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WITHOUT A SIGNIFICANT VICTORY AT THE FRONT, RUSSIA IS TRYING TO DESTROY UKRAINE'S ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE



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SPECIAL FOR HROMADA

Vitaliy Portnykov | Notes for March

WAR HAS COME TO RUSSIA



One of the major news stories in March was the fact that the war had finally come to Russia. Regular attacks on military targets in Belgorod, which became one of the main springboards for the destruction of Kharkiv and other border areas, made the residents of this Russian regional center realize how Ukrainians have been living on the other side of the border for the past two years. And, interestingly enough, Moscow treated the fate of the inhabitants of the Belgorod region with almost the same indifference as the fate of the inhabitants of Ukraine. The famous Russian propagandist Vladimir Solovyov even accused those who talked about the problems of Belgorod residents of "hysteria". I have no doubt that this is exactly how the Russian leadership treats its provincial compatriots. And from this point of view, the Kremlin can pay much more attention to another successful operation – strikes against Russian oil refineries. We can say that Russia must abandon the logic of the so-called special operation. After all, what is a special operation? It is when a war is supposed to take place on the territory of Ukraine or on the occupied Ukrainian lands, and the Russian citizens themselves are supposed to enjoy peace and not feel any consequences during this war of annihilation.

But, it will not happen as Vladimir Putin planned. The blitzkrieg planned by the Russian leader for February-March 2022, which was supposed to lead to the elimination of the Ukrainian statehood, ended in a fiasco for its organizers. And the war will take place not only on the territory of Ukraine, but also on the territory of Russia.

So, in March we learned what a combined attack is, which includes both combat operations in the frontline regions and drone strikes on Russia's fuel and energy complex. And

we have to understand that every destroyed Russian oil depot, every destroyed oil refinery is not only a blow to the interests of the Russian people, who of course, have to feel the consequences of this war in their own pockets and in their own well-being, but it is also a blow, first and foremost, to the Russian armed forces.

The fewer resources Russia has for the Russian army, the fewer opportunities it has to provide it with material support, the sooner the Russian leadership will realize the futility of a long war of attrition for Russia itself. Even if such a realization does not occur in the near future, the Russians will at least have to abandon the offensive on Ukrainian territory, the idea of occupying new Ukrainian lands and their subsequent annexation.

In March we learned that the Kremlin had such ideas. In fact, the deputy head of the Russian Security Council and former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev came up with his own Russian "peace formula" – allegedly in response to the peace formula promoted by Ukrainian leaders.

This so-called "peace formula" of Medvedev is in fact not a "formula for peace" or even a formula for Russia's victory in the war. It is a formula for the obliteration of Ukraine. There are many contradictory points in it. But if you reduce them all to one denominator, it becomes absolutely clear: the Ukrainian state must cease to exist, its territory must be annexed to the Russian Federation, and before that it must be robbed by the Russians. This is because Dmitry Medvedev demands that the Ukrainian leadership not only make a decision to join the Russian Federation, but also be ready to pay reparations to Russian citizens who died at the front, as well as to those who suffered losses during the Russian-Ukrainian war.

In other words, in any case, for Medvedev and his compatriots, the inhabitants of the territory of modern Ukraine are second-class citizens who must be robbed for the sake of the wealth of those who participated in Putin's war against our country. And the territory of Ukraine, in turn, should be annexed to the Russian Federation, so that its citizens will have the opportunity to further plunder these con-

quered and destroyed territories.

In fact, this is the real program of the Russian political leadership regarding the war against Ukraine.

We have repeatedly had to explain that it is not about the need to annex the territories of the Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson or Zaporizhzhya regions to the Russian Federation. It is not even about the desire to annex all of eastern and southern Ukraine. And, by the way, it is not even about the desire to annex all of Ukraine to the Russian Federation. It's about a political program that implies the return of Russia to the borders of the USSR in 1991.

The war with Ukraine is only a part of Russia's ambitious man-hating plan. However, it is absolutely clear that without defeating Ukraine and integrating its entire territory into Russia, Russia has virtually no chance of forcing the former Soviet republics to give up their statehood.

In this situation, the war with Ukraine has become a real existential challenge for Vladimir Putin and his associates. Because it turned out that the heroic resistance of the Ukrainians to the Russian plans actually blocked the entire program of "development" of the Russian state, approved by the Chekists back in the 1990s, after the Soviet Union had disappeared from the political map of the world and remained in memory as one of the most disgusting and vile entities in the history of mankind.

In this way, Dmitry Medvedev expressed what these people really want – to annex the territory of the whole of Ukraine to Russia. And there should be no illusions about this: Russia will not limit itself to individual regions, Crimea or Donbass. This is just a stepping stone to the further destruction of the whole of Ukraine. And if the Russians manage to conquer some other Ukrainian region, it will also only be a stepping stone to conquer new Ukrainian regions. This is their "formula" for peace.

