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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:* Will European diplomacy help Xi Jinping to implement his “peace plan” for Ukraine? \_\_\_\_\_ 3

### ■ FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY OF UKRAINE

*Theme Analysis:* Will V. Zelenskyy's visit to Poland become a historical milestone in deepening the Ukrainian-Polish strategic partnership? \_\_\_\_\_ 6

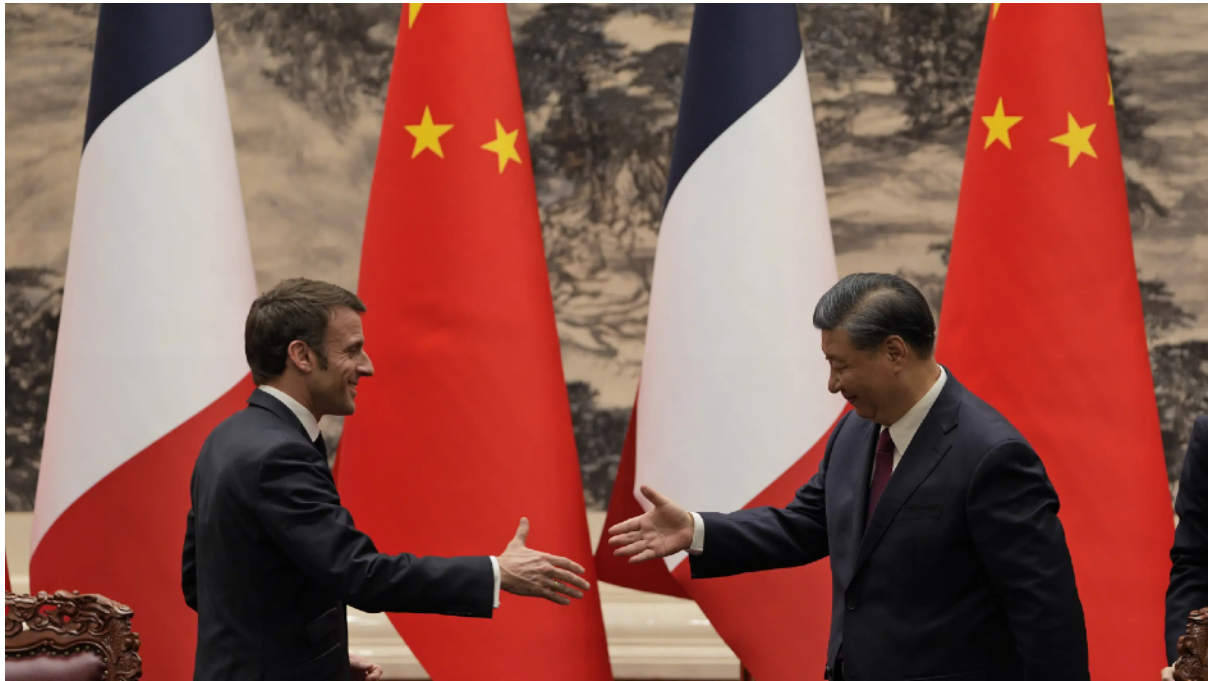
### ■ THE COURSE OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

(01.04 – 15.04.2023)

Changes at the front	9
Military assistance	10
Russia: External and internal challenges	11

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- *THEME ANALYSIS: Will European diplomacy help Xi Jinping to implement his “peace plan” for Ukraine?*



*Photo: Meeting between Emmanuel Macron and Xi Jinping  
Source: AP News*

From April 5 to 8, Emmanuel Macron visited Beijing on a state visit. The head of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, visited China together with the President of France, which should have testified to the unity of European politics. However, the reception of Emmanuel Macron and Ursula von der Leyen, the rhetoric of the two politicians, on the contrary, emphasized the differences on the issues of Europe's interaction with other actors of international relations.

