

# INTERNATIONAL WEEKLY

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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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(15.08 – 31.08.2022)

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- *THEME ANALYSIS: The Crimean platform - a carte blanche for the return of Crimea by military means*



*Photo: Meeting of the second Crimean Platform summit  
Source: Office of the President of Ukraine*

On August 23, 2022, the second summit of the Crimean Platform took place. This time the event was held online, but this format does not diminish its importance. The initiative, the purpose of which is the consolidation of international policy around the non-recognition of any change in the international legal status of Crimea and increasing pressure on the occupying country<sup>1</sup>, was continued, despite the criticism heard during its creation and despite the efforts of the Russian Federation aimed at disruption of its implementation .

In the domestic political dimension, during the year since the founding summit, Ukraine has adopted a number of initiatives in the direction of the return of Crimea, in particular the adoption of the Strategy for Deoccupation and Reintegration of Crimea and, accordingly, the plan for the implementation of this strategy. The Strategy for the Development of the Crimean Tatar Language for 10 years (2022–2032) was also adopted, as well as The Law of Ukraine "On Indigenous Peoples".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Crimean Platform official website, Last of accessed: 30.09.2022,  
URL: <https://crimea-platform.org/>

<sup>2</sup> Кримська платформа 2022: новий формат, розширення географії, конкретні кроки,  
URL: <https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/08/23/krymska-platforma-2022-novyj-format-rozshyrennya-geografiyi-konkretni-kroky/>

In the foreign policy dimension, the main point was to keep the issue of Crimea on the agenda of the international community. After the strikes of the Ukrainian Armed Forces on the peninsula, a new mass information wave about the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Ukraine has swept the world. Last but not least, thanks to the strikes of the Ukrainian army, the tone of the summit was harsh, different from last year. Carrying strikes right before the platform was a bold move by Ukraine, which encouraged Ukrainian partners to be more active. This time, there were more participants in the Platform. Similar to last year, representatives of European and North American countries, the European Commission and the Council of Europe, NATO and the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people joined the initiative. At the same time, the geography of the platform expanded to include countries from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In particular, Guatemala, Belize, Liberia, Niger, Ghana, Suriname and the Organization of American States took part in the summit. Andorra, Liechtenstein, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the OSCE also participated. In total - 59 participants.

Compared to last year, there is a change in the position of the participating countries regarding the ways of returning the occupied peninsula. If last year the states agreed that the only way to return the occupied peninsula is political and diplomatic, **now the vast majority of states perceive and support the possibility of Ukraine's liberation of Crimea by military means.** This was facilitated not only by the fact of the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, but also by the strikes of the Armed Forces of Ukraine on military facilities in the occupied Crimea and the absence of Russian reaction to them. Crimea, which was previously considered an impregnable fortress due to saturation with modern Russian air defense systems, was subjected to systematic attacks and sabotage organized by the Ukrainian command during August. After a series of explosions, the Russian leadership once again swallowed the destruction of another myth about the strength of the Russian army. Russians in panic began to leave the peninsula en masse, and shortly after numerous rocket attacks, family members of the local occupation administration also left the Crimea.

It seems that this development of events, together with the refusal to recognize Crimea as a part of Russia by group of countries and organizations, reminded the Russian leadership directly that the peninsula is illegally annexed. All intimidation in the spirit of Dmitry Medvedev's statements was a bluff, in contrast to the position of the main players on the European continent. The speeches of representatives of European countries at the second summit of the Crimean Platform contained assurances of support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, as well as intentions to provide military assistance in order to restore Ukraine's borders as of 1991.

Andrzej Duda was the first among the speaking leaders of the participating countries. The President of Poland stated that it is no longer possible to return to the line that existed on February 23, 2022. "It is necessary to liberate the entire territory of Ukraine, together with Crimea." He also noted that "North Stream - 2" should be dismantled. Andrzej Duda is one of the leaders in supporting Ukraine in Europe, and criticism of the delay in German military aid to Ukraine has become commonplace for Polish politicians.