And it is symbolic that we heard these threats from the Kremlin on the eve of the horrific terrorist attack in Krasnogorsk near Moscow. It seems that Putin and his company should have realized that there are not fictional but very real threats. For example, radical Islamic terrorism. After all, sup-

porters of the Islamic State and other radical groups have a lot to hate about Russia and Putin after the "exploits" of the Russian military in Syria or Moscow's actual willingness to support the Taliban in Afghanistan. While Russia was not threatened by the West or Ukraine, the Russian president unilaterally attacked a neighboring state and started a confrontation with the civilized world.

However, even in this situation of a serious security challenge, Putin habitually began to think about how to use the ineptitude of his own special services and the deaths of his compatriots to blame Ukraine. This is despite the fact that the United States had warned Moscow in advance of the possibility of major terrorist attacks, even issuing a public warning when it called on U.S. citizens in Russia to avoid mass gatherings. And not surprisingly, in the immediate aftermath of the attack, the White House insisted that it knew who organized it because it had

warned of the possibility of the crime.

But Putin continues to stubbornly look for a "Ukrainian trace" and blame the West. And this is, in fact, clear evidence of the Kremlin dictator's political inadequacy. It is this inadequacy that leads Putin to make crazy political decisions, such as the attack on Ukraine in February 2022. It is this

inadequacy that prevents him from seeing real dangers and forces him to fight imaginary threats. It is this inadequacy that leads him to plan new attacks on Ukraine at a time when he needs to fight terror. So Putin is not only a cold-blooded and brutal murderer, but also a crazed suicide.



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SPECIAL FOR HROMADA

Oles Doniy

POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES OF
GENERAL ZALUZHNYI

On March 7, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced that former Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Valerii Zaluzhnyi would be appointed Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

On the same day, similar information was published in the name of the press service and on the website of the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Ukrainian authorities were so interested in this appointment that they violated an established international diplomatic procedure. A future ambassador must first be agreed upon with the authorities of the target country (obtaining such prior consent is called "agriman"), and only then is the future ambassador officially announced. In this case, there was no prior consent from the British government, which put London in a less than ethical situation.

Despite the fact that from a formal point of view it looks like a diplomatic appointment, in reality it is an internal Ukrainian policy.

After the full-scale Russian aggression, Ukrainian democracy was dealt a severe blow, and democratic procedures were effectively curtailed: the state monopolized the media, political criticism was silenced, and finally, term elections for the Verkhovna Rada and the president were canceled. The influence of party politics on society has diminished significantly. The army, on the other hand, rightly enjoys the confidence of society, according to all polls. Therefore, in a political vacuum, public attention began to turn to people associated with resistance of the aggressor, and in particular to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The

Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, Valerii Zaluzhnyi, having broken the long-standing stereotypes of reserved, uncommunicative and unsmiling generals, quickly won the sympathy of Ukrainian audience of millions.

Sociological services have noted that the level of trust in the Armed Forces of Ukraine is concentrated on the commander-in-chief. Thus, according to a survey conducted by the reputable Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS), trust in the Armed Forces in December 2023 was 96%, and trust in Zaluzhnyi 88%. Trust in President Zelenskyy in the same survey was significantly lower: 62%. The correlation between trust and willingness to vote is not direct, and most Ukrainian sociological services do not even dare to ask questions about the elections, apparently fearing a reaction from the authorities. In December of the same year, however, the media reported the results of an unpublished poll by another reputable sociological service, Rating, which showed that if Zelenskyy and Zaluzhnyi had made it to the second round of the presidential election, the results would have been almost identical. No other person in Ukraine except Zaluzhnyi could compete with the incumbent at that time. Such sociology and Zaluzhnyi's political prospects were noticeably irritating to the authorities. Commenting on the results of the KIIS poll, the leader of the Servant of the People party, Olha Shuliak, could not hide her dissatisfaction: "There is a saying: there are lies, there are big lies, and there are statistics." Instead of focusing on ratings, it is important to unite for a common victory. Let's leave the discussion about the ratings for later and focus on the joint efforts to strengthen our country. After our common victory, we will have an opportunity to discuss and evaluate the ratings in the context of real achievements".

Zaluzhnyi's sky-high ratings, in turn, have led to a revival of political intrigue within the Ukrainian political elite. Those around Petro Poroshenko's party were ready to consider a scenario

in which Zaluzhnyi would serve as president after his victory and Poroshenko as prime minister (in the future, hoping to politically defeat the inexperienced general and concentrate the main levers of influence around the prime minister). And the rest of the forces opposed to the government, with their own scenarios and developments, tried to find ways to access the popular commander-in-chief.

