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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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## CONTENT

### ■ UKRAINE - EUROPEAN UNION

*Theme Analysis:* What will be the West's response to Russia's nuclear blackmail?\_\_\_\_\_3

### ■ FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY OF UKRAINE

*Theme Analysis:* Negotiations in the context of weakening Russia threaten a new escalation of the war\_\_\_\_\_6

### ■ THE COURSE OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

(15.09 – 30.09.2022)

Changes at the front\_\_\_\_\_10  
Military assistance\_\_\_\_\_11  
Russia: Internal and external challenges\_\_\_\_\_12

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- *THEME ANALYSIS: What will be the West's response to Russia's nuclear blackmail?*



*Photo: Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin at the talks in Geneva  
Source: Reuters*

The leadership of the United States of America has been trying to develop partnership relations with the Russian Federation for years. For the sake of this partnership, Washington turned a blind eye to all the illegal actions of Moscow, and since the Russian Federation has not received a proper response, this led to the continuation of an aggressive foreign policy of Moscow. At first, russians destroyed Grozny, brutally resumed control over Ichkeria. Further, in 2008, a few months after the Bucharest summit, where Ukraine and Georgia were denied MAP, Russia attacked Georgia and occupied Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In Syria, the Russians, together with the troops of Bashar al-Assad, repeatedly violated the law of war, in particular, during the destruction of Aleppo and the repeated use of chemical weapons. Contrary to these precedents, Russia's journey from Grozny to Aleppo was not accompanied by isolation, containment of threats, as well as the imposition of harsh sanctions. While the threats of the administration of Barack Obama, which took place during the Syrian campaign, were not carried out.

Joe Biden's approach to relations with the Russian Federation was initially based on the desire to avoid direct confrontation. The 46th President of the United States of America began a strategic dialogue with the Kremlin and initiated the summit in Geneva in summer of 2021. At the summit, the parties agreed on a further model of interaction, while Joe Biden was not going to cross the red lines articulated by Vladimir Putin. In fact, Ukraine was left in

the sphere of influence of the Russian Federation in order to find a compromise with Russia, since the United States wanted to avoid rapprochement between Moscow and Beijing.

However, the search for a compromise and concessions to Russia have not brought the results to the American leadership. The Russian leadership always perceives concessions as weakness and demands more. So it was during the Soviet era, so it is happening today. After the concentration of 200,000 troops on the border with Ukraine, the creation of military infrastructure on the territory of Belarus, the deployment of Iskander ballistic missile systems there, American intelligence was finally convinced of the intentions of the Russian top military-political leadership. According to The Washington Post, this happened in October 2021. In a closed-door meeting, the US president was briefed on Russia's remarkably audacious plan, which could directly threaten NATO's eastern flank or even destroy Europe's post-World War II security architecture. Putin's plans were now far more radical than annexing Crimea in 2014 and fomenting a separatist movement in east of Ukraine. Now the Kremlin dictator was planning to take over most of Ukraine.

When the US shared information with NATO allies and Ukraine, according to The Washington Post, Kyiv and majority of NATO members were skeptical. Berlin and Paris did not believe that Putin could go on an all-out offensive.<sup>1</sup> Zelensky administration, in turn, firstly, was afraid of the consequences of the panic that could appear, and secondly, they did not understand why the United States does not provide weapons for defense if the intelligence information is really true. The United States, through diplomatic channels, informed Russia of its awareness of the Kremlin's plans and threatened Russia with enormous cost if it invaded.

However, threats without the use of force traditionally did not work with the Russian Federation, and in response, the United States received an ultimatum. It was Moscow's position on Ukraine, formally set out in mid-December in two treaties, that NATO should abandon plans for its expansion and stop all activities in countries that joined the alliance after 1997, including Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Baltic states. In the end, Putin denied the US red lines and resorted to the attack.