Before her visit to China, Ursula von der Leyen made critical comments towards the Asian state. The President of the European Commission condemned the position of the People's Republic of China on Ukraine and the relations of the Chinese leadership with Putin, for the violation of human rights within the state, as well as for the economic punishment of those countries that do not share Beijing's point of view. Probably because of this, the reception of the President of France and the head of the European Commission was radically different. While Xi Jinping and Emmanuel Macron spent time at joint events accompanied by lavish celebrations, the Chinese press demonized von der Leyen, who received a cold reception. Chinese diplomacy motivated this by the different status of the guests.

As the result of the visit, the presidents of France and the People's Republic of China adopted a joint declaration consisting of 51 points.<sup>1</sup> 3 of them concerned Ukraine. Despite the fact that at the beginning of the visit at a joint press conference with Xi Jinping, the French president explained at length the problem of the Russian invasion and the importance of restoring the European security architecture for the world, the points regarding Ukraine were written in a more neutral style, which is typical feature of the position of the PRC.

In particular, China and France confirmed their support for all efforts aimed at restoring peace in Ukraine based on international law and the goals and principles of the UN Charter; parties opposed armed attacks on nuclear power plants and other peaceful nuclear facilities, and supported the IAEA in its efforts to play a constructive role in promoting the safety and protection of peaceful nuclear facilities, including ensuring the safety of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant; emphasized the importance of strict observance of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict and called, in particular, to protect women and children, victims of the conflict, to increase humanitarian aid to conflict zones, as well as to ensure safe, quick and unhindered access for humanitarian aid in accordance with international obligations. These points completely repeat the provisions of Xi Jinping's Peace Plan regarding the political settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which the PRC published in February.

The point of the joint declaration regarding the intention of the two countries to deepen the cooperation of the French Asia-Pacific Naval Command with the People's Liberation Army of China in the South China Sea, "with the aim of strengthening mutual understanding on regional and international security issues," seems controversial. While France's NATO Allies are building a network of alliances in the Indo-Pacific region and are increasingly involved in containing China, the European leader is signing an agreement to deepen relations with Beijing in the military sphere. Such a move is a blow to the Euro-Atlantic unity, which has strengthened over the last year. *Emmanuel Macron supplemented the official document signed after the meeting with dubious statements*, which, according to Politico, the Elysee Palace banned from publishing in full. **In his interview with an American newspaper, the French president said that Europe should reduce its dependence on the United States, avoid getting dragged into a confrontation between China and the U.S. over Taiwan, and that the Europeans cannot resolve the crisis in Ukraine.**<sup>2</sup>

Thus, Emmanuel Macron questions his country's readiness to respond harshly to China's attempts to seize Taiwan. In addition, *the prospects of deepening relations between China and France were not tied to China's behavior*. The actions of the French leader resemble the policy of Germany and France towards Russia before the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine.

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<sup>1</sup> Déclaration conjointe entre la République française et la République populaire de Chine, 07.04.2023, URL: <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2023/04/07/declaration-conjointe-entre-la-republique-francaise-et-la-republique-populaire-de-chine>

<sup>2</sup> Europe must resist pressure to become 'America's followers,' says Macron, 09.04.2023, URL:<https://www.politico.eu/article/emmanuel-macron-china-america-pressure-interview/>

*Emmanuel Macron supported his actions with statements about European strategic autonomy* and immediately upon his return to Europe and during his next visit to the Netherlands, he delivered a keynote speech that conceptually complemented his initiative. In the Netherlands, Emmanuel Macron's speech was built around the idea of creating a single European market without barriers. Such a market would give Europe advantages in the global confrontation with the United States and the People's Republic of China. However, there is a fundamental contradiction.

The security of Europe is ensured not by France, but by the United States of America. Emmanuel Macron's idea of realizing European political autonomy under the leadership of France has common features with the aspirations of Great Britain in the context of London's new "Global Britain" strategy. Macron, just like the leadership of Great Britain, seeks more active involvement of his country in solving global issues. However, the fundamental difference in the approaches of the two states lies in the vision of ways to achieve the task. If Great Britain has stepped up work in the diplomatic sphere to strengthen ties with the states of the Indo-Pacific region, there is a discussion about the need to increase the funding of international aid programs, then France is trying to achieve leadership in Europe without increasing costs, only through diplomatic negotiations.

