

INTERNATIONAL WEEKLY

№02 01.02.2024-15.02.2024

Topics:

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

■ UKRAINE - EUROPEAN UNION

Theme Analysis: Seeing a military threat from Russia, the EU is stepping up assistance to Ukraine_____3

■ FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY OF UKRAINE

Theme Analysis: The key problem of Ukraine's security policy. Restoring the old or building a new model of Ukraine's military-industrial complex based on military-technical cooperation with European partners_____6

■ THE COURSE OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR
(01.10 – 15.10.2023)

Changes at the front_____9
Military assistance_____9
Russia: External and internal challenges_____11

Ukraine – European Union

- **THEME ANALYSIS:** Seeing a military threat from Russia, the EU is stepping up assistance to Ukraine



Photo: Getty Images

On 5 February 2024, the High Representative of the European Union, Josep Borrell, arrived in Warsaw for meeting talks, where he discussed, among other things, Ukraine. After the scheduled meetings, Josep Borrell travelled to Ukraine. This time, in addition to non-public events and trips (for example, he visited two drone manufacturing plants), Borrell spoke at the Verkhovna Rada, and his speech can definitely be called **a new step**. In particular, the head of European diplomacy stated that Europe needed to continue its support for Ukraine *"for as long as it takes"* in favour of a new approach - **"Ukraine's victory at any cost"**.

After the visit, the diplomat wrote in his blog that a new offensive by Russian troops could begin in March. *"Another major Russian offensive may begin in a few months after the Russian 'elections' in March. However, I have seen that the Ukrainian people remain determined to continue the struggle, and I have seen their ingenuity and resilience at work,"* Borrell said. He stressed that, unlike their Russian counterparts, Ukrainian soldiers know what they are fighting for and are not lacking in motivation:

"But they cannot do this without our support, which must be urgently increased... What the EU and its member states do in the coming months to give Ukraine the tools to withstand the Russian offensive will be crucial for both Ukraine and the security of the European Union," the European diplomat said.

He called on EU member states to work with their defence companies to review contracts and prioritise the supply of arms and ammunition to Ukraine. In addition, he also expressed hope that the **EU will soon be able to re-launch its Peace Fund to support Ukraine:**

"I also hope that by the end of the month we will be able to re-launch the EU Peace Fund to continue to support you not only from the warehouses, from the previous capabilities that we had before the war, but also to create new capabilities, new orders, new synergies between

your industry and ours," the EU official said.¹

This initiative is an important step in maintaining security and stability in the region. It demonstrates the European Union's commitment to resolving the situation in Ukraine and recognises the need to strengthen the country's defence capabilities.

The creation of new production facilities will allow Ukraine to obtain the necessary military equipment and weapons, which will help strengthen its defence capabilities and ensure effective resistance to potential threats. Relaunching the Peace Fund could also be an important step in expanding cooperation between the European Union and Ukraine in the security and defence sector.

Borrell highlighted Ukraine's experience in weapons production, noting that such experience would be very useful for Europe: *"You don't need help with drones. I visited some of your drone factories and was very surprised by the ability of your engineers to create high quality drones in large quantities. And at the end of the war, Ukraine will be at the forefront of a new way of fighting a war. It's really amazing. And I think it's something to be very much taken into account, how a country can have such a production capacity of sophisticated and effective drones from nothing in one year. I have to congratulate you on that,"* Borrell said at a joint press conference with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba in Kyiv.

The emphasis that Ukraine may be at the forefront of a new way of warfare points to the importance of military innovation and Ukraine's readiness to adapt to modern military technology. It may also indicate support from the European Union for the development of Ukraine's military-technical capabilities and cooperation in this area.

When asked whether the threat from Russia more serious today is than it was two years ago, Borrell noted the importance of "being very well informed". *"Two years ago, we were 40 per cent dependent on Russian gas. That was a lot. Now this dependence is zero,"* he said.²

One of the main aspects of the discussion was the provision of ammunition to Ukraine. According to Borrell, Ukraine needs more ammunition, there is a big imbalance in artillery capabilities that needs to be levelled. To this end, it is planned to discuss a fund to help Ukraine under the European Peace Fund, which will now be more focused on supporting the production of ammunition and the European defence industry.