The American leadership did not believe that Ukraine would survive the invasion, so the United States was preparing to support partisan movements on Ukrainian territory in order to create problems for the Russian Federation. However, resistance of the Ukrainian people, pushed Joe Biden to change his policy. It only happened in March of this year. ***So far, however, the White House's new strategy for the Russo-Ukrainian war was to prevent Ukraine from losing, not to completely defeat the Russian army.*** Moreover, Russia maintains a significant advantage in artillery, aviation and equipment, despite the successes of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. According to retired US Army Lieutenant General, Hoover Institution Senior Fellow HR McMaster, the United States of America should take advantage of the current situation and change its approach - instead of trying to prevent Ukraine from losing, they should help the country to win. Before winter comes, he said, the Biden

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<sup>1</sup> Шлях до війни: як США дізналися про наміри путіна і намагалися переконати союзників і Зеленського, що буде вторгнення, 16.08.2022,  
URL: <https://mind.ua/news/20245769-shlyah-do-vijni-yak-ssha-diznalisya-pro-namiri-putina-i-namagalisy-perekonati-soyuznikiv-i-zelenskogo-shch>

administration should provide the weaponry needed for the successful offensive. Tanks, ATACMS missiles capable of hitting targets at a distance of 300 km, as well as MQ9-Reaper drones, which, in conjunction with ATACMS, would have increased the efficiency of destroying the forces of the invaders should be on the list.<sup>2</sup> Aircraft is also mentioned, including A-10 Thunderbolt attack aircraft.

Avoiding escalation has long been a key element in the US approach towards Russia. As practice shows, it does not work. If we take the period since the beginning of the presidency of Joe Biden, **every interaction attempt: whether it was cooperation or sort of deterrence, Putin responds with escalation.** Immediately after Biden's election, the "Russian Donbass" conference took place in occupied Donetsk. After that, the Russian Federation concentrated troops around the borders of Ukraine. Then, after meeting with Biden in Geneva, Vladimir Putin published an article dismissing the possibility of an independent Ukraine. After Washington's threats, he issued an ultimatum to NATO and eventually attacked. After NATO and the United States threats to respond in the event of nuclear weapons use, Vladimir Putin held referendums and announced mobilization. For now, the threat of using nuclear weapons remains. However, there are doubts that if it is used against Ukraine, the United States of America will actually respond in a way that can be heard in the media today. The United States did not respond to the destruction of Grozny, did not properly respond to the aggression against Georgia and Ukraine in 2008 and 2014. In Syria, the Bashar al-Assad regime has repeatedly used chemical weapons and is still in power thanks to Vladimir Putin. In Ukraine, the main factor of military assistance was the people of the state and the defense forces, which have resisted. Thanks to Ukraine's resilience, the US and partner countries are now delivering the current level of aid. However, from the very beginning, Ukraine was actually given over to Russian occupation.

Given such a policy of the American leadership, doubts remain a nuclear strike on Ukraine will be fatal for Russia. Which can only encourage Vladimir Putin to escalate. Attempts not to anger the Kremlin dictator and attempts to "save" his face only encourage Russia to further increase its aggression. Therefore, the United States and partner countries should take advantage of the window of opportunity currently existing at the front and strengthen the counteroffensive capabilities of Ukrainian troops. Large-scale provision of heavy equipment, ATACMS missiles, MQ9-Reaper drones and A-10 aircraft will not cause a nuclear catastrophe. Such assistance will speed up the liberation of the entire territory of Ukraine, save the lives of Ukrainian military personnel, save the funds of Europeans who have suffered economic losses, and hasten the collapse of the Russian regime. **The goal of the United States should be to ensure Ukraine wins the Russian-Ukrainian war and not to worry it can lose.**

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<sup>2</sup> Upheaval and Change in Russia, Iran, and Italy | GoodFellows, 27.09.2022, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qb5DEysJkQQ>

- *THEME ANALYSIS: Negotiations in the context of weakening Russia threaten a new escalation of the war*



*Photo: Vladimir Putin and heads of pseudo-republics  
Source: Reuters*

Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine leads to the gradual degradation of the aggressor state. After the failure of the initial plan to quickly capture Ukraine, the Russian army has suffered significant losses in modern Russian equipment and the most experienced and motivated units. Under the influence of these military defeats, position of Kremlin in Russian society was damaged. Dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs can already be heard even on propaganda channels, and the forces of extremists in the person of the militant Igor Girkin are openly criticizing the military and political leadership of Russia. Economic sanctions have also dealt a powerful blow to the Russian Federation: the Kremlin is running out of money, Russia is losing ground in the energy market, import substitution is not working, while businesses and wealthy residents are leaving the country.<sup>1</sup>

Existing problems also affect the perception of the Russian Federation in the international arena. As early as the beginning of 2022, the Russian Federation was perceived

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<sup>1</sup> Санкції стали катастрофою для російської економіки - дослідження Єльського університету, 30.07.2022, URL: <https://tsn.ua/groshi/sankciyi-stali-katastrofoyu-dlya-rosiyskoyi-ekonomiki-doslidzhennya-yelskogo-universitetu-2123011.html>

as one of the three powers, along with the United States and the People's Republic of China, around which the global geopolitical confrontation will unfold. Now the situation has changed for Moscow and other regional powers understand this. The summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Samarkand was indicative.

