

INTERNATIONAL WEEKLY

№14 15.07.2022-31.07.2022

Topics:

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



Supported by:

**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
FOUNDATION** For Freedom.

Ukraine and Belarus

CONTENT

■ UKRAINE - EUROPEAN UNION

Theme Analysis: The grain crisis as evidence of the complete collapse of the existing world order_____3

■ FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY OF UKRAINE

Theme Analysis: Female dimension of Ukrainian diplomacy_____7

■ THE COURSE OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

(15.07 – 31.07.2022)

Changes at the front_____10
Military assistance_____11
Russia: Internal and external challenges_____12

The publication "International Weekly" is the project of the Foreign Policy Research Institute with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Project Office Ukraine & Belarus. The publication presents only the authors' research. They do not necessarily reflect the position of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom.

- *THEME ANALYSIS: The grain crisis as evidence of the complete collapse of the existing world order*



*Photo: Negotiations in Istanbul regarding unblocking the export of Ukrainian grain
Source: Slovo I Dilo*

On July 22, in Istanbul, a Ukrainian delegation led by Minister of Infrastructure Oleksandr Kubrakov signed an agreement with the UN and Turkey called “the Initiative for the Safe Transportation of Grain and Food Products from Ukrainian Ports”. Russia signed a separate agreement with the UN and Turkey. Ukraine, better than any other state, knows what the agreements with Russia are worth, therefore, since the agreements were not signed between Russia and Ukraine, in case of their violation, the Russian Federation could not blame Ukraine, and now the aggressor country is responsible exclusively to Turkey and the UN for its further actions.

This initiative provides for the creation of conditions for the safe export of grain and related food products and fertilizers, including ammonia, from the Ukrainian ports of Odesa, Chornomorsk and Yuzhny. A Joint Coordinating Center (JCC) has been established in Istanbul under the auspices of the UN, which includes representatives of the three states and the UN. Inspection teams have been organized within the framework of the JCC to check ships heading to/from Ukrainian ports for the presence of unauthorized cargo and personnel on ships board, and approve the schedule for these ships.

The successful implementation of this initiative can bring positive achievements not only for Ukraine, but also for the countries that consume Ukrainian agricultural products.

These are mainly Arab and African countries, the food security of which will affect the internal political situation of these states, on which, in turn, regional stability depends. In general, before the war, Ukraine supplied 10% of world wheat exports, more than 15–20% of barley, and more than 50% of sunflower oil.¹

Ukraine, when signing this initiative, primarily pursues the goal of providing a trade route from Odesa for the export of agricultural products, enhancing the export of domestic companies and attracting foreign currency. The agreement also allows unloading elevators and terminals for the new crop, reducing the loading of grain carriers at the western railway border crossings, which will facilitate the export of other products.²

Turkey also pursues its national interests through the concluded agreement. Erdogan demonstrates an important role in solving the global problem between the countries of the Black Sea region, as well as seeks economic preferences. Under the terms of the agreement to unblock Ukrainian seaports, Turkey agreed to purchase Ukrainian and Russian grain below world prices, by about 25%.³

Despite the optimism of Turkey and the UN after the signing of this agreement, the very next day Vladimir Putin demonstrated his attitude towards Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Antonio Guterres. Within 24 hours, the Russian Federation violated the principles enshrined in the Agreement and hit the Odesa port with four Kalibr missiles, two of which were shot down by Ukrainian air defense systems. As a result of a missile attack on the Odesa Commercial Sea Port, a fire broke out in a pumping station. The grain storage was not hit.

The question immediately arose: what would be the reaction of Turkey and the UN to such a daring violation of this Agreement by Russia. The next day, the Turkish Ministry of Defense quoted Russian counterparts saying they denied involvement and expressed concern that such an incident occurred immediately after the signing of the agreement. The representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry soon acknowledged the involvement of the RF Armed Forces in the strike. In addition, Maria Zakharova stated that the agreement was not formally violated, because russians allegedly did not directly strike at the grain-related infrastructure. This is nonsense, because the strike was delivered a few dozen meters from the grain storage facilities, where the employees of the port work, which, in accordance with the Agreement, should not be a target of missile strikes. Of course, this strike was a demonstration that this agreement is possible with the good will of the russians and, if the Kremlin wishes, Ukrainian food exports will stop, regardless of the wishes of Turkey or the United Nations. The UN, in turn, said UN Secretary-General António Guterres "unequivocally condemns" Russia's missile attack on a commercial port in Odessa on the 23rd of July. The organization's statement focused on the importance of grain exports for third world countries. There was no mention of terror against Ukraine in the message.