Fairly assessing Zelenskyy's psychotype, progressive experts and journalists warned of the inevitable resignation of Zaluzhnyi from his post. The lack of significant territorial successes during the announced "counteroffensive" was not the reason, but rather the pretext for replacing the head of the armed forces. Considering that the "counteroffensive" was not announced by the military leadership, but by political leaders and the media close to them, it may seem that Zaluzhnyi's resignation was prepared in advance.

The situation with the possible resignation was politically and media-driven, and finally, on the evening of February 8, 2024, a decree was published on the website of the President's Office dismissing Valerii Zaluzhnyi from the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The next day, on February 9, Volodymyr Zelenskyy awarded Zaluzhnyi the title of Hero of Ukraine, and they embraced in front of the cameras at the award ceremony, but this did not reduce the wave of negativity against the president from the replacement of the popular commander-in-chief.

As head of the army, Zaluzhnyi looked like an alternative to the current president, and when the general was removed from office, the alternative began to look even more convex. The authorities urgently needed to find an algorithm for removing Zaluzhnyi from public life. Within a month and a day, such an algorithm was publicly announced – the future appointment as ambassador. The authorities were in such a hurry to ensure that the combination would not fail that they even rejected diplomatic etiquette, which requires prior approval from the agriman.



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The next day, the media published information that had a certain compromising tone for a part of society: in February, in connection with the procedure for dismissal from the post of Commander-in-Chief, Valerii Zaluzhnyi passed a military medical commission, which concluded that he was in poor health and unfit to serve in the army. This, in turn, paved the way for his dismissal from the army as a whole and his subsequent appointment to a civilian position.

This behavior suggests that the ambassadorial appointment is a mutually beneficial decision for both parties: Zelenskyy and Zaluzhnyi. Is there more to gain?

Zelenskyy's opponents on social media have begun to write about "political exile."

But exile means either:

- a) the forced displacement of the exiled person (as a result of a court sentence or other type of punishment), or
- b) the use of political or military resources to move an unwanted but directly dependent person to a dangerous or unpromising location.

Instead, the appointment of a can-

didate as ambassador to another country requires the approval of three parties

- a) The top political leadership of the country appointing the ambassador,
- b) the leadership of the state to which the ambassador is appointed (the "Aggreccan"), and
- c) the consent of the person to be appointed ambassador.

No one can appoint anyone anywhere without the consent of the person to be appointed ambassador. So either Valerii Zaluzhnyi agreed to the appointment, or Zelenskyy was sure that Zaluzhnyi would not be able to refuse.

It appears that Zelenskyy has won a tactical victory, and Zaluzhnyi may have won a strategic one.

Zelenskyy temporarily removes from the country a person he sees as his political rival. The political opposition in the country will not have easy physical access to Zaluzhnyi, which is necessary for negotiations on the formation of a powerful alternative to the current government. His contacts with Ukrainian citizens as an ambassador will be limited and under protocol

control. In other words, Zelenskyy has bought time.

But Zaluzhnyi can win strategically. The authorities are making it clear to everyone that they will not allow any elections next year, and perhaps for many years to come. This means that if Zaluzhnyi is planning a political perspective, there is no point in accelerating and making a false start. Instead, as an ambassador not in an unimportant country, but in the capital of one of the largest strategic partners, Zaluzhnyi will be able to build the necessary ties with the outside world and win the support of leading political, economic and military circles not only in Britain, but in the entire Western community.

London can become not a political reserve, but a political springboard.

Therefore, objectively speaking, Zaluzhnyi remains the star of the future political scenario.

The only question is when democratic procedures will return to Ukraine, because the government is still doing everything to restrict them, not to restore them. And the war is a pretext for this, not a reason.

WHAT DOES VICTORY COST?

Nataliya Anon

In the aftermath of a Russian missiles and drones striking many cities in Ukraine, several people were killed, lots of injured. These tragedies occur almost every day while we receive heartbreaking news. Russians deliberately kill civilians, trying to maintain a high level of stress and psychological pressure on entire continents. We see how in every country, even the most developed, emerging influence agents actively spread their activities at trusted areas. These may be representatives of governments, parliaments, major parties, and public movements. They do not openly support Russia, as that would end disastrously. Instead, they try to switch the focus of their fellow citizens, initiating discussions on topics that would lead to discrediting or nullifying the Ukrainian issue. And Russia spends hundreds of billions of dollars on this.

Less than 100 years ago, events unfolded in a similarly dramatic manner. It took the United States two years to decide to take actions and start actively assisting allies during World War II. Within American society, there were heated debates about the advisability of intervention, the prioritization of domestic issues, the refugee problem, and the efficiency of budgetary expenditures. At that time, Europe was bleeding, and the Nazis were triumphantly marching through the squares of the largest cities.