This is certainly a major turnaround in EU policy, which is now becoming increasingly determined to engage in military assistance to Ukraine. This can be seen not only at the EU level, but also at the level of individual countries. For example, French President Emmanuel Macron has declared Europe's readiness to provide Ukraine with strategic equipment, which is an important step in maintaining security and stability in the region. In particular, he emphasised the operational cooperation between the armies of NATO member states and the European Union and their readiness to act together to protect Ukraine.

Before his visit to Washington, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also called on the European Union and the United States to do more to help Ukraine, stressing the need to join forces to support the country. He noted that Russian aggression continues, and more support for Ukraine is needed than previously promised in Europe and the United States. Scholz said that Germany has made a great contribution, but more needs to be done, especially in the context of the situation in the US Congress. He stressed the need to send a clear message to Russia with continued and significant support for Ukraine.

In addition, some European countries have announced their intention to increase the production of ammunition to support Ukraine, and this is a very important contribution to support the country in times of war. The EU has also recently agreed a €50 billion aid package for Ukraine. These actions demonstrate the European Union's determination to support Ukraine in its fight for security and sovereignty.

¹ Боррель: Росія може почати новий великий наступ після "виборів" у березні.13.02.2024. <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2024/02/8/7179162/>

² Боррель захоплений здібностями України у виробництві дронів. 07.02.2024. <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/965595.html>

This development is due to several factors. The first is the United States. The recent failure of a vote on a \$60 billion aid package for Ukraine in the US Senate has caused serious outrage and concern among politicians in Germany and Europe. It highlighted the potential problems that could arise if the US stops providing aid to Ukraine. Europe's security could be at risk if a similar situation were to repeat itself if Donald Trump returns to the White House.

The EU aid package does not include military assistance. These funds are directed to civilian needs, such as teacher salaries or the maintenance of the state apparatus. In contrast, US aid is mainly military in nature and includes the supply of weapons.

In terms of military aid, the EU is catching up with the US, but the latter remains the largest donor to the Ukrainian armed forces. However, the problem is that **Europe is not able to provide Ukraine with what the US can due to the limited size and production capacity of the European defence industry.**

It is also important to note that some **EU member states have different approaches to aiding Ukraine.** Eastern European countries provide mainly military assistance, while Western countries have long believed that it is important to support only self-defence. This is also reflected in the speed of decision-making within the EU and the provision of specific assistance. The presence of pro-Russian countries such as Slovakia and Hungary should not be forgotten.

So, although Europe is improving its efforts to assist Ukraine, it must be recognised that it cannot yet fully replace the military assistance provided by the United States.

But now we see Europe gradually changing its policy. We should not forget that it also has leverage over the US. If the Republican isolationists in the US Congress finally refuse to support Ukraine and leave Europe alone against Russian aggression, Europe will probably not be ready to help the US in its confrontation with China. This opinion was expressed by University of Ottawa law professor George Monastiriacos in a publication in The Hill, Ukrinform reports³. According to the author, Republicans in Congress are preventing America from maintaining its role as a global leader, and Trump personally lobbied to break the deal, which was supposed to unblock Biden's request for US national security needs, including support for Ukraine. If America remains an ally with Europe, it will ensure that their capabilities and needs are fully met. However, if they act separately, success will be unattainable for both.

The European Union is also considering possible scenarios of how Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election could affect economic relations between Europe and America. According to Bloomberg, Brussels fears that Trump could start a transatlantic trade war.⁴

As Trump increases his chances of being re-elected president of the United States, Brussels officials are beginning to seriously consider the possible consequences of his return to power. The European Union is watching the Republican primaries, where Trump is winning one victory after another, and considering how best to respond to a possible new administration in the United States.