¹ Ярослав Прищеп, Роксолана Лісовська, Тетяна Войтюк, У Стамбулі підписали угоду про експорт українського зерна. ЗМІ повідомили деталі 22.08.2022,
URL: <https://suspilne.media/263462-u-stambuli-uklali-ugodu-sodo-deblokadi-ukrainskih-portiv/>

² Юрій Григоренко, Що в рамках «зернової» угоди отримають українські металурги, 03.02.2022,
URL: <https://gmk.center/ua/posts/shho-v-ramkah-zernovoi-ugodi-otrimajut-ukrainski-metalurgi/>

³ Туреччина купуватиме зерно в Україні та РФ за нижчими за світові цінами, - турецький парламентар, 24.08.2022,
URL: <https://espresso.tv/turechchina-kupuvatime-zerno-v-ukraini-ta-rf-za-nizhchimi-za-svitovi-tsinami-turetskiy-parlamentar>

If the Russian Federation violated the agreement the very next day, then why did the Russian side agree to this arrangement? **Firstly**, from the Russian point of view, the agreement could be the first step towards signing a truce in order to suspend the Ukrainian counteroffensive in the South, regroup its forces, replenish troops to further continue the aggression against Ukraine with renewed vigor. The rhetoric of Putin's friend, Gerhard Schroeder, indicates that the Kremlin wants to agree on a truce in the near future and one can expect information attacks against Ukraine, in which pro-Russian propagandists will try to present Russia as a party that wants peace, and Ukraine – a party which wants war. **Secondly**, Russia used the grain agreement to spread disinformation and its own narratives, and neither the UN nor Turkey prevented this.

The Russian leadership allegedly agreed that the UN would facilitate the process of removing restrictions from Russia on the export of its agricultural products. However, apart from certain restrictions on the part of the states of the Euro-Atlantic space in the banking sector, there were simply no direct sanctions against Russia that would ban the export of grain. In March, the leadership of the Russian Federation itself introduced a number of restrictions, in particular, a temporary ban on the export of grain until June 30 and sugar until August 30, "to protect the domestic food market in the face of external restrictions."⁴ After that, due to the blockade of Ukrainian ports, prices for cereals increased significantly, from which the Russian Federation benefited, especially given the fact Ukraine is a competitor to Russia in the agricultural sector exports. In late July, Sergei Lavrov travelled to Africa in an attempt to show solidarity with developing countries. After the conclusion of the grain agreement, Russia is trying to show that in fact it is not the cause of the food crisis.⁵ On the contrary, the Russian Federation blames the West, positioning itself as a reliable partner for developing countries.

And it works, Russian and pro-Russian propagandists, even in European countries, use and spread this rhetoric. Moreover, **the UN Secretary General also helps Russia**. António Guterres promised to seek the easing of anti-Russian sanctions in exchange for the deblockade of Ukrainian seaports. He signed with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Andrey Belousov a corresponding memorandum for a period of three years. The details of this document are not disclosed. That is, the UN Secretary General signs a memorandum with a country waging a war of conquest against its neighbour, blocking ports, stealing grain, people, however, Guterres avoids these topics.