Poland, together with other Eastern European and Baltic countries, as well as Finland, took a principled position. These states are in favor of a complete refusal to issue visas to Russians, the dismantling of the "Nord Stream", the refusal of Russian gas, and demand further expansion of sanctions against the aggressor state. However, the decision to dismantle the pipeline depends on Germany, and since Berlin is still calling for negotiations with the Russian Federation, it is quite likely that Germany will not dismantle Nord Stream – 2. However, at the Summit of the Crimean Platform, the German Chancellor expressed his intention to continue to provide comprehensive assistance to Ukraine and its citizens affected by Russian aggression. In particular, the chancellor mentioned military aid and Iris air defense systems, which Germany should transfer to Ukraine. Although the process of transferring Bundeswehr weapons to Ukraine is delayed, the country's position has indeed been transformed, and in August Scholz confirmed that his country has nothing against Ukraine's use of German weapons in Crimea. Germany is also focusing on supporting the agricultural sector of Ukraine to ensure food security. According to Olaf Scholz, the country will continue to invest funds in Ukrainian granaries and in the restoration of Ukraine, based on the decisions made in Lugano.

Another leader who spoke at the summit and mentioned food security was Recep Erdogan, the president of Turkey, the country that contributed to the creation of the grain corridor from the Black Sea ports of Ukraine. Unlike the previous summit, this year Erdogan personally expressed his position on non-recognition of the occupation of Crimea. "From the very beginning, Turkey has openly stated that the annexation of Crimea is unconstitutional and illegal, and does not recognize it. This is a principled position for both legal and moral reasons. International law essentially determines that Crimea should return to Ukraine, of which it is an integral part," Erdogan said. He emphasized that the de-occupation of the Ukrainian peninsula is a requirement of international law, as well as an important element of global security and stability.<sup>3</sup> Traditionally, the Turkish president emphasized the priority of ensuring the security and well-being of the Crimean Tatars.

Emmanuel Macron said that the war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine concerns all countries of the world, because it is connected with the destabilization of international law, international order, has humanitarian consequences and consequences in the energy and food spheres. "Our determination remains unchanged. We are ready to continue our efforts in the long term," the French president said. Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, in turn, emphasized that the Russian occupation of Crimea in March 2014 was an unacceptable act of aggression, a gross violation of international law, and the struggle for Crimea is part of the struggle for the liberation of Ukraine. "We are with you in your struggle against the invasion of Russia. We are with you in this struggle for the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, the protection of your democracy and independence," he said.

This year, many speeches mentioned the human dimension of the occupation and persecution of Crimean Tatars and pro-Ukrainian inhabitants of the peninsula. Calls for a compromise with Russia were often followed by a disregard for the lives of those who

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<sup>3</sup> Віра Перун, Ердоган на саміті Кримської платформи: "Крим має повернутися до складу України", 23.08.2022,  
URL: [https://lb.ua/world/2022/08/23/527163\\_erdogan\\_samiti\\_krimskoi.html](https://lb.ua/world/2022/08/23/527163_erdogan_samiti_krimskoi.html)

suffered from the Russian occupation, were forced to leave their homes, lost their jobs and businesses, as well as those who were killed, arrested, or tortured by the occupiers. Attention to the violation of human rights on the Crimean platform may contribute to the future prosecution of those guilty of crimes in the entire occupied territory of Ukraine.

**The strategy for the reconstruction of Crimea** was also presented on the platform. The territory occupied in 2014, like the entire state as a whole, will be a subject to restoration with the support of Ukraine's international partners. The creation of this strategy is not only a signal for organizations, states and businesses that will participate in the restoration of Ukraine, but also a signal for the residents of Crimea. As noted by the Permanent Representative of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Tamila Tasheva, a more detailed plan for the economic recovery of Crimea will be presented at the following international platforms and events, which will be included in the general policy for the economic recovery of the entire state. That is, **the Ukrainian government is already trying to present to citizens and the world a vision of the post-war system with Ukraine restored within the borders of 1991.**