Today, Ukraine is bleeding, and the threat of the war spreading to Europe is the most acute it has been in the last two years. Using this catastrophe for any benefits in domestic political struggle is farcical at best, and at its truest, is a vile blasphemy.

Every action has its name. Mike Johnson decided to become a symbolic Dead End, taking what he believes to be a favorable negotiating position. A little more effort, and his name will become nominal for describing someone who, between cynicism and honor, chooses the first one.

The United States is ready to provide \$60 billion in support for Ukraine. This includes \$46 billion that go directly to the American defense industry. These funds will remain within the country, providing companies with new contracts and American citizens with new jobs. Another \$14 billion will be allocated as humanitarian support to Ukraine.

How much will a defeat of Ukraine cost the United States? This simple question has complex formulas for calculation. But it can be firmly stated that this whole sum will be geometrically greater than \$60 billion.

How many Ukrainian lives will delay cost? At its maximum – all, because Russia acts by all the rules of genocide against Ukraine. And there are inevitable proofs Putin does not plan to stop within Ukrainian borders.

The number of destroyed Russian forces that entered the territory of Ukraine is swiftly approaching half a million. Nearly 7,000 tanks, over 13,000 combat armored vehicles, 11,000 artillery systems, 347 aircraft, 325 helicopters, and many thousands of other types of weapons have been

destroyed.

For such impressive results, the United States has provided assistance that is less than 3% of the total defense budget. And these numbers should be enough to restore leadership in decisions similar to those made during World War II. So what can common Americans do about it?

There is nothing more effective and stronger than the direct action of the voter. Every American citizen, living in any corner of the country, can call Mike Johnson and honestly say – Americans demand immediate support for Ukraine, as our nation's development depends on it. Further delay is not an option.

Mike Johnson's phone number is publicly available: **(202)-225-4000**

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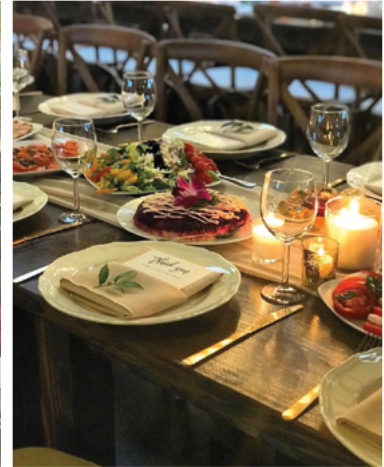




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THE AMERICA WE ARE LOSING

After the March 5th primaries, the course of the presidential campaign has been set, and it poses dangers for the United States, Ukraine, and Europe

Nadia Banchik

The least desirable outcome

Even the formal internal party elections, which have not yet ended, prematurely brought the result least desired by a large part of American voters: a repeat of the Joe Biden-Donald Trump "match". Voters of both parties created this consequence with their own hands.

The Democratic Party deliberately ignored and did not promote any candidates other than Biden, even though doubts about him began to manifest themselves long before Super Tuesday. A generational divide has emerged in the party. For an electorally significant number of Americans, especially younger ones, an 82-year-old president at the time of his election is too much. However, many young Democrats are gravitating to the far left wing of the Democratic Party, which in turn raises serious concerns among the middle-aged and older generations: Excessive attention to racial equality, which in extreme cases leads to the replacement of personality-based approaches (especially in hiring) with artificial percentage quotas; elements of the European social-democratic economy with a large public sector, which are not perceived by the individualistic middle class in the United States; finally, excessive attention to the primitively interpreted ideas of "liberation from colonialism" (in its various interpretations), which leads to real political support for some dictatorial and even terrorist regimes in Africa and the Middle East.

Iran, which is drawing closer and closer to Russia, most likely acted in concert with it when, on the infamous day of October 7, Hamas terrorists attacked Israel with such destructive force as even these terrorists had never experienced before: there are obvious parallels with what happened, for example, in Bucha or Mariupol.

This attack on Israel was a blow to the solar plexus of the entire world: it was intended to provoke Israel's response, which is exactly what the state did when it fell into this trap. The at-

tack on Israel and its response allowed Russia not only to shift the world's attention from Ukraine to the Middle East. It also shifted the focus of U.S. domestic politics, particularly in the Democratic Party. The far left wing tends to support the Palestinians rather than Israel, while traditional Democrats (as well as Republicans) support Israel as the most important U.S. ally in the Middle East and the only democracy in the region.