After the murder of Ukrainian prisoners of war, the defenders of Azovstal in Olenivka, the UN again limited itself to a restrained statement. At the same time, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission, in its statement, equated the Russian war crime with the actions of the Ukrainian army on the video on the Internet, the authenticity of which has not been confirmed and looks like a Russian provocation. Thus, **the UN made an attempt to remain neutral and distribute responsibility between the aggressor and the victim of aggression**. In general, the reports of this institution are often based on unproven facts, and particular cases

⁴ росія ввела заборону на вивезення цукру та зерна, 15.03.2022,
URL: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-economy/3430138-rosia-vvela-zaboronu-na-vivezenna-cukru-ta-zerna.html>

⁵ Hanna Shelest, Grains of Hope and Risk in the Black Sea, 02.08.2022,
URL: <https://cepa.org/grains-of-hope-and-risk-in-the-black-sea/?fbclid=IwAR30CdN5J2aUY0uS-PuoQM-GwhyhEJKndoo4cw6IEnCCHaUYnndKNEnM9Mw>

are generalized and presented as systematic, in order to distribute the blame equally between Russians and Ukrainians.

The ineffectiveness of the UN, the inability of this institution to influence the Russian-Ukrainian war, is multiplied by the incompetence and corruption of its employees. Russians still work in international organizations for the benefit of their state and help Russia continue its aggression against Ukraine. Another such institution is the **Red Cross**, which, like the UN, has demonstrated its worthlessness. The head of the organization, Peter Maurer, fraternized in Moscow with Sergey Lavrov at a time when Russian soldiers were executing civilians in Bucha. *After the capture of the defenders of Azovstal, the ICRC was in no way involved in the monitoring of Ukrainian prisoners, despite its involvement during the surrender of Azovstal.* The organization did not promote communication between prisoners of war and their families, and after the murder in Olenivka, it did not get access to the camp where Ukrainian military personnel are held, despite the "warm" relations between the head of the ICRC and Lavrov, judging by the reception in Moscow. The wives of the defenders of Azovstal, who do not even have information about the whereabouts of their husbands, have already announced that they will demand the resignation of the head of the ICRC, Peter Mauer.

We are observing a large-scale disinformation campaign that plays in hands of the Russian Federation. The Russian leadership is trying to position itself as a reliable partner of developing countries, and receive support of their efforts from international institutions that do not fulfill their basic tasks. The UN Secretary General repeats the propaganda rhetoric regarding the export of Russian grain, and promises to promote its sale. The same shameful rhetoric is used at a lower level, in particular regarding the record harvest in Russia. Even experts working in Western analytical centers repeat Putin's statements about the record harvest, but do not mention the share of stolen Ukrainian grain in it. They simply turn a blind eye to Russia's crimes. At the same time, in the conditions of a conflict of attrition, Ukrainian partners are already beginning to make concessions to the aggressor country. Initially, Western European countries forced Lithuania to allow the transit of sanctioned goods to Kaliningrad by rail. Then Canada handed over a turbine for Nord Stream 1 to Germany. Although Russia still cut gas supplies and this turbine was not needed, there is already a precedent for violating the sanctions policy. The same applies to the European Union's exclusion of grain transactions from its banking sanctions. **Russia is gradually negotiating terms that will allow it to avoid isolation and continue its aggression against Ukraine.** Third world countries that still ignore Russian aggression and avoid the introduction of sanctions European countries imposed, want to maintain relations with Russia. This camp is joined by international organizations.

■ *THEME ANALYSIS: Female dimension of Ukrainian diplomacy*



*Photo: Jill Biden meets Olena Zelenska in Washington
Source: Office of the President of Ukraine*

Against the background of the all-out aggression of the Russian Federation, Ukrainian diplomacy is mobilizing the maximum set of tools to increase military, political, financial and humanitarian aid to Ukraine and keep the issue of supporting Ukraine on the agenda of partner states. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has received great support from the Ukrainian diaspora, forcibly displaced citizens, world-famous actors and business representatives. Many personalities continue to publicly express their support for Ukraine, many people changed their activities to volunteering in order to contribute to Ukraine's victory over the aggressor. One of the millions of such citizens is the wife of the President of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska, whom Atlantic Council researcher Peter Dickinson dubbed "Ukraine's secret weapon."

The diplomatic activity of the First Lady of Ukraine is simply amazing. She became especially noticeable after meeting with the First Lady of the USA Jill Biden on Mother's Day on May 8 in Uzhgorod. Back then the wives of the presidents held a bilateral meeting behind closed doors, which lasted about an hour, and met with the children at the school, which was turned into a Center for internally displaced persons. The next time the First Ladies met in Washington.

