS, 58 air defense systems, three aircraft, 997 UAVs, 1,758 vehicles and 284 special equipment. The combat work of the soldiers of the 108th separate territorial defense brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is being noted. In their area, they demonstrate persistent combat work, professionalism and an exemplary rate of destroyed enemy manpower and equipment.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Карта бойових дій в Україні станом на 1 липня 2024 року.  
<https://glavcom.ua/country/incidents/karta-bojovikh-dij-v-ukrajini-stanom-na-1-lipnja-2024-roku-1007730.html>

### ■ *Military assistance*

**The EU** has increased the European Peace Facility with two additional tranches of €1 billion each, for a total of €5.6 billion.

**Denmark** is pledging €1 billion in military support throughout the year, including additional Leopard-2 tanks. This corresponds to an increase of €765 million compared to the end of February 2023, or 175%.

**Poland** promised two new additional military assistance packages totaling €581 million. One of the packages included the promise of 14 MiG-29 fighter jets, all of which have already been delivered to Ukraine.

**Germany**, which is now the second largest provider of military aid in absolute terms, increased its military pledges by €3.26 billion, or 76%, to a total of €7.5 billion. These include additional battle tanks, Iris-T air defense systems, and other weapons to strengthen Ukraine's air defense capabilities.

**The Czech Republic** handed over the first batch of ammunition to Ukraine as part of this country's initiative.

**Romania** has decided to transfer another Patriot air defense system to Ukraine.

**South Korea** may provide Ukraine with air defense systems and 155-mm shells, media reports

**The Netherlands:** €1.4 billion of Russian assets will go to artillery, shells and air defense for Ukraine Together with another unnamed country, the Netherlands will provide Ukraine with a Patriot air defense system.

In total, as stated by President Zelensky, Ukraine needs 25 Patriot systems to protect its entire territory. But the immediate need is for 7 such systems.

### ■ *Russia: External and internal challenges*

**Trend:** *Russia is strengthening allied relations with the DPRK: how will this affect the course of the Russian-Ukrainian war?*

Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent visit to North Korea made headlines not only because of its intensity and pathos, but also because of the signing of a mutual military assistance pact, i.e., a military alliance. Even if the visit itself was not supposed to bring any concrete results, it was still an important event. Putin was the first Soviet and Russian leader to visit North Korea, although Nikita Khrushchev had planned a similar trip in 1959, which never materialized. Putin's only visit to North Korea was in 2000, shortly after his first inauguration as president.

In comparison, North Korean leaders have regularly visited both the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia. Kim Il-sung visited the Soviet Union twelve times, and his son Kim Jong-il three times. Current leader Kim Jong-un visited Russia in 2019 and 2023.

The difference in the frequency of visits can be explained by the fact that visiting a country is considered a sign of respect, and for most of the 20th century, the balance of power was such that Pyongyang expressed its respect to Moscow unilaterally. And so the latest visit and meeting between the Russian president and the North Korean leader was a particularly significant event because of the signing of a wide-ranging treaty that effectively restores the 1961 alliance treaty between the Soviet Union and North Korea. This document obliges both

sides to provide mutual military assistance in the event of an attack, and the text of the treaty was virtually copied from the original 1961 treaty with minimal changes.

For North Korea, this means obvious benefits, including military protection and support from Russia. Previously, Russia had remained neutral in relations between Seoul and Pyongyang, but now its position on the conflict has become clear and, most importantly, officially proclaimed. Moscow also actively invested in maximizing attention to the signing of the agreement. This became part of the Kremlin's strategy, which was reinforced by Putin's demonstration of the treaty's clause on mutual military assistance before its publication. Moscow most likely needed this to scare the West.<sup>7</sup>

But we can safely say that the conclusion of such an agreement would seriously undermine Russia's relations with South Korea, which would be a diplomatic defeat for Seoul. The fact is that before that, although South Korea was certainly more pro-Western, it remained neutral. This will no longer work. Seoul has already stated that it will determine the volume of arms supplies to Ukraine based on Russia's position on its relations with North Korea.