Biden is a spokesman for the centrists in the Democratic Party, who are mostly middle-aged and older. However, the longer Israel's war against Hamas goes on, the more the left in the Democratic Party is gaining ground, gradually taking over the center and forcing Biden to maneuver between the very narrowly defined goal of the left and the centrists (and center-right). In some states, such as Michigan and Minnesota (where not only young left-wing Democrats live, but also a significant percentage of Arabs), Biden has already been shown the "finger in the pocket": a significant percentage of voters in the Democratic internal elections voted "for no one" (i.e. "against all"). Why didn't they vote for one of Biden's internal party rivals (at least the younger ones)? This question should be directed to the leadership of the Democratic Party, which deliberately deprived the voters of a real choice by not promoting it; but it is also a question for the voters: did you want to vote for a presidential candidate or to slap Biden in the face?

The Republicans did have a real choice. Nikki Haley did not withdraw her candidacy until the last minute, hoping that her party's voters could think two steps ahead. Polls confidently showed that Haley's chances of defeating Biden in the finals were much higher than Trump's, as she was preferred to Trump by unaffiliated voters, a significant number of Republicans, and even some Democrats! But no! Those who were mesmerized by Trump stubbornly voted for him, squandering the only chance for a decisive generational change that shone for all of America, but the voters did not take it.

Déjà vu

As a result, we have an exact repeat of the situation in 2020, that is, a continuous horror that began in the fall of 2020 and culminated on January 6, 2021. On that day, the whole world watched in horror and amazement as an angry mob stormed the Congress. Yes, yes, I know that those who are fascinated by Trump will contradict me: it was a setup, they say, and some participants suspiciously escaped punishment... That's not the point. The point is that for the first time in U.S. history, a presidential candidate blatantly lied to the voters for six months about massive voter fraud, even though numerous recounts and 60 court cases, including by Trump-appointed judges, confirmed that there was no massive fraud that would have changed the results in Trump's favor, but Trump and his supporters stubbornly insisted otherwise. This set the stage for an assault on Congress that could be repeated this season if Biden wins again.

And as the whole world saw then, that crowd had no moral compunction. No one can predict whether the basic institutions of the American constitutional order will survive another such experiment.

And if Trump wins? Neither Mike Pence, nor John Bolton, nor even Mike Pompeo will be around him anymore. Most likely, there won't be many high-ranking professionals like them who, after all Trump's escapades, will not want to have anything to do with him. And Trump will be different from the model of the first term. Attracting a significant part of supporters by playing himself as an unfortunate victim of political persecution, he will "reform" all the US law enforcement agencies, including the most important for national and world security, in his own way, that is, by saturating them with his loyal supporters. What America can turn into, if such processes prevail over the attempts of American institutions to oppose them, one can only imagine.

Will Trump be able to attract Haley's voters? He would need them to win the election, but will he care about them?

The question is open, because these voters were mostly voting for a full return of the United States to world leadership, even more fully and vigorously than Biden's attempt to do so from a position of some weakness caused by the split of the Democratic Party into extreme left and moderate center. For the core of Trump's voters, on the contrary, the greatest possible isolationism of the United States in this era, at least from European affairs and the Euro-Atlantic community of values, laws and rules, is crucial (how this fits in with the slogan "Make America Great Again" is probably not something his supporters think about).

In foreign policy, Trump will rely on leaders like Orban, and the trends that have not yet won a decisive victory in Europe but are steadily developing will intensify, as can be seen even in Poland, where the government elected by the majority seems unable to counter the aggressive minority. Every EU country has its own "Trumpsters": "Confederation" in Poland, Alternative for Germany, Northern League in Italy, Marine Le Pen's party in France... It is true that Emmanuel Macron has shown new hope, but whether he and his party will have the strength to resist the Trumpist tendencies in the EU is an open question. World politics will completely lose its predictability and will be based on personal relationships and agreements with a validity period of a few days to a few months.

If Biden wins (and American institutions stand up to Trump's challenge!), his foreign policy is likely to be more uncertain than in the outgoing term. This is due to trends in European politics and the situation in the Democratic Party, which is split between the far left and the center.

A golden ticket for the US and the world

As of today, the outcome of the election has not yet been determined, and

the battle will be even fiercer than in 2020: the stakes are too high. Trump's bet is that he will be convicted in at least one of the four trials (the most serious of which are charges of inciting a riot and misleading voters; also, attempting to mishandle classified documents of extreme importance to U.S. national security). Biden's bets are a desperate, perhaps last-ditch attempt to preserve the predictability of US domestic and foreign policy and world order.

The situation is such that the ultimate winner (barring some drastic change like October 7, 2023) will be determined by the voters who voted for Nikki Haley and the portion of Biden's potential voters who hesitated to vote for him or did not vote at all. Among Haley's voters, some will vote for Trump and some for Biden. This will depend on whether they are supporters of budget cuts and the reduction of the US national debt (for Trump) or more moderate in this sense (for Biden).