The second risk factor is a **possible Russian attack on NATO.** The likelihood of this has never been higher, and the EU understands this. **Europe has realised its mistake in its long-standing policy of neglecting the military sector and is trying to fix it.** For Ukraine, this is, of course, a good sign and a source of hope. But Brussels faces a number of challenges in its reform process, and now ***Europe needs unity and determination to survive these difficult times.***

Foreign and Defense Policy of Ukraine

³ Науковець застерігає: Якщо республіканці не підтримають Україну, ЄС не допоможе США у протидії Китаю. 02.02.2024. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-world/3822046-naukovec-zasterigae-akso-respublikanci-ne-pidtrima-ukrainu-es-ne-dopomoze-ssa-u-protidii-kitau.html>

⁴ ЄС готується до торговельної війни зі США після обрання Трампа президентом. 08.02.2024. <https://www.unian.ua/world/yes-gotuyetsya-do-torgovelnj-viyni-zi-ssha-pislya-obrannya-trampa-prezidentom-12537567.html>

- *THEME ANALYSIS: The key problem of Ukraine's security policy. Restoring the old or building a new model of Ukraine's military-industrial complex based on military-technical cooperation with European partners*



Source: DR

On 7 February 2024, the Foreign Policy Research Institute and the Conversion and Disarmament, with the assistance of the General Directorate for the Service of Foreign Missions, held a roundtable discussion for foreign diplomatic missions, leading Ukrainian media and experts on the topic "Ukrainian defense industry and its capabilities in ensuring the needs of the front". The main objectives of the event were to find answers to the question of providing the Ukrainian Defence Forces with appropriate weapons and ammunition in the context of the tense situation at the front and the global dimension of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The parliamentary crisis in the US Congress and other challenges Ukraine faces have greatly increased the need for new perspectives.

The panelists were Valentin Badrak, Director the Center for Research Army, conversions and disarmament; Volodymyr Gavrylov, Deputy Minister of Defense of Ukraine in 2022-2023, Ukrainian Defense Attaché in the USA in 2015-2018; Vitaly Nemilostiviy, Deputy Minister of Strategic Industries of Ukraine (2020-2021), First Deputy Minister of Industrial Policy (2007-2010); Vladyslav Belbas, general director of Ukrainian armored vehicles. Together, they provided a comprehensive in-depth look at the current state of the Ukrainian defence sector and recommendations for its improvement.

One of the possible ways to overcome the stalemate at the front and ensure victory in the war is to strengthen cooperation with partners and allies, including the United States and other countries that support Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity. This could include providing additional military assistance, weapons, ammunition, training and consultations with military strategists and experts.

In addition, it is important to focus on improving Ukraine's own defence capabilities, developing and implementing effective defence strategies and countermeasures, and enhancing mobilisation and defence capabilities. The development and modernisation of Ukraine's armed

forces, including through the use of the latest technologies and developments, can also ensure better preparedness and effectiveness in responding to threats.

In addition, it is crucial to support national defence capabilities by mobilising society, raising patriotism and military awareness among citizens, and providing adequate support for soldiers and their families.

In general, successfully overcoming the stalemate and achieving victory in the Russian-Ukrainian war requires a comprehensive approach that includes cooperation with partners, enhancing defence preparedness and mobilisation efforts, as well as active support on the social and psychological front.

Ukraine has found itself in a difficult situation, particularly with regard to the supply of ammunition and weapons to the Armed Forces. **The outbreak of a full-scale war led to the rapid depletion of its own ammunition stocks, and thus the country was forced to rely on the remnants of the Soviet legacy and Western aid.**

The Ukrainian leadership hoped for a strategic counter-offensive, but the implementation of this strategy required significant resources, which were limited due to the lack of sufficient domestic arms and ammunition. Western aid thus became a key source of ammunition and weapons for Ukraine, but over time it became even more important as Ukraine's own ammunition stocks were almost exhausted. The percentage of Western aid covering Ukraine's military needs has increased significantly, and at the moment almost all ammunition and weapons come from Western partners.