Olena Zelenska flew to the US capital on July 19, 2022, and before meeting with a wife of US president, she held several important and productive meetings, which are usually unusual for the first ladies. On the first day of the visit, Olena Zelenska met with Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Administrator of the US Agency for International Development Samantha Power. After the negotiations, USAID announced additional humanitarian aid to Ukraine in the amount of 169 million dollars. Zelenska also visited the memorial to the victims of the Holodomor in Ukraine in 1932-33 and the Ukrainian House in Washington. She met with Ukrainian and American public figures, activists and representatives of charitable organizations there.¹ Olena Zelenska also held a meeting with the participants of the Prosthetics Program, which was initiated by the Ukrainian House in Washington and the Embassy of Ukraine in the USA. It was created specifically for Ukrainians who lost their limbs as a result of Russian aggression.

The next day, the First Lady of Ukraine held a meeting with Jill Biden, who directly invited Olena Zelenska to Washington. The wife of the Ukrainian Head of State was also met at the entrance to the White House by US President Joseph Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. An extended meeting was also held with Douglas Emgoff – the first ever Second Gentleman of the United States, US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Surgeon General of the United States Vivek Murthy, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland, First Deputy Administrator of USAID Isobel Coleman, Senior Director for Europe at the US National Security Council Amanda Sloat.² After that, the First Lady met influential American women: officials, think tank experts, and journalists to discuss the concept of "powerful woman".

On the second day of the visit, Olena Zelenska discussed a wide range of initiatives regarding cooperation between Ukraine and the United States, as evidenced by the diversity of positions of the persons who participated in the meetings. Most of these initiatives are humanitarian and aimed at alleviating the suffering of people caused by war (a program of mental health and psychosocial support, treatment of Ukrainian children in the US, educational initiatives and assistance to internally displaced persons). However, in addition to humanitarian issues, the First Lady raised the issue of providing Ukraine with powerful, high-precision weapons to defend against Russian aggression.

Such an unusual call for First Ladies was repeated on the third day of the visit - during a speech in Congress, the US legislative body. **Olena Zelenska became the first wife of a state leader in history who had the opportunity to deliver a speech within the walls of this institution.** Addressing the congressmen not as the First Lady, but "primarily as a woman and mother", Olena Zelenska once again told what Ukrainians are going through today. She showed a video of a child killed the day before in Vinnytsia, as well as children killed in Mykolaiv Oblast and Odesa Oblast, victims of a rocket attack in Kremenchuk. Olena Zelenska asked for weapons for protection and emphasized that the air defense systems would allow children to return to school in the fall, because currently the safe educational

¹ Зеленська у Вашингтоні зустрілася з Блінкеном та провела переговори з USAID, 19.07.2022, URL: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-politics/3532049-zelenska-u-vasingtoni-zustrilasa-z-blinkenom-ta-provela-peregovori-z-usaid.html>

² Перша леді України зустрілася з першою леді США у Вашингтоні, 20.08.2022, URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/persha-ledi-ukrayini-zustrilasya-z-pershoyu-ledi-ssha-u-vash-76557>