At the same time, **Emmanuel Macron's statements ignore the interests of Eastern European states, whose security depends on the United States of America.** A strong Europe is a concept that is a useful aspiration, because both the countries of the continent and the United States of America will benefit from a strong Europe. However, Emmanuel Macron's concept is ultimately naive. Europe cannot be strong without the USA.

**China's interest is to oust the US from East Asia. Russia's interest is to oust the USA from Europe. Emmanuel Macron's trip plays against the US and its European allies.** As evidenced by the visit, Xi Jinping has not changed his position on Ukraine and Russia. The President of France signed economic agreements with China, which contributed to the development of domestic business at the expense of Euro-Atlantic unity. French companies continue to work in Russia and develop activities in China. They have the right to do so, however, under such conditions, the French president's claim to leadership in Europe is inappropriate, as *France ignores the interests of Eastern European states and plays along with China. The PRC hopes to alienate the US's European allies to strengthen its own position in the global confrontation, and the currently weak position of France seems to give Beijing hope for success.*

- *THEME ANALYSIS: Will V. Zelenskyy's visit to Poland become a historical milestone in deepening the Ukrainian-Polish strategic partnership?*



*Photo: V. Zelenskyy and A. Duda  
Source: Office of the President of Ukraine*

On April 5, Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived on an official visit to Poland. This time, the trip of the President of Ukraine to the neighboring country was deliberate, not a transit one. Prior to that, Volodymyr Zelenskyy was twice in Poland in transit, while Andrzej Duda visited Ukraine four times. So, it was already the seventh meeting between V. Zelenskyy and A. Duda since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. First Lady Olena Zelenska and the official delegation left for Warsaw with the President of Ukraine. The reception of Volodymyr Zelenskyy testified to the high level of Ukrainian-Polish relations that currently exist and laid prospects for their further development.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy received the highest state award from the President of Poland. The head of the Ukrainian state was awarded the Order of the White Eagle in recognition of outstanding merits in deepening friendly and comprehensive relations between Poland and Ukraine, for the development of cooperation in the name of democracy, peace and security in Europe, steadfastness in the protection of inalienable human rights.

The presidents of Ukraine and Poland covered a broad range of issues during their discussions. At the joint press conference, the presidents of the two countries touched upon issues of military cooperation, the reconstruction of Ukraine, economic and humanitarian

cooperation, as well as the topic of historical memory. It is worth noting that the issue of historical memory, which has been a bone of contention between the two countries for many years, did not affect the level of interaction between Ukraine and Poland against the background of Russia's full-scale aggression, and this time it was emphasized again. During a speech at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, Andrzej Duda sent a signal to the Kremlin by saying that Russia will not be able to bring the two major Eastern European nations at loggerheads. "There are no taboo topics between us - we also discussed historical issues, which even today are painful for many families. I am convinced that together we will build consistent ties between our peoples, based on the policy of honest memory," Andrzej Duda said.<sup>1</sup> The development of relations between the two countries in this direction will be facilitated by friendly personal relations between the leaders of the two countries and their willingness to discuss problematic issues, as well as interpersonal contacts between Poles and Ukrainians, which have only strengthened over the past year.

Poland became one of Ukraine's main partners during the war and provided substantial comprehensive support. Warsaw received the largest number of Ukrainian refugees. Economic cooperation between the two states remains important. During the President's visit, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine and the Ministry of Economic Development and Technologies of the Republic of Poland on cooperation in the reconstruction of Ukraine. In addition, a Ukrainian-Polish economic forum was held in Warsaw. Volodymyr Zelenskyy also participated in this event and called on Polish business to join the reconstruction of Ukraine as a future member of the European Union. Zelenskyy noted that some representatives of Polish business are already participating in the program of rapid recovery of Ukraine. Thus, according to him, thanks to their efforts, a maternity hospital, a school and a university will be restored in the Kharkiv region.<sup>2</sup> "In the morning on the road to Warsaw, we saw a lot of different cargo vehicles going towards Ukraine. And it looks very optimistic when business works with the country, when business believes in Ukraine, when business expands its presence. This is the most obvious confirmation that the country has a future. I thank you very much, Poland, for believing in the future of Ukraine," the Head of State said.<sup>3</sup>