Ukraine's resistance to the superior forces of Russian troops is achieved through the technical superiority of Western weapons. This technological superiority creates space for successful warfare and national security.

Ukraine has undergone significant changes in the military sector in recent years. Until 2014, most defence products were produced by state-owned enterprises, but over time, private companies have become the main source of development and production of military equipment. This reflects the dynamic development of the private sector and its importance for Ukraine's technological progress. However, sustainable defence capability requires much more than we have. Ukraine needs to increase the production of ammunition and weapons, as well as ensure continued access to components and raw materials for the military-industrial complex. It is important that the government creates transparent and clear rules of the game for businesses involved in the military industry. Unnecessary bureaucratic procedures and obstacles that could slow down the development of the defence sector should be avoided.

It is also important that government agencies maintain a balance between controlling and supporting military production, avoiding excessive bureaucracy and inspections. This will help maintain the pace of development of the military-industrial complex and ensure that it meets its needs in times of military conflict.

Ukraine's defence industry should be a synergistic organism where all parties understand their tasks and can work together to achieve common goals. This means constant interaction with the military, research and industry sectors to ensure that the military's capability and technological development needs are met. The experience of the military, the results of combat operations and the use of new technologies should contribute to the continuous improvement of weapons and defence systems.

The state budget should be clearly focused on the development of the military-industrial complex, so that enterprises understand the prospects for their investments and can plan their activities in line with military needs. Ensuring transparent and stable conditions for military contracts will help support the investment climate and provide the necessary weapons for the Armed Forces.

It is also important to rethink and adapt weapons and military strategies to the new conditions of modern warfare. Ukraine has the opportunity to reject outdated Soviet standards and adopt NATO standards, which will increase efficiency and combat readiness. For example, the transition to NATO standards in the field of artillery in a short time shows Ukraine's

readiness to adapt quickly and effectively to new challenges.

Overall, ensuring the effective functioning of the defence industry and using its potential to achieve military goals is a key task for the successful defence of the country. This leads to a number of ***recommendations for the Ukrainian government*** that should be implemented in order to quickly and effectively improve the Ukrainian defence industry and make it capable of responding to today's risks.

1. Integration with European and American partners: Given the technological superiority and the importance of economic integration with developed countries, cooperation with Europe and the United States in the field of military-industrial complex and technology is key to ensuring access to advanced developments and increasing military power. This also applies to attracting foreign business.

2. Transition to NATO standards: Adapting the Ukrainian military to NATO standards and technologies is strategically important, as it will increase interoperability and effectiveness of joint operations with partners from Europe and North America.

3. Use of innovations and the latest technologies: Focusing on the development and implementation of the latest technologies, such as unmanned platforms, artificial intelligence and situational awareness systems, will increase the efficiency and accuracy of combat operations, reducing losses among Ukrainian troops and resources.

4. Use strategic planning and effective resource management: Clear planning and budget allocation for military-technical needs is an important step to ensure the development of the military-industrial complex and the provision of necessary weapons and equipment for the Armed Forces.

5. Implement reform and modernisation of the military-industrial complex: The transition to new technologies and models of combat capability requires systemic reforms and investments in the military-industrial complex to ensure its ability to produce and repair modern military equipment and hardware.

6. Increase the prestige of working in the military-industrial complex: Career opportunities and professional development in the industry should be actively promoted, especially among young engineers and technicians.

7. Introduce tax incentives and other support measures: Consideration should be given to introducing measures to support and develop the military-industrial complex, such as tax incentives for investors or export facilitation.

8. Improve the macroeconomic climate: The need to normalise the credit rating, improve export performance and work with international partners can help attract investment and develop the military-industrial complex.

9. Implement legislative reforms: Legislation governing the military-industrial complex, in particular laws on mobilisation and profits, should be reviewed and improved to ensure the efficient functioning of the industry.