The second summit of the Crimean Platform demonstrated increased support for Ukraine from the international community in the issue of the return of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, which was occupied in 2014. The event fixed the principled position of Ukraine's main partners, primarily the NATO member states, which consists in the conviction of the need to return the peninsula to Ukraine as a result of the current Russian-Ukrainian war and their readiness to continue their support. **The de-occupation of Crimea is directly called an important factor of regional and global security, while Ukraine actually receives carte blanche to liberate its territory by military means, which is a radical change compared to last year.** This change is primarily the result of Ukraine's successful strikes on military facilities in Crimea during August and absence of Russia's reaction. The intimidations of the Russian leadership turned out to be a bluff, as well as the myth of the power of the Russian army. Now, **the partner states call not only the return of the territory controlled by Ukraine as of February 23 a victory for Ukraine, but the complete restoration of territorial integrity.**

### ■ *THEME ANALYSIS: Warning of Twenty*



*Photo: Servicemen of UAF raise the flag of Ukraine over the liberated village of Visokopilya in Kherson Oblast  
Source: Ukrainian Pravda*

Despite the fact that the Ukrainian armed forces have stopped the advance of Russian troops along the entire front line and are steadily maintaining their defense, a significant numerical advantage still remains on the side of the Russian Federation. This makes it impossible for the Armed Forces to take counter-offensive actions to liberate Ukrainian territories occupied by Russian troops. ***In this regard, in order to increase the effectiveness of the offensive actions of the Armed Forces, Ukraine needs to further increase the supply of weapons and accelerate this process, taking into account the approach of winter, which will significantly complicate the potential advance.***

Ukraine's partners abroad, first of all in the USA, understand this state of affairs. The United States has provided major aid to Ukraine since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, but still there are different groups in Washington that have different visions for further support for Ukraine. At the government level, these are, first of all, 2 groups - Joe Burns, director of the CIA, and Jack Sullivan, Joe Biden's national security assistant, and the second group is represented by Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin. The approach of the first group consists in limiting aid in order not to "provoke Putin", the latter - in increasing aid.

Discussions are already underway in the USA regarding further support, and the Ukrainian leadership hopes for the earliest possible start of the Lend-Lease. Understanding this pivotal problem, the solution of which may decide the fate of Ukraine, on August 17, 2022, a group of about 20 American national security experts appealed to the US leadership to increase military support for Ukraine. Among the signatories are: former commanders of NATO's joint forces in Europe Generals Philip Breedlove and Wesley Clark, former US ambassador to Ukraine John Herbst, ex-commander of the US Army in Europe Lt. General Ben Hodges, former ambassadors to Ukraine William Taylor and Marie Yovanovitch, former special representative for Ukraine Kurt Volker and former Deputy Secretary General of NATO, ex-US Ambassador to Russia and NATO Alexander Vershbow.

The letter states that the war in Ukraine has reached a decisive moment and therefore the Biden administration must move more quickly and strategically, in meeting Ukrainian requests for weapons systems. And when it decides to send more advanced weapons, like HIMARS artillery, it should send them in larger quantities that maximize their impact on the battlefield. Experts noted that Ukraine needs long-range systems, ATACMS munitions, with a range of 300 km, necessary to strike Russian military targets anywhere in Ukraine, including occupied Crimea. Ukraine also needs a constant supply of ammunition and spare parts for artillery platforms, supplied from various countries, some of which are not interchangeable.<sup>1</sup>

The group of experts wrote the letter in time, at a period when, as Politico notes, **military support for Ukraine began to decrease.** Jake Sullivan's approach has already turned out to be a failure, because the Russian leadership perceives US concessions as weakness pushing Kremlin to further aggression. Every new weaponry that came to Ukraine did not lead to a nuclear war, but to an increase in Ukraine's ability to resist. Therefore, the success of the Ukrainian counter-offensive also depends to some extent on which approach - Sullivan/Burns or Blinken/Austin - will be finally chosen in the White House's policy regarding Ukraine.