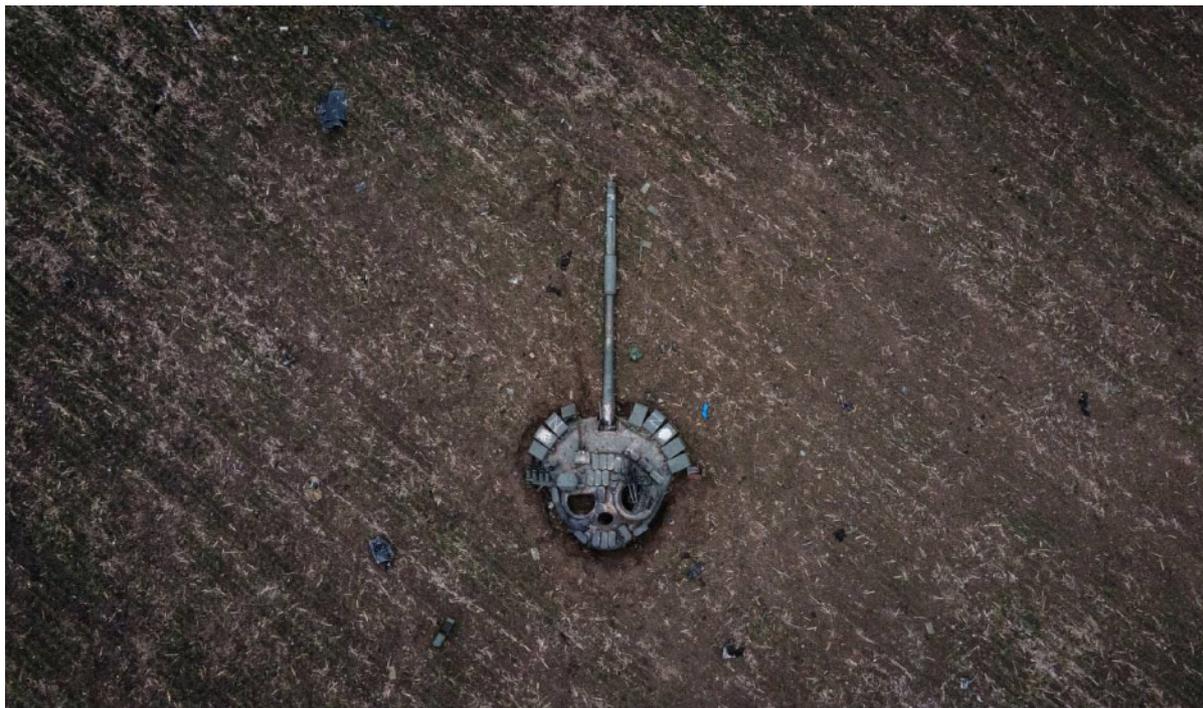
process in the new year remains in question.³ The named deadline - until September is quite understandable, because in August the congressmen have a one-month recess, and therefore a quick decision was needed. This is how the trip of the wife of the head of state to the USA ended.

In Ukraine, Olena Zelenska did not stop and, in addition to practical initiatives: collecting funds for ambulances, signing a Memorandum with UNICEF, handing over incubators for newborns to hospitals, she continued her informational work. In particular, she gave interviews for El Pais, NBC News and Vogue. The interview and photo session for Vogue, which was shot by the world-famous Annie Leibovitz, an American portrait photographer, caused a particularly great resonance.

Such a diplomatic success of the First Lady of Ukraine could not fail to be noticed in Russia, which immediately poured a lot of dirt on the First Lady. Thus, pro-Russian sources considered Zelenska's photo session during the war as a feast during the plague. Critics also wrote that this photo session is a proof that the scale of the war in Ukraine is exaggerated in the media. But those who live in Ukraine do not need to explain the scale of the tragedy, and critics in the West are either people with pro-Russian attitudes, or those who have no idea about the essence of modern war in a European country. The fact that the photo session attracted such attention testifies to the success of the campaign of the wife of the head of state. In the end, a flash mob was launched in Ukraine, in which women took photos on the stairs imitating the pose of Zelenska, whose photo became to some extent a symbol of the spiritual strength and struggle of Ukrainian women during the war.

The informational work of the First Lady during the war is difficult to overestimate. In the conditions when Russian aggression affects not only Ukrainians, but also European societies, it is important to remind about Ukraine and the price that Ukrainians are paying today for the right to live and be independent. Keeping the issue of Ukraine on the agenda and countering Russian narratives by telling the truth is an important task undertaken by Olena Zelenska. The wife of the current president has already made history after her speech in Congress. However, **the history of her struggle for a free Ukraine continues as well as the struggle of the entire Ukrainian people for their freedom and independence.**

³ Олена Зеленська закликала США надати Україні системи ППО, 21.08.2022,
URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/olena-zelenska-zaklikala-ssha-nadati-ukrayini-sistemi-ppo-76581>



Source: Army FM

■ *Changes at the front*

Russia has no territorial gains in the Kharkiv region. The Russian Armed Forces continue shelling Ukrainian settlements. Due to the concentration of forces in other directions and the slow advance of Russian forces in the Donetsk region, it is likely that the occupiers will not be able to carry out successful offensive actions in the near future with the aim of occupying the city of Kharkiv and the Kharkiv region.