These are domestic policy actions that will help the Ukrainian defence sector, but ***certain measures should also be taken in the area of foreign policy***, especially in the context of NATO integration:

1. Use of Ukraine's unique military experience in dialogue with NATO: Ukraine is a unique country for NATO due to its experience in reforming and fighting a war on its territory. This opens up opportunities for the development of new standards and approaches to modern military strategy not only at the national level, but also at the level of the Alliance.

2. Pay due attention to the principles of standardisation of integration: Cooperation with NATO to standardise and integrate military standards and procedures is important to ensure efficiency and interoperability in military operations.

3. Develop cooperation with Western industry: It is important to involve industry in the development and production of military equipment and hardware, taking into account NATO's needs and requirements. This could include joint research and development programmes as well as technology sharing.

4. **Conclude additional security assurances:** Security assurance agreements with key partners, such as the UK and other G7 countries, could provide additional support for the industry and ensure financial stability in arms production and procurement.

Thus, the problem of the development of the military-industrial complex in Ukraine requires a comprehensive approach and active action. *Given the current unstable geopolitical situation, Ukraine needs to have a well-established and effective self-sufficient defence complex that is able to respond and adapt to new challenges.*



Source: Army FM

■ Changes at the front

Trend: *Ukrainian defence forces are forced to retreat from Avdiivka after months of heavy fighting, while Russian troops try to build on their offensive success along the entire frontline*

In the Kupyansk direction, Ukrainian defenders repelled enemy attacks near Sinkivka and Ivanivka in Kharkiv region.

In the Liman direction, Ukrainian troops repelled six Russians' attacks near Terny, Yampolivka and Vesele in Donetsk region.

In the Bakhmut direction, Ukrainian defence forces repelled 10 militants' attacks near Bohdanivka, Ivanivske, Klishchivka and Andriivka in Donetsk region.

In the Avdiivka direction, Ukrainian defenders continue to hold back the enemy on the second line of defence after the capture of Avdiivka by the Russians force. Ukrainian troops are holding steadfast, inflicting significant losses on Russians. According to the decision, the units are being reinforced as planned and troops are manoeuvring in threatened areas.

In the Maryinka direction, Ukrainian troops continue to hold back Russian troops near Krasnohorivka, Heorhiivka, Pobeda and Novomykhailivka in Donetsk region, repelling 34 attacks.

In the Novopavlivka direction, the Ukrainian Armed Forces are repelling occupants' attacks south of Prechystivka and near Staromayorsk in the Donetsk region.

In the Kherson direction, the Ukrainian Armed Forces continue to hold their positions

Military assistance:

Germany has decided to provide a new aid package worth €1.13 billion, which includes 120,000 122mm artillery rounds, an additional 100 missiles for the IRIS-T SLS systems, two Skynex systems to be delivered in 2024 and 2025, and an additional 18 self-propelled artillery systems in 2026-2027.

■ *Russia: External and internal challenges*

Trend: Russia is becoming an active participant in D.Trump's presidential election campaign

On 6 February 2024, American host Tucker Carlson conducted the first interview with Russian President Vladimir Putin since the full-scale invasion. This is the first dialogue between the Russian president and a Western journalist since the start of the full-scale invasion. The interview lasted over two hours, after which Carlson posted it on his website.

Putin began his speech with a lengthy account of history, predictably filling it with false claims about Ukraine's sovereignty and distorting facts about Ukrainian history. He also mentioned NATO expansion and the attacks on the Nord Stream gas pipeline, but the main topic was Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He also expressed his assessment of the Ukrainian president and discussed the issue of the imprisoned American journalist Evan Hershkowitz. But there was no new information or anything different from the typical Russian disinformation that can now be found on every social media platform.

Nevertheless, we managed to hear something unique from these two hours. Putin was more direct than usual in expressing his vision for ending the Russian invasion of Ukraine: not through a military victory, but through a deal with the West to legalise the territory captured by Russia from Ukraine to end the conflict.