**The Russian-Ukrainian war approached a decisive point. The Russian Federation is no longer capable of advancing in a broad front. At the same time, the Ukrainian army has not yet received enough weapons for a large-scale counter-offensive operation.** While the Russian Federation manages to replenish its losses with new manpower. In such conditions, events at the front largely depend on increasing military aid to provide Ukraine with means that would enable successful offensive actions and lead to liberation of part of the territory before the onset of winter.

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<sup>1</sup> DEBRA CAGAN, JOHN HERBST AND ALEXANDER VERSHBOW, OPINION CONTRIBUTORS, US must arm Ukraine now, before it's too late, 08.17.2022, URL: <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/3605064-us-must-arm-ukraine-now-before-its-too-late/>



*Source: Army FM*

#### ■ *Changes at the front*

Russia's full-scale aggression continues for the seventh month and the hostilities are gradually approaching the winter period. With the approach of winter, both sides of the Russian-Ukrainian war will face a number of problems that push them to attempts aimed at affecting the development of events in the current war already today.

The Russian Federation and its citizens will increasingly feel the impact of sanctions on the economy. In the military dimension, Russia is not as well prepared as previously believed. First of all, Russian soldiers will lose even more morale. In harsh conditions, unequipped trenches and without suitable winter military clothing, Russian soldiers will suffer from diseases and frostbite. Given the level of equipment of the Russian army at the first stages of the war and as of now, Russia probably will not be able to equip its military in a proper way. The volunteer movement in Russia, compared to Ukraine, is frankly weak, and society, which will feel the consequences of sanctions more strongly, is unlikely to rally to help the Russian armed forces. Probably, the level of support of the so-called special operations will decrease, which will also have an impact on the morale of the military personnel of the occupying country. In the absence of progress due to weather conditions, demoralization awaits Russian soldiers. Also, according to The Insider, by the end of this

year, the Russian Federation will face a shortage of ammunition and will be forced to limit the use of artillery.<sup>1</sup>

For Ukraine, the winter period also carries threats. Even if the EU passes the test in the winter period and maintains unity in its sanctions policy, it is worth remembering that economically Ukraine relies on foreign aid. Therefore, further resistance and functioning of the state depends on the will of the partners. In order to maintain faith in Ukraine's possible victory, and therefore further economic and military support, Ukraine will likely resort to attempts to demonstrate its ability to return territories by military means. On August 29, offensive actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine began in several directions in the South of the country. It is still too early to talk about a counteroffensive of Ukrainian troops, however, successful actions aimed at improving the tactical position along the contact line may lay the groundwork for further effective combat operations aimed at returning control of the entire Right Bank and the city of Kherson.

Therefore, the Russian leadership will probably look for ways to conclude a truce in order to restore forces and renew aggression after a certain pause. Any respite in this war will be used by the Russian leadership to replenish reserves and make another attempt to occupy Ukraine. After all, the situation at the front is not in favor of Russia. In the second half of August, the Russian army did not make any significant progress. Ukrainian forces continued to shell enemy supply routes and key positions throughout the Kherson region in support of the counter-offensive launched in southern Ukraine. Russian troops carried out limited ground attacks northwest and northeast of Slovyansk, in the direction of Siversk, and northwest of Kharkiv. They had no success.

*In the Avdiyivka direction*, battles are being fought for the settlements of Pisky, Opytne, and there are attempts to surround Avdiyivka, but without success. Probably, in September, Russian troops will use reserves for an offensive in this direction with the aim of capturing the entire Donetsk region. According to information from the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, ***Russian troops received an order from the President of the Russian Federation to reach the administrative borders of the Donetsk region by September 15.***

*In the Zaporizhzhya direction*, the enemy is regrouping units and units of the 3rd Army Corps with the aim of resuming the offensive.