Those of Haley's supporters who voted for her foreign policy program will mostly vote for Biden. But not all of them.

A significant number of Israel's supporters may prefer Trump if Biden does not calculate his next steps correctly. He is now clearly under the influence of the left, trying to strike a somewhat awkward balance between supporters of the Palestinians and traditional supporters of Israel. However, the left will not vote for Trump under any circumstances, but supporters of Israel, especially some American Jews who used to lean towards the Democrats (and Biden satisfied them), may now switch to Trump, who is remembered for his radical actions in this direction: the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the "Abrahamic Accords" and decisive actions against Iran. In his second term, however, Trump will be less consistent and

less focused on foreign policy for the reasons mentioned above, and it is far from clear how he will conduct policy in the Middle East as well. Ultimately, it is an open question whether he will be able to balance Israel's interests in the midst of the extremely complex situation in the Middle East and global uncertainty.

However, Biden should immediately stop playing give-and-take with his left wing, because the golden card for his victory in this area is in the hands of Jews rather than Arabs; centrists, not leftists.

Attitudes toward Ukraine are a consequence of the overall situation

The situation around Ukraine fits all the general trends outlined in this article. If Biden wins, the same policies will continue. Trump, on the other hand, can either cut off aid or take some radical steps to protect it. "He was the first to supply Ukraine with weapons!" say his supporters. Yes, he did. But they forget the circumstances under which this happened. Trump, with his praise for Putin and some of his statements (especially "the press is the enemy of the people"), raised not unfounded suspicions of Russian interference in the election in his favor, and even collusion with Putin. Congress then passed a bill requiring President Trump to provide aid to Ukraine. Backed into a corner, Trump was forced to act somewhat proactively and was forced to provide Ukraine with Javelins.

So, if Trump wins, everything for Ukraine will depend on the composition of Congress: whether Ukraine's supporters win in both houses. Ultimately, global foreign policy under Trump's presidency will also depend on the composition of the chambers. However, his presidency carries too many risks and uncertainties that are dangerous for both the United States and the world.

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UCU FOUNDATION WELCOMED 42 OF THE BRIGHTEST UKRAINIAN ENTREPRENEURS IN PALO ALTO FOR THE STANFORD IGNITE UKRAINE PROGRAM

On March 22, Ukrainian Catholic University Foundation and the Consulate General of Ukraine in San Francisco hosted a Networking Reception for 42 Ukrainian business leaders participating in the Stanford Ignite Ukraine educational program. The program is a joint initiative launched by the Stanford Graduate School of Business and CfE accelerator of Ukrainian Catholic University, designed to support Ukrainian entrepreneurs poised to drive their nation's economic reconstruction.

Dmytro Kushneruk, Consul General of Ukraine in San Francisco, and Annetta Hewko, Ukrainian Catholic University Foundation CEO, inaugurated the reception.

"We are extremely proud to announce this group of 42 entrepreneurs from Ukraine, several of whom are also graduates of the business school at UCU. The knowledge these business owners gain through the program will certainly help to further their endeavors and boost the economic revival of Ukraine. In turn, I think they will inspire us with that innovative, resourceful, and indefatigable spirit that Ukraine and Ukrainians show the world daily," shared Annetta Hewko.

As Dmytro Kushneruk pointed out, the gathering represents the largest Ukrainian delegation ever hosted in California. The reception aimed to bring together Ukraine's brightest entrepreneurial minds, the Silicon Valley community, and everyone supporting the renewal of Ukraine.

Attendees also heard featured remarks by Penny Pritzker, U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine's Economic Recovery and former Secretary of Commerce; Michael McFaul, Director of Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University and former U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation; Yossi Feinberg, Director of Stanford Ignite at Stanford GSB; and Ivan Petrenko, CEO of CfE accelerator at UCU.

"UCU has been a trailblazer in higher education in Ukraine. Its business school, founded just a little over 15 years ago, has become one of the top-ranked programs in Ukraine. We all share its vision to put Ukraine on



the world's business map. Advancements like this are crucial to increase collaboration between Ukrainian entrepreneurs and the business and tech community in the United States," said Penny Pritzker in her video message.

Ms. Pritzker believes that the Stanford Ignite Ukraine model will become something we replicate across the country. She thanked the program participants, emphasizing that they are the reason Ukraine's economy continues to chart a positive future even amidst all of Russia's attacks, adding, "Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion, 47,200 new companies have started operations across Ukraine, proving that the economy is alive, active, and resilient. And we will be there to support you along the way. The United States government and USAID have provided 230 million dollars in private sector support, including 23,250 small and medium-sized enterprises...which have helped create or retain over 140,000 jobs."