National Security Advisor Jang Ho-jin said on Thursday that South Korea would consider supplying weapons to Ukraine after North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a pact on mutual defense in case of war. In response, Putin warned that South Korea would make a "big mistake" if it decided to provide lethal weapons to Ukraine.<sup>8</sup> Among the weapons that Seoul could transfer to Ukraine are 155-mm artillery shells, as well as air defense systems that Ukraine needs. However, Seoul officials remain strategically vague about the types of weapons, viewing it as a diplomatic move to use the opportunity to pressure Moscow to refrain from transferring key military technologies to Pyongyang. In general, such a move could be considered risky for Moscow, but it is in line with its strategic interests and possible benefits in the area of military supplies.

**The meeting between the leaders of Russia and North Korea was clearly anti-Ukrainian in nature.** The main topic of discussion between Putin and Kim Jong-un was, of course, the war in Ukraine. There is ample evidence that North Korea is supplying Russia with significant amounts of military supplies in exchange for fuel and food. There is also interest on the part of Pyongyang in obtaining missile and aviation technology from Russia. This rapprochement between the two totalitarian regimes has caused considerable concern in Europe. Thus, the EU has stated that it is seeking a security and defense partnership with Japan and South Korea. A senior European Commission official expressed a desire to develop partnerships with Japan and South Korea for closer cooperation, emphasizing that the security environment in Europe and Asia is changing rapidly. Brussels aims to reach a ministerial agreement with Japan by the end of the year. Brussels has security and defense partnerships with non-EU countries, such as Norway. This will be the first time that such a partnership has been established with an Asian country.

Japan and the EU share common challenges, such as relatively small national defense industries, high research, development and production costs, and dependence on U.S. contractors. There is a proposal to expand opportunities for Japanese companies to participate in EU-led defense R&D programs. The EU could provide funds for projects between Japanese and European companies. South Korea, meanwhile, is increasing its arms exports to Europe. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Poland placed large orders for South Korean K2 tanks and K9 howitzers. Romania, Finland, and Estonia are also increasing their purchases of South Korean weapons.

In other words, Putin did manage to change the state of affairs in Asia, but not in the

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<sup>7</sup> Cozying Up to North Korea Means Diplomatic Sacrifices for Putin.28.06.2024.

[https://www.google.com/search?q=Cozying+Up+to+North+Korea+Means+Diplomatic+Sacrifices+for+Putin&oq=Cozying+Up+to+North+Korea+Means+Diplomatic+Sacrifices+for+Putin&gs\\_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIBzUyNmowajeoAgCwAgA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=Cozying+Up+to+North+Korea+Means+Diplomatic+Sacrifices+for+Putin&oq=Cozying+Up+to+North+Korea+Means+Diplomatic+Sacrifices+for+Putin&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIBzUyNmowajeoAgCwAgA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

<sup>8</sup> S. Korea's level of arms supply to Ukraine hinges on Russia's actions: presidential office.21.06.2024<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20240621006000315>

direction he wanted. Japan and Korea have long been living under the constant North Korean threat and have clearly realized the impossibility of compromise. That is why they will not retreat, but will only increase their capabilities.

The last leg of Putin's Asian tour is Vietnam, which has also been important since the end of the Cold War. However, the visit to Hanoi did not contribute to the diversification of Russia's economic ties or to taking the place of China, which has complicated relations with Vietnam. The volume of trade between Vietnam and Russia in 2023 was only \$5 billion, compared to \$230 billion with China. The prospects for Russian military exports to Vietnam, which have long been the backbone of their relationship, also do not look promising, as the Russian defense industry is largely focused on the needs of its own army, and Vietnam is looking for other suppliers.

Even in Beijing, Putin's hug with Kim Jong-un may not matter to the Russian leader. In addition, the possibility of provocative actions by a North Korean leader supported by Russia could anger the Chinese leadership. *Beijing does not want to strengthen security ties between Tokyo, Seoul, and Washington, and rejects the idea of a China-Russia-North Korea "northern triangle," preferring instead to encourage cooperation between the United States, Japan, and South Korea, or a "southern triangle."* Thus, although Putin continues to strengthen his ties with authoritarian states that do not shy away from openly providing large-scale support for Russia, his place in Asian politics is being limited. Meanwhile, **new opportunities are opening up for Ukraine that Kyiv should not miss.**