In the Slovyansk direction, the Russian offensive may stop, as the Russian Federation transfers significant forces to the South. According to the Institute for the Study of War, this may create an opportunity for Ukrainian troops to launch a counteroffensive in the Izyum direction.

In the Donetsk direction, the situation for Ukrainian troops is quite difficult. According to Volodymyr Zelensky, Pisky and Avdiyivka are now a real hell. Russian troops intensified their efforts to encircle Avdiyivka - from the side of Pisky and from the side of Novoselivka Druha and Vasylivka. The Russians had some success, pushing Ukrainian forces out of their positions around the Butivka coal mine ventilation shaft southwest of Avdiyivka. The defense forces in the area of the village of Pisky received reinforcements and are continuing their defense.

Heavy fighting is also taking place near Mariinka, where the occupying forces are using scorched earth tactics. Mariinka is virtually wiped off the map because of shelling. It has already turned into the previously destroyed Volnovakha, Hostomel, Borodyanka, Baryshivka, and Mariupol. However, the Ukrainian military is holding its ground.

In the South, Ukrainian troops continue their gradual advance and create the prerequisites for the liberation of the city of Kherson. Thanks to the supply of HIMMARS systems, the Armed Forces systematically strike at warehouses and command posts of the occupiers. In July, accurate strikes were made at the Antonivskyi road and railway bridges, at the Dariivskyi bridge and the bridge located on the dam near the Kakhovskaya HPP. Antonivskyi and Dariivskyi bridges are out of order. A total of 53 settlements in Kherson Oblast have already been liberated by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

At the same time, Russian troops continue to accumulate and transfer forces to the south of Ukraine from other directions. The representative of the Main Directorate of Military Intelligence (GUR) of Ukraine, Vadym Skibitskyi, said that a battalion-tactical group of the Russian Airborne Forces had arrived in Crimea and would soon go to the front line. Earlier, Skibitskyi reported that Russian troops have begun redeploying airborne troops from Donetsk Oblast to the occupied territory of Kherson Oblast, and these forces are likely to support Russia's efforts to suppress Ukrainian counter-offensive actions in the region. Russian troops are expanding air defense systems in Crimea and are regrouping forces in the Zaporizhzhya and Kherson directions, which probably indicates their intention to defend their positions from Ukrainian counter-offensives along the entire southern front line. It is quite possible that the Russians will try to accumulate forces and counter-attack the Ukrainian forces in the direction of Kryvyi Rih.

■ *Military assistance*

In the second half of July, Ukraine received the following weapons:

From Germany:

- 80 SUVs
- 3 Gepard anti-aircraft guns
- 3 MLRS MARS II
- 16 Biber bridge-layer tanks
- MAN Kat trucks for FH70 howitzers (quantity not specified)

From United Kingdom:

- MLRS M270 (quantity not specified)
- 6 units of Stormer HVM air defense systems

From France:

- 6 CAESAR self-propelled guns (the total number of such self-propelled guns is now 18)

From Lithuania:

- M113 armored personnel carriers and M577 armored command and staff vehicles (quantity not specified)

From USA:

- 4 HIMARS and missiles to them (the total number of these systems is already 16)

- 4 command and staff vehicles, probably for HIMARS MLRS
- 36 thousand artillery ammunition
- anti-tank weapons and grenade launchers
- 580 Phoenix Ghost kamikaze drones

From EU:

- 10 cars and 2 special vans

From Poland:

- PT-91 Twardy tanks (the exact number is not specified)
- Citizens of Poland raised funds for Bayraktar TB2, which Baykar Makina eventually transferred to the Armed Forces of Ukraine for free

From Slovakia:

- Ammunition "OFd MKM" caliber 155 mm for KRAB self-propelled guns

From North Macedonia:

- T-72 tanks (quantity unknown)

From Italy:

- Military equipment, materials and equipment (the list of specific units is classified).

From Norway:

- 14 IVECO LAV III armored vehicles.