The program participants are prominent Ukrainian entrepreneurs who have continued to operate during the war and demonstrated their resilience and determination to thrive under any circumstance. Among them are **Liki24.com**, a medicine search and delivery service known as Ukraine's pharmaceutical Uber; **Athlon Avia**, a local drone producer; **rekava**, a CleanTech start-up relocated from the east of Ukraine that crafts biodegradable products from coffee grounds; **Gorgany**, a retail chain offering hiking and sports

apparel and equipment; and **hotline.finance**, an insurance comparison and online application service. The complete list of participants and their companies is [available here](#).

As a part of the Stanford Ignite Ukraine program, Ukrainian business leaders will spend three weeks at Stanford GSB, engaging in intensive classes led and mentored by top-tier instructors. Upon completion of their studies, the entrepreneurs will return to Ukraine to implement the knowledge gained within existing enterprises.

Michael McFaul, Director of the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, commended Stanford GSB for its bridge-building role between Ukraine and the United States. In his address, he delivered a persuasive statement, *"The dynamism of Ukraine's private sector is going to make the country one of the leaders in Europe. You will be a driver and exporter of wealth and security, not an importer of assistance."*

The initiative to establish such an educational opportunity for Ukrainians came from Nataliya Anon, CEO & Founder of Svitla Systems and an alumna of the Stanford Graduate School of Business. She has played a key role in the program's development and financial support as a member of the UCU Foundation board and a proud supporter of UCU.

"For myself and other honor donors, providing constant scholarship for the very capable Ukrainian youth is like helping to unearth and empower

other *Shevchenkos, Ukrainas, Koro-levs, Maleviches, Pulujs and influence the lives of Ukrainian society,*” shared Nataliya Anon.

The Stanford Graduate School of

Business launched the Stanford Ignite Ukraine program in collaboration with the CfE accelerator of UCU, with support from the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, the USAID Competitive Econo-

my Program in Ukraine (USAID CEP), and Ukrainian Catholic University. The program is planned to be developed further over the next four years.



Michael McFaul delivering his address at the Stanford Ignite Ukraine Networking Reception



Hromada at Stanford Ignite Ukraine Networking Reception



Nataliya Anon. Panel at the Stanford Ignite Ukraine Networking Reception



Dmytro Kushneruk, Consul General of Ukraine in San Francisco



At the Stanford Ignite Ukraine Networking Reception



"WE FELT THE POLITICAL LOCKDOWN IN THE US CONGRESS REGARDING AID TO UKRAINE ON THE FRONT LINE."

Bohdana Sadomska

According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba, the acquisition of F-16 aircraft, drones of the appropriate class, EW means and a sufficient number of missiles will make it possible to close the sky by the end of this year. A wide range of weapons – from personal small arms to tanks – is supplied to Ukraine by the United States of America. However, if we also receive artillery systems or armored vehicles from a number of other partners, then the USA has pledged to become the main supplier of ammunition in NATO calibers for the entire range of weapons, and the interruption of supplies has affected the situation at the front. Andriy Kramarov, a military expert and reserve officer of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, spoke about the importance of American aid to Ukrainians, the special features of F-16 fighter jets, and their main shortcomings.

"The role of American weapons is very, very tangible, because the United States is a supplier of probably all types of weapons that we receive. These are personal small arms, like M4 rifles and Beretta 92 pistols. They are large-caliber machine guns, such as the Browning M2, which is currently in active use. These are various types of artillery: from MK-19 grenade launchers to M777 155mm caliber howitzers. These are also M109 Paladin self-propelled artillery systems of large caliber. These are the HIMARS and M270 multiple launch rocket systems, both of which can fire the same family of 227mm artillery rockets, as well as the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS). These are also Abrams tanks. The assistance in the form of air defense systems, namely the Patriot PAC-3 system, is very tangible – it has proven to be able to shoot down absolutely everything the Russians can launch at us," Andriy says.

However, two years ago, in 2022, during the first meetings in the Ramstein format, official Washington promised to become the main supplier of ammunition in NATO calibers for a wide range of weapons: ammunition for the same 5.56×45 small arms and 277-mm missiles for HIMARS systems. Thus, the political blockade (as the ex-



Andriy Kramarov, military expert, reserve officer of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

pert calls the situation) in the US Parliament, which began six months ago to provide aid to Ukraine, was literally felt on the front line – the interruption of supplies and the escalation on the front line meant that we were unable to hold Avdiivka.