Before the SCO summit, Chinese leader Xi Jinping visited Kazakhstan, where he declared that China will support the independence and territorial integrity of Kazakhstan. "No matter how the international situation changes, we will continue to resolutely support Kazakhstan in the defense of its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, we will firmly support your reforms to ensure stability and development, and we will categorically oppose the interference of any forces in the internal affairs of your country." - Xi Jinping said. The only state that could threaten the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan at the current stage is the Russian Federation. In their unofficial statements, high-ranking officials of Russia have repeatedly questioned the territorial integrity of their southern neighbor and expressed threats against Kazakhstan. Therefore, Xi Jinping's statement is obviously aimed at the leadership of Russia and shows that China will dominate Central Asia from now on.

In addition to China, Turkey is also strengthening its position in the region. Istanbul is considered by the countries of the region as a counterweight to the growing influence of Beijing. Central Asian countries are culturally connected to Turkey and see the state as a promising partner in many fields, in particular, military. Recep Erdogan looked confident at the summit, a photo spread on the Internet where the Turkish president is in the center of attention during an informal conversation. At the same time, Vladimir Putin was given a modest place on the sideline. Putin's press conferences with his colleagues were also a telling moment. The Russian president had to wait for the leaders of Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, India and Iran.

However, the main evidence of the weakening of the Russian Federation's position was the Russian leader's conversations with representatives of China and India. Vladimir Putin, addressing Xi Jinping, as if apologizing for the defeats in Ukraine and the war he started, said: "We understand your questions and concerns about this. During our meeting today, we will of course clarify our position...". And Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Putin that today's era is not an era of war."<sup>2</sup> "I know your position regarding the conflict in Ukraine, the concern you constantly express," Putin replied. "We will do everything to stop it as soon as possible."

Despite this diplomatic rhetoric, China and India did not support Ukraine against the background of Russian aggression. The two states continue to import goods from the aggressor country and took part in joint military exercises with Russia in September. However, the continuation of the armed conflict affecting the whole world does not correspond to the strategic interests of the two states. Therefore, Xi Jinping and Modi chose such rhetoric at the summit, effectively distancing themselves from Russia. It is possible that

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<sup>2</sup> Підсумки саміту ШОС: приниження путіна і хрест на перспективах рф, 19.09.2022, URL: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3575007-pidsumki-samitu-sos-prinizenna-putina-i-hrest-na-perspektivah-rf.html>

the PRC and India urged the Russian president to end the war before the G20 summit in Indonesia.

Although Russia has lost ground on the international stage, Vladimir Putin will not give up on his plans to take over Ukraine. **Currently, the goal of the Russians may be to conclude a truce on favorable terms for Russia before the summit in Indonesia.** We are already observing powerful information campaigns directed against Ukraine, the purpose of which is to force Ukraine to negotiate. Further the degree will only increase.

For this, Vladimir Putin is raising the stakes: along with his willingness to negotiate, he announced the illegal annexation of four regions of Ukraine, started mobilization and threatening to launch a nuclear strike. This rhetoric has already been picked up by pro-Russian propagandists in the USA and Europe, as well as a fairly large number of journalists and even scientists. The main idea of calls for peace is the exchange of Ukrainian territory, together with the Ukrainians living there, for a conditional "peace". Such a peace would not guarantee security for Ukraine, would not ensure the rights that states have in accordance with the UN Charter. The only consequence of such an agreement would be a period for the restoration of capabilities of the Russian Armed Forces in order to resume the offensive. After an armistice without security guarantees, Ukraine would have no investment in the economy, and the population would be demoralized. In Europe, economies would start to gradually recover and the population would react negatively to the news of any resumption of hostilities. The level of support for Ukraine in the international arena would be much lower than it is now, which would give Putin an advantage. During this time, the Kremlin regime would have been able to regain domestic political influence and, driven by the desire for revenge, launch a repeated full-scale aggression, taking into account all previous mistakes.