Source: Mil.ua

■ *Russia: internal and external challenges*

Former Russian President Medvedev has recently published another historical excursus, this time on his Vkontakte social media profile. The previous article by the ex-president of Russia, full of anti-Semitism and personal insults at Volodymyr Zelensky, was published before the war. In that publication, he ruled out the possibility of continuing a dialogue with the current leadership of Ukraine. Back then the publication was perceived in Ukraine with indignation, skepticism and a certain irony, saying that, Medvedev, a person who does not have political weight, took on the role of Vladimir Zhirinovsky. However, as time has shown, the Kremlin's court jesters often declare the mood of the ruling elite. Calls to refuse contacts with the Ukrainian leadership, to destroy Ukraine as a state, received further development in Russian policy in practice. Therefore, the new publication of the ex-president of the Russian Federation should not be underestimated.

Medvedev's position reflects Russia's intentions after the war in Ukraine. According to him, after the "liberation" of the entire territory of "Malorossiya (Little Russia) from the bands of Ukrainian nationalists, Russia will again become united, powerful and invincible." Then the deputy chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation predicts a campaign to restore the borders of Russia, now against Georgia and Kazakhstan.

In this publication, Kazakhstan and Georgia are called artificial, inferior states that have no right to exist and should become part of Russia.¹ Traditionally, pseudo-historical facts and the intention to protect the Russian population are selected in support of this rhetoric. The post was later deleted and Medvedev's aide said the page had been hacked. However, this post generally corresponds to the rhetoric of Russian officials and propagandists. The aggression of the Russian Federation against Georgia took place back in 2008, and the imperial attitude towards Georgians can be traced not only in the speeches of officials, but also in the statements of ordinary Russians who have now flooded the territory of the neighbouring Caucasian country.

In January, after the suppression of demonstrations in Kazakhstan, Russian propagandists called for interfering in the internal affairs of the CSTO state and presenting a number of demands. In particular, the editor-in-chief of Russia Today Margarita Simonyan suggested that in exchange for assistance through the CSTO, Russia should demand Kazakhstan to recognize the occupied Crimea as Russian territory, return the Cyrillic alphabet, and recognize Russian as a second state language. Simonyan also considered it necessary to expel «anti-Russian NGO's» from Kazakhstan and demand an end to «flirting with the Nazis». At the same time, Russian telegram channels called the introduction of Russian «peacekeepers», a «brilliant operation» that will provide Russia with control over Kazakhstan.² Margarita Simonyan's husband, Tigran Keosayan, was also noted for his chauvinist rhetoric while threatening the neighbouring country on the air of a television show, saying Ukrainian scenario could happen in Kazakhstan. The propagandist was banned from entering Kazakhstan for this speech.

A spit in the face of Kasim-Jomart Tokayev was the election of Keosayan's wife as a moderator of the discussion at St. Petersburg forum. The negative dynamics of Russian-Kazakh relations did not end there. Russia has limited the shipment of oil from Kazakhstan through its port in Novorossiysk. Now there is an article by Dmitry Medvedev with direct threats to neighbouring states, which contains an allegation of an alleged genocide of Russians in Kazakhstan. Such rhetoric preceded Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Currently, Vladimir Putin effectively controls the Republic of Belarus and continues to occupy part of Ukraine, creating the ground for the illegal annexation of these territories. In all likelihood, **Georgia and Kazakhstan may become the next targets of the Russian Federation on the way to the restoration of the Russian Empire, if its armed forces are not completely defeated in Ukraine.**

¹ Денис Казанський, П'яна дичина чи істинні плани кремля: що стоїть за черговим "завойовницьким" опусом медведева, 02.08.2022,
URL: https://24tv.ua/dmitro-medvyedyev-prigroziv-okupatsiyeyu-kazahstanu-gruziyi-shho_n2116279

² Інститут зовнішньополітичних досліджень, «Розширення» Росії на Казахстан в дзеркалі російської пропаганди, 19.01.2022,
URL: http://www.fpri.kiev.ua/articles_view/rozshirennja-rosii-na-kazahstan-v-dzerkali-rosijskoi-propagandi/