Economic support is of great importance in a war of attrition and when Ukraine has lost almost 40% of its GDP. At the same time, the main topic discussed by the Ukrainian and Polish sides was military aid. Warsaw is the third partner of Ukraine in terms of the amount of military support provided. The state was one of the first to come to Ukraine's aid, in

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<sup>1</sup> Україна вважає Польщу не лише своїм партнером, а й другом навіки – Володимир Зеленський за результатами зустрічі з Анджеєм Дудою у Варшаві, 05.04.2023,  
URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/ukrayina-vvazhaye-polshu-ne-lishe-svoyim-partnerom-j-drugom-82101>

<sup>2</sup> Зеленський: Ми запрошуємо бізнес Польщі заходити в Україну дуже інтенсивно вже зараз, 05.04.2023,  
URL: <https://interfax.com.ua/news/economic/902197.html>

<sup>3</sup> Володимир Зеленський узяв участь в українсько-польському економічному форумі, 06.04.2023,  
URL: <https://mspu.gov.ua/news/prezydent-ukrainy-volodymyr-zelenskyi-uziav-uchast-v-ukrainsko-polskomu-ekonomichnomu-forumi>

particular, it has provided hundreds of units of heavy equipment. This time, the Agreement between Ukraine and Poland on military cooperation was signed. It provides for the supply by Poland of Rosomak armored personnel carriers, Rak self-propelled mortars, Piorun portable anti-aircraft missile systems, MiG-29 fighters and other weapons. Also, one of the enterprises of "Ukroboronprom" and Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa (PGZ SA) concluded an agreement on cooperation in the field of production of tank shells of 125 mm caliber. In addition, the creation of joint ventures for the production of weapons and ammunition was discussed. Thus, ***Poland becomes not only a logistics, but also a production platform for Ukraine.*** In addition, Ukrainian soldiers are trained in Poland, in particular, on the latest models of equipment, which facilitates its transfer to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. ***This country has become a reliable rear in the conditions of the Russian invasion, and the current level of relations between Ukraine and Poland has serious prospects for reaching the union level.*** Both Ukraine and Poland have similar views on security issues, which is one of the main factors in the formation of alliances. The statements of the Polish leadership testify to the common views of the two states. Warsaw is almost the main lobbyist for Ukraine's accession to NATO and the EU. According to Mateusz Morawiecki, Ukraine wants to be in NATO, to be a part of the EU, and Poland is very supportive of these aspirations. "Because we know: when Ukraine is in NATO, we will be safer... You are the shield of Poland, the shield of the whole of Europe,"<sup>4</sup> the Polish Prime Minister said.

**The Ukrainian-Polish alliance** may also include other states in the future. For example, Great Britain can join the two countries. Before the start of the full-scale invasion, Kyiv, London and Warsaw had already created a tripartite alliance, however, from that moment on, the states did not actively interact within this format. Ukrainian-Polish partnership, according to Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, can change the balance of power not only in the European Parliament, but also in the European Union as a whole. At the same time, two large Eastern European states can contribute to the achievement of Great Britain's goals in the context of the implementation of the Global Britain strategy.