Currently, there is a danger that Ukraine's partners, in particular US President Joe Biden, also believe in the possibility of ending the current war at the current stage through negotiations. If the US presses Zelensky instead of helping, it will be a catastrophic mistake for the entire international security system.

The fear of nuclear weapons has always been one of the main factors influencing international relations after 1945. However, the leaders of Western countries understood that it is impossible to show weakness. Instead of concessions to the USSR, the Reagan administration went for escalation and as a result the United States of America have won. The Russian Federation is a weaker actor than the USSR. Ukraine is already changing the course of hostilities. And therefore, when making decisions, the American administration should remember the decisions of the past, because the scenario of victory was already written by the predecessors. Concessions to the Kremlin dictator increase risks, because Russia perceives any concessions as weakness. Allowing Russia to threaten nuclear weapons is a blow to the non-proliferation regime. If Moscow gets what it wants the result of the threats to use WMD will be a signal to all other countries that it is impossible for non-nuclear states to defend their territorial integrity and sovereignty without possessing nuclear weapons. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure a faster victory for Ukraine - by increasing pressure on Russia, introducing new sanctions and providing weapons to Ukraine.

That is true, this war should end diplomatically - by signing an agreement. This agreement must be signed after the full restoration of the territory of Ukraine within the borders as of 1991, which can only be done by force, in a language that Russia understands. And even in this case, in case of victory, according to the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Valery Zaluzhny, based on what he knows about the Russians, it will only be an opportunity to take a breath and prepare for the next war.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Inside the Ukrainian Counterstrike That Turned the Tide of the War, 26.09.2022,  
URL: [https://time.com/6216213/ukraine-military-valeriy-zaluzhny/?utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=editorial&utm\\_term=world\\_ukraine&linkId=183047256](https://time.com/6216213/ukraine-military-valeriy-zaluzhny/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=editorial&utm_term=world_ukraine&linkId=183047256)



*Source: Army FM*

### ■ *Changes at the front*

In the second half of September and early October, the Defense Forces of Ukraine carried out successful offensive operations in the Kharkiv and Kherson directions. After the success in the Kharkiv region and the capture of Balakliya and Kupyansk, the Armed Forces of Ukraine continued their offensive, pushed back the defensive positions of the Russians near the Oskil River and liberated the city of Lyman in the Donetsk region. As a result of the de-occupation of Yampil, Drobyshevo, Stavky, reaching point-blank range and taking fire control of the route from Torske to Kreminna, the Lyman enemy grouping was in a semi-encirclement and was forced to break through in battle. A significant part of the Russian units were captured or destroyed. Ukrainian troops continue their offensive already in the Luhansk region. As a result of the capture of Lyman, the Russian top military-political leadership was subjected to harsh criticism, in particular from the chairman of the Chechen Republic and the chairman of the Wagner PMC, Yevgeny Prigozhin. For Ukraine, this is a positive precedent, indicating that domestic political tension will increase after Russia's military defeats, which will damage the position of the current Russian authorities.

***In the Kherson region***, the Armed Forces of Ukraine broke through the defense of the Russian occupation forces. As of November 4, the following settlements are known to have been liberated: Lyubimivka, Kreshchenivka, Zolota Balka, Belyaiivka, Ukrainka, Velyka Oleksandrivka, Mala Oleksandrivka, Davydiv Brid. Russian troops continue to inflict artillery, air and missile strikes on the Zaporizhzhya, Mykolaiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions. The occupying troops attacked the cities of Mykolaiv, Ochakiv, Zaporizhzhya, Nikopol,

Gulyaipole, Dnipro, Odesa and critical energy infrastructure in the vicinity of Krivyi Rig. In recent weeks, the active use of drones by Russia, which was transferred to the country by Iran, has been recorded. In the morning of September 30, Russian troops carried out a terrorist attack, inflicting a missile attack on a humanitarian convoy at the exit from Zaporizhzhya. As a result, 30 people died and 88 were injured.