Overall, the course of the interview was rather a surprise for Tucker. Expecting that it would be easy for him to build an image of Putin as a great defender of traditions for his audience of rural conservatives, he was faced with a "history lecture" and vague answers. And even when he tried to direct the Russian president, he only evaded and continued his monologues.

But from this interview, it is still possible to identify certain of Putin's plans. For example, when Tucker asked whether Russia would be satisfied with the Ukrainian territories it had already seized when signing a peace agreement, the Russian president only evaded the question. This suggests that Russia is seeking to seize all of Ukraine's territory.

It is also worth paying attention to Russia's attempts to legitimise its war and discredit its enemies, in particular Europe. The fact of this narrative is nothing special; it is a classic component of Russian propaganda. This time, however, the form is interesting. ***Putin directly accused Poland of being allied with the Third Reich during World War II, shifting the responsibility for the German occupation onto it:*** "Before the Second World War, when Poland cooperated with Germany, (it) refused to comply with Hitler's demands, but it took part with Hitler in the partition of Czechoslovakia, but since it did not give up the Danzig Corridor, the Poles forced it, they flirted and forced Hitler to start the world war with them," Putin said in an interview.

Of course, this statement caused a resonance and international outrage. But what's more telling here is that Putin used a typical Russian tactic of "identifying with the Nazis". Russia has applied this propaganda strategy to all states, which it then insidiously attacked. Now it is applying it to NATO and EU countries. At a time when the prospect of Russia's actual war with the whole of Europe is more real than ever, **Putin's statement should send a signal to European leaders.**

However, the very fact of the interview remains unclear to many. If Putin's interests are clear, what is Carlson's agenda? To do this, we need to understand his personality. He is a very popular journalist, having previously worked for FoxNews, one of the largest US news outlets targeting a Republican audience. He became especially famous during Trump's presidency, as he was an active supporter of his during the election campaign, and afterwards became his mouthpiece. And during the current election race, he has remained loyal to Trump. Most of Tucker's audience are Republicans, Trumpists and conservatives. During the Democrats' rule, he became a model of media opposition for them, so he has great credibility. **In other words, all of Carlson's actions somehow reflect the interests of Trump and his voters.**

But he has no less ties to the Russian president than to the former American president. VoxCheck, together with the National Security and Defence Council's Centre for Countering Disinformation, analysed the activities of 26 Western "experts" and identified signs of their networking. To do this, they reviewed publications and speeches from 2014 to 2023. The activities of these "experts" were analysed according to the following criteria: publications on websites owned by other "experts" or funded by the Kremlin, appearances on YouTube channels, receipt of awards, and feedback on visits to Russia or the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Most of the analysed "experts" have their own YouTube channels or blogs on other platforms. Among them is Tucker Carlson, who now has his own show on Twitter. In his first episode, Carlson accused Ukraine of blowing up the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station. Previously, he had repeatedly justified Russian aggression, spread fakes about "American biolabs in Ukraine" and stressed that supporting Ukraine was harmful to Western countries.⁵

Among the guests of the former *Fox News* host was journalist Glenn Greenwald. Similar to Carlson, he has a loyal audience that believes and trusts his opinion. Previously, Greenwald wrote articles for *The Guardian* and received several awards, including for investigative journalism. In his interview with Tucker Carlson, he stated that *"in the end, there will be negotiations that will result in Russia keeping part of eastern Ukraine, where he believes there are predominantly Russian-speaking ethnic Russians who are being oppressed by Kyiv. They will also keep Crimea"*.

Russian state-owned foreign-language media companies such as *Russia Today* (RT) and *Sputnik* not only republish material from many of these figures, but also have active ties with them. For example, after Tucker Carlson was fired from Fox News, RT immediately offered him a job. In addition, Carlson himself outlined his positive attitude towards Russian President Vladimir Putin, asking the question: "Why should I hate him?"