***During the full-scale war, an unprecedented rapprochement between Ukraine and Poland takes place.*** According to Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in the future there will be no borders between the two peoples: political, economic and - what is very important - historical. Warsaw has become a reliable rear, one of the main lobbyists of the Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine, an important economic and military partner. The visit of the President of Ukraine witnessed the further development of Ukrainian-Polish relations and the new role that Warsaw will play in the future. In the short term, joint defense enterprises that will work to meet the needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine may emerge on the territory of a neighboring state. Thus, ***in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war, from a logistical point of view, Poland is also turning into a production center for Ukrainian weapons.***

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<sup>4</sup> КОЛИ УКРАЇНА ВСТУПИТЬ ДО НАТО, ТО ПОЛЬЩА БУДЕ У БІЛЬШІЙ БЕЗПЕЦІ – МОРАВЕЦЬКИЙ, 05.04.2023,  
URL: <https://zn.ua/ukr/war/koli-ukrajina-vstupit-do-nato-to-polshcha-bude-u-bilshij-bezpetsi-moravetskij.html>





Source: Army FM

#### ■ *Changes at the front*

**Trend:** *A tactical and strategic balance was established along the entire front line.*

In the first half of April, there were no serious changes at the front. It can already be asserted that the Russian Federation did not achieve the goal it set in the winter and did not seize the entire territory of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions as part of the "large-scale offensive".

*In the Bakhmut direction* fierce battles are taking place. The situation in the city itself is dynamic, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, despite the significant efforts of the enemy, continue to defend the city center and carry out counter-attacks.

*In the Avdiyivka direction*, the intensity of the fighting decreased somewhat, since Russia does not have enough resources to carry out offensive actions in several directions, and therefore part of the troops were transferred from near Avdiyivka to Bakhmut. At the same time, Russian troops continue to try to surround the city from two sides. President Zelenskyy visited the city of Avdiyivka and presented awards to Ukrainian servicemen.

*In the Mariinka direction*, Russia is making significant efforts to advance directly within the Mariinka town, but has no significant successes.

*In the Lyman direction*, the enemy conducted unsuccessful offensives near the settlements of Dibrova and Bilohorivka.

*In the Zaporozhzhia region*, Russian troops continue to build defensive fortifications and prepare for the defense of captured territories.

## ■ *Military assistance*

In the first half of April, it became known about the transfer of the following weapons to Ukraine:

### **Poland:**

- MiG 29 (4 units)
- Self-propelled anti-aircraft gun -23-4 "Shilka"

### **France:**

- AMX-10RC

### **Canada:**

- BREM Bergepanzer 3

### **USA:**

- Avenger air defense system
- Oshkosh M-ATV
- patrol boats "40 Defiant"
- Cougar armored vehicles
- Stryker armored personnel carrier

### **Slovakia:**

- SAM "Kub"
- MiG 29 (4 units)

### **Belgium:**

- 240 Volvo military trucks

### **FRG:**

- missiles for MARS II anti-aircraft missiles
- 5 thousand 155 mm caliber artillery shells
- 500 SFP9 pistols
- two forklifts
- four mobile antenna-mast systems
- two hangar awnings
- 25 generators
- BMP Marder
- Pionierpanzer Dachs engineering vehicles (3 units)
- 70 MG3 machine guns for Leopard 2 tanks

### **Lithuania:**

- 155 mm caliber ammunition

**Portugal:**

- Leopard 2A6 tanks (3 units)

**Norway:**

- Leopard 2A4NO tanks (8 units)
- Bergepanzer 2 armored repair and evacuation vehicles (2 units)
- Engineering vehicles NM189 Ingeniorpanservogn (2 units)

**Finland:**

- Leopard 2R armored demining vehicles (6 units)

**United Kingdom:**

- Challenger 2 tanks

The US approved a new aid package, which included: ammunition for the HIMARS multiple-launch rocket systems; 155 mm caliber artillery shells; 25 mm caliber ammunition; high-speed anti-radar missiles (HARM); 81-mm and 60-mm mortars and ammunition for them; AT-4 anti-tank grenade launchers; grenade launchers, small arms and ammunition for them; explosive charges and equipment for clearing obstacles; demining equipment; refueling stations; thermal imaging systems, optical devices and laser rangefinders; river patrol boats; test and diagnostic equipment for maintenance and repair of vehicles; spare parts and other field equipment.