***In the Donetsk direction,*** Russian troops continued unsuccessful assaults on Bakhmut and Avdiivka.

It should be noted that the successful actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the East and South were preceded by successful Russian counterattacks in the Kherson region. Russia still retains a significant advantage in heavy weapons, tanks, artillery and aviation. The success of the Ukrainian Defense Forces is primarily the result of the talent of the Ukrainian military command, the motivation and sacrifice of Ukrainian defenders. Due to the lack of heavy equipment, Ukraine is suffering significant losses and requires increased assistance from partner countries to minimize casualties among personnel and speed up the process of de-occupation of territories before the onset of winter.

#### ■ *Military assistance*

In the second half of September, Ukraine has received the following weapons:

**From the USA:**

- Additional ammunition for HIMARS rocket launcher systems
- 36,000 ammunition for 105-mm guns
- 1000 high-precision ammunition for 155-mm howitzers
- 4 counter-battery radars
- 4 trucks
- 8 trawls for transporting heavy equipment
- Anti-drone systems
- Demining equipment
- Claymore anti-personnel mines
- Explosive device
- Small arms and ammunition
- Night vision devices
- Winter clothes
- Other field equipment
- 12 Titan anti-drone systems

**From Lithuania:**

- Two batches of armored personnel carriers

**From Belgium:**

- Large-caliber machine guns and ammunition for them

**From Germany:**

- 2 "Mars II" multiple rocket launcher systems
- 200 GMLRS missiles
- 50 "Dingo ATF" type armored vehicles
- Anti-tank mines "AT-2"
- 6 "Gepard" installations
- 10 bridge systems
- 3 medium bridge systems
- 90 heavy-duty trailers for transporting heavy weapons

**From the EU:**

- Thermal imaging equipment for the total amount of 500 thousand euros

In addition, the US announced a new \$1.2 billion aid package, which will include: 18 M142 HIMARS multiple launch systems; 150 armored high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWV); 150 tactical vehicles for towing weapons; 40 trucks and 80 trailers for transporting heavy equipment; two radars for unmanned aerial vehicles; 20 multipurpose radars; anti-drone air systems (probably "Titan"); protected communication systems, surveillance systems and optics; equipment for disposal of explosive objects; body armor and other field equipment; training, maintenance and support funding.

*Source: Mil.ua.*

## ■ *Russia: internal and external challenges*

Vladimir Putin announced a "partial" mobilization in Russia, as it was called to avoid panic among the population. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu announced that 300,000 people are planned to be drafted into the army as part of the partial mobilization, but this figure is not included in the official document and the final number of people to be mobilized is classified. That is, the Kremlin probably plans to mobilize a larger number of people. According to the Russian edition "Meduza", this figure can be up to 1.2 million people.<sup>1</sup> Russia still has serious problems with training and equipping new soldiers. The first mobilized are already being thrown to the front to strengthen positions where units have lost a significant number of personnel. The quality and motivation of such fighters remains at a low level. In the first week after the announcement of mobilization, more than 2,000 Russians

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<sup>1</sup> У Росії збираються мобілізувати 1,2 млн осіб – Медуза, 23.09.2022,  
URL: <https://news.liga.net/ua/politics/news/v-rossii-sobirayutsya-mobilizovat-12-mln-chelovek-meduza>

called Ukraine's hotline for information on how to surrender. With the arrival of winter, the psychological and physical condition of these fighters will drop even lower.

At the same time, it is worth noting that the number of mobilized Russians is significant and will definitely bring problems for Ukraine. ***Part of the mobilized are motivated fighters and in a few months they will be ready to kill Ukrainians.*** In addition, in Russia, ideological entrepreneurs began to join the military equipment, who collect money for the purchase of military equipment at their own expense and by organizing money raises.

***It is likely that the Russians will have time to strengthen their own defensive positions in several directions and concentrate a significant number of personnel to maintain the occupied territory.*** Also, the option of a second invasion from the territory of Belarus is not excluded. This development of events requires an increase in military aid from partner countries to increase the effectiveness of the offensive of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, as well as increase the general pressure on the aggressor country and ordinary citizens of the Russian Federation. **Now the US and the EU cannot say that this is Putin's war. Many Russians believe in the ideals of Russian world and are consciously preparing for upcoming hostilities.**