#### ■ *Military assistance*

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

**From Latvia:**

- self-propelled guns M109 (6 units)

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<sup>1</sup> До кінця року армія РФ відчує снарядний голод: Insider зіставив запаси і втрати, 01.09.2022, URL: <https://texty.org.ua/fragments/107615/do-kincy-a-roku-armiyi-rf-vidchuye-snaryadnyj-holod-insider-zistavyv-zapasy-i-vtraty/>

**From Estonia:**

- 90-mm anti-tank guns "Pansarvärnspjäs 1110"

**From Finland:**

- Mortars 120 KRH 92
- Anti-aircraft guns "23 ItK 61"

**From Jordan (Probably)**

- RPG-32 anti-tank grenade launchers (Unknown quantity)

**From Great Britain:**

- Ferret Mk 1 armored reconnaissance vehicle
- Snatch Land Rover armored jeeps (14 units)
- Patrol cars Vector Pinzgauer 718 (3 units)
- 6 underwater drones for demining the coastline

**From Bulgaria:**

- Mortars M60CMA

**From USA:**

- HARM anti-radiation missiles in the AGM-88B Block III version

Assistance of charitable and fundraising funds:

- Satellite, and access to the ICEYE satellite constellation database
- Mi-2 AM-1 helicopter

*A number of military aid packages were also announced.* The US package includes: additional ammunition for HIMARS multiple-launch systems; 75,000 155 mm artillery ammunition; 20 120 mm mortar systems and 20,000 120 mm mortar ammunition; Ammunition for the NASAMS surface-to-air missile system; 1,000 Javelin installations and hundreds of AT4 anti-armor systems; 50 armored medical vehicles; Claymore anti-personnel ammunition; S-4 explosive, ammunition and equipment for demolition of buildings; Medical supplies, including first aid kits and other equipment.

The Estonian government intends to transfer mortars and anti-tank weapons. In addition, Estonia plans to support the training of Ukrainian servicemen. Norway and Britain will give Ukraine Black Hornet micro-drones and NightFighter anti-drone systems. Sweden will provide military support to Ukraine in the amount of 100 million dollars, which includes weapons requested by the Ukrainian government. It is not specified what positions Ukraine will receive.

*Source: Mil.ua.*

■ *Russia: internal and external challenges*

The first summit of the Crimean Platform caused a stir in Russia. The initiative was criticized by almost all high-ranking officials of the occupying country, in particular, Dmitri

Medvedev defiantly called it a "retard initiative", Lavrov called it a "Russophobic event" and a "coven", and Vladimir Putin declared that the platform was a provocative measure. This year, against the background of strikes on military facilities on the territory of the occupied peninsula, Russian high-ranking officials did not focus on the Crimean platform, and those who commented on the event were more restrained than last year. Dmitry Peskov did not directly answer the question about the Crimean platform, but only stated that all the goals of "special operations will be achieved." At the same time, according to the Kremlin spokesman, Turkey's position does not prevent bilateral cooperation. In August 2022, Russian officials no longer threaten either nuclear weapons or alternative measures, since Ukraine has already been attacked, and the existing tools of pressure on European countries are already in place, and Russia has almost no capacity to increase this pressure. The emphasis of the media was focused mostly on the murder of the Russian propagandist Daria Dugina. After August 23, Russian propaganda evaluated the Crimean Platform as a minor event. The speeches of the leaders of the participating countries were interpreted as "permission to the puppet government in Kyiv to bomb Crimea." **Such rhetoric was used to demonize the Ukrainian government.**

Currently, the Kremlin is actively using non-military methods to put pressure on Ukraine's partner countries. In particular, these are psychological operations aimed at discrediting the Armed Forces and the top political leadership of Ukraine and nuclear blackmail, as well as energy pressure. This winter may be one of the most difficult for Europeans, high gas prices threaten to hit the economies of EU member states, lead to higher prices and bankruptcy of many enterprises. The European Union understands this and has already developed a number of strategies and adopted a number of measures aimed at reducing the harmful impact of Russian energy blackmail. In particular, a decision was made to reduce energy consumption by 15% and the "REPowerEU" plan to end dependence on Russian energy sources by 2030 was adopted. Among the measures currently being taken, it is worth noting diversification of energy sources, modernization of energy infrastructure, deconservation of coal-fired thermal power plants, return to nuclear energy, and agreements on interstate mutual assistance. As of the beginning of September, the EU has taken a fairly clear position and is still maintaining sanctions pressure with some success, despite the blackmail of the Russian Federation.