Source: *Mil.ua*

## ■ *Russia: External and internal challenges*

**Trend: *Technology and practice of introduction of denazification of Ukrainians by Russia.***

On March 29, a report authored by Dr. Jack Watling, Oleksandr Danilyuk, and Nick Reynolds was published on the website of the British think tank RUSI "Preliminary lessons from Russia's unconventional operations during the Russian-Ukrainian war, February 2022–February 2023."<sup>1</sup> One of the focuses of the study was Russia's strategy in relation to the civilian population. As the authors note, Once in Kyiv, the plan ***included three interconnected directions of operation.*** **The first** was the use of local agents to guide Russian SSO in capturing the executive and parliamentary leadership of the country. These were likely to be given show trials. **The second** direction was assigned to the Kadyrovtsy who had to hunt the Ukrainians believed to be organisers of patriotic resistance and those associated with the Revolution of Dignity in 2014. **The third** line of effort was to be the

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<sup>1</sup> Preliminary Lessons from Russia's Unconventional Operations During the Russo- Ukrainian War, February 2022–February 2023 Jack Watling, Oleksandr V Danylyuk and Nick Reynolds, 29.03.2023, URL: <https://static.rusi.org/202303-SR-Unconventional-Operations-Russo-Ukrainian-War-web-final.pdf.pdf>

pacification of the population. This depended on the isolation of communities through the control of egress and ingress through natural choke points in civic infrastructure. Within these isolated areas, the Rosgvardia were to manage protests and acts of civil resistance. There would not necessarily need to be violent suppression of protests, but the organisers of such protests could be identified and subsequently targeted by the Kadyrovtsy.

Russia implemented this occupation plan in the occupied territories. Citizens were planned to be divided into 5 groups:

1. Those deemed leaders of Ukrainian nationalism who were specified for physical liquidation on a high-priority target list, or for capture to enable show trials.
2. Those suspected of intending to support acts of resistance who needed to be recruited or suppressed including anyone associated with Ukrainian law enforcement, local government, the military or related to officials that were not actively collaborating.
3. Those who were deemed apathetic.
4. Those actively collaborating with Russian forces.
5. Individuals who were necessary for running critical national infrastructure and had to be controlled.

The Russians planned to remove all registers: medical, tax police, electoral, as well as registers of local authorities, insurance companies, etc. These data were necessary in order to find out who lives where and how they are related to the state. Therefore, after the seizure of the Chornobyl and Zaporizhzhya NPPs, the Russians immediately removed all hard drives.

Based on the experience of the war in Chechnya, the military-political command of Russia believed that in order to control Ukraine, they needed only 8% of the population to agree to cooperate. According to the assessment of the Ukrainian intelligence community, this assessment was correct and the Russians really established control over the captured territories. However, with such a low level of support from the local population, control was only possible through systematic violence.

In each village and city, the occupiers chose a building in which to organize the power headquarters. Usually it was a police station or fire department. There, the Russian military equipped, in particular, rooms for interrogations and torture. In all occupied territories, these rooms were equipped in the same way - even the devices for electric torture were the same. This example proves that **the Russians prepared for torture systematically and in advance**. It is worth mentioning the mobile crematoria used by the Russians at the beginning of the war. Taking into account the plan for the rapid occupation of Ukraine, it can be concluded that these mobile installations were supposed not to be used for the bodies of Russian soldiers, but to destroy the bodies of killed Ukrainians.

The number of personnel of 200,000 soldiers at the beginning of the invasion shows that the ***Russians were not prepared for strong resistance from the Ukrainians***. The main task was to establish control over the population. This explains why in the first stages of a full-scale aggression, a significant number of the **Rosguard** was involved. The resistance of Ukraine and the liberation of territories saved a large number of Ukrainians from death.

Currently, significant territories in the South and East of Ukraine remain under occupation. It was in the South that a system of "filtering" the population was established, and many Russian crimes remain unsolved. **The lack of reaction on the part of international organizations and leading non-governmental structures to the Russian occupation system is cause for concern.** It openly violates human rights and should not remain outside the attention of the international community.