Such speakers, who try to position themselves as "independent experts", actually play a key role in spreading pro-Russian narratives. They have their own dedicated audience, authority and established image, which gives them access to large platforms of influence. Their regular appearances on Russian state channels, visits to Moscow or the temporarily occupied territories, as well as their undisguised admiration for **Putinism**, indicate that they are directed by the Kremlin.

The danger lies not only in the spread of pro-Russian narratives, but also in the legitimisation of Russian propaganda in the West. Joint broadcasts, media columns, awards

⁵ Мережа російської пропаганди: що пов'язує західних «експертів», які просувають вигідні росії нарративи. 09.02.2024. https://voxukraine.org/merezha-rosijskoyi-propagandy-shho-pov-yazuye-zahidnyh-ekspertiv-yaki-prosuvayut-vygidni-rf-naratyvy-voxcheck?fbclid=IwAR0HhyLrNecYyVQTtF_NROTOFwddb1B46h6bp2im6S63i2Ee_dFgGjxEde

and prizes create the illusion of mass appeal and professionalism. This allows Russian media to use their materials to confirm their words and spread their own narratives, including in Ukraine.

Thus, **there is a whole network of pro-Russian propagandists in the West who are now flooding the media space of the Republicans.** Given that all of them are Trumpists, it is logical to understand that Trump himself will also act in alliance with Russia.

Trump has already made a number of pro-Kremlin statements. For example, he said that if he becomes president, he will force the Russian and Ukrainian sides to accept a ceasefire, even if it means Ukraine losing territory. Recently, he also said that he would encourage Russia to attack NATO countries that do not spend enough on their military budgets. By doing so, he is trying to close two of his priorities of his presidency - to implement his Korea plan and to relieve the US of its financial burden in NATO. **Trump's main goal is to build a large anti-Chinese coalition. That is why he needs Russia.**

In other words, the interview is a kind of "trailer" for future open cooperation between Trump, who has a very high probability of being re-elected president, and Russia. It can be assumed that Russia will publicly abandon its claims against the West in exchange for a power-sharing agreement in which its desired Soviet-era sphere of influence will return to it. It is clear that in such a situation, Ukraine would at best lose the territories seized by Russia and its political subjectivity, and at worst lose its independence entirely.

At the same time, we can say that Trump's plans are unjustified, because even in the interview itself, Putin said that Russia would not leave China. As Europe is outraged by both the interview and the Republican's own statements and is unlikely to support him in the Chinese confrontation, if it does not become a new enemy at all. This will certainly only weaken the United States. But Trump as a politician has never been known for his foresight, and so he will go through with his plans to the end.

Within the first day alone, the interview gathered 100 million views on Twitter. ***Tucker Carlson has indeed provided Russia and Putin with a huge platform for spreading their propaganda.*** After all, while the Russians' lies are obvious to Ukrainians, Putin's words may seem truthful and justified to a global audience that lacks context and understanding of the Ukrainian-Russian situation.

But the Russian leadership itself is not satisfied with this publicity. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov admitted that the large number of views of Russian President Vladimir Putin's interview with American journalist Tucker Carlson on social media "does not mean support at all". He explained that it was an opportunity for the Russian leader to be heard in the West, as "the largest media outlets are controlled by the Anglo-Saxons".⁶

He noted that the main task is for the president to be heard, and this may encourage more people to think about the correctness of his views. However, he emphasised that it is very difficult for Russia to counter the US in terms of propaganda, as "the Anglo-Saxons own all the major broadcasters and newspapers".

In other words, Russia needs an American media platform and will therefore be happy to support those who are willing to provide it, such as Trump. ***Given the predictions about the US election results, unfortunately, such cooperation may soon move from the information plane to the political one. This will have enormous negative consequences not only for Ukraine but also for the entire Western world. However, we need to be prepared for this and start developing a countermeasure plan.***

⁶ Розраховано на Захід: у кремлі прокоментували інтерв'ю Путіна Карлсону. 09.02.2024. <https://uapress.kyiv.ua/za-kordonom/rozrahovano-na-zahid-u-kremli-prokomentovali-intervyu-putina-karlsonu/>