In addition to ammunition, we currently lack the aforementioned Patriot air defense missile systems of the PAC-3 modification with RIM missiles: they are capable of intercepting all ballistic weapons, including hypersonic ones. However, the most significant shortage of aviation components is for F-16 fighters. "We cannot systematically solve the problem of intensifying strikes with guided bombs, which the Russian tactical aviation launches from the range of 40-50 km with Su-24 bombers accompanied by Su-35. Our Air Force has tried to counter in a certain way locally, i.e. I understand that they have raised anti-aircraft missile systems, but this is not a systemic struggle, it is more situational, because there is no other way out," Andriy explains that F-16s are needed to deprive Russia of the ability to launch bomb strikes along the front line. In addition, it will increase our ability to defeat the enemy on the line of contact and allow us to use JDAM bombs and other weapons more effectively. In other words, this is a component that is sorely lacking, because its absence does not allow us to deter the aggressor, prevent its missile strikes, and target enemy positions more effectively. Other countries have aircraft of

the same class, such as the Swedish Saab JAS Gripen or certain modifications of the French Dassault Mirage 2000. Some nations are planning to partially upgrade from the current Eurofighter Typhoon to the F-35 as a more versatile platform, so in theory Ukraine could get one. But there are many "buts", including operational costs, the range of weapons that can be installed on the F-16 platform, and its effective versatility. All this makes this particular fighter the best option for us. In addition, the infrastructure, pilots and technical personnel are almost ready for the F-16, so it is counterproductive to "switch" to another aircraft. To start normal combat missions with fighters, we need at least 12-14 aircraft in the first batch, which is an aviation unit. In total, we need at least 50 such aircraft, and preferably more than 100.

Part of the shortage caused by the political situation in the United States has been filled by European countries. However, as the expert explains, the military-industrial complex of the European Union has only just begun to actively develop and expand. The decisions taken in late 2023 and early 2024 are only now beginning to bear fruit in terms of increasing production, launching the production of certain new weapons and modernizing old ones. Therefore, it is unlikely that we will be able to get all of this in sufficient quantities without the United States by the end of the year.

SPECIAL FOR HROMADA

Katerina Manoff | Ukrainian Roots, American Branches

THE PERFECT UKRAINIAN WOMAN



Have you met the perfect Ukrainian woman? She is slim and stylishly dressed; you've never seen her without her makeup applied just so. Her nails are painted, and her hair is blown out.

The perfect Ukrainian woman works, probably full-time. She might write code or supervise a factory floor or sell jewelry in a sparkling boutique. Regardless of the job, she does it well.

The perfect Ukrainian woman has dinner on the table every night for her family, though she may not have time to eat it herself. She keeps her home clean. Her kids are clean too – well-dressed, neat hair braided into works of art, perfect Ukrainian women-in-training. She takes the children to piano and gymnastics and science club and French lessons. She sits with them, helping with homework, and, once that's done, challenging them with advanced math problems.

Just like the rest of us, the perfect Ukrainian woman encounters financial woes, death, illness. She meets them head on, resigned to her fate, without a hint of despair and with flawless eyeliner.

I first met the perfect Ukrainian woman in my babusya's reminiscences and black-and-white photos. She was a young nurse married to a career soldier, escaping the Soviet Union for the relatively exotic German Democratic Republic. My babusya kept a spotless home, with hot meals for dido when he stopped by on his lunch break. She somehow worked full-time and also took care of a toddler full-time (perhaps she had mastered the art of being in two places at once). In a time of

scarcity, when the pinnacle of achievement was getting your hands on fine china or intricate rugs, she always got the best deals on the army base. The other military wives loved her; she was the only one invited to the officers' parties.

Listening to these I figured the perfect Ukrainian woman was a melange of myth and exaggeration. But then, I started catching glimpses of her everywhere.

I saw her at Ukrainian school dropoff on Saturday mornings, all glamorous outfits and glowing faces. I found her in new acquaintances who'd rather be late to dinner than leave the house with less-than-perfect makeup.

When I complained to a Ukrainian friend that my husband expected me to clean the stovetop each evening rather than wiping it down during our usual weekly cleaning, she laughed, "To be honest, I clean it after every single meal."

But, my closest brush with the perfect Ukrainian woman was last spring, when a mom of two from Kalush came to live with us for a few months to help take care of my toddler.

Our new nanny had gotten one of her own children to an Ivy League University and one to a top boarding school on full scholarship, so I figured she knew what she was doing. Indeed, she was a whirl of energy. The other nannies parked themselves on benches and escaped into their phones. She chased my child for hours.

At home, she insisted on whipping up fresh dinners for the kids, as she couldn't bear for them to eat leftovers. She reminded me to feed my husband. She not-so-subtly indicated that the crispy golden syrnyky were not for me.

On weekends, she didn't know what to do with herself. She cleaned the house, even though I told her to relax. She looked for gifts for her children and relatives. She was uneasy with leisure, which made me uneasy as well.

"What did you do in your spare time in Ukraine?" I asked.

"We'd usually be working, then with the kids, then doing stuff around the

house until midnight. Then we'd sleep. There wasn't any spare time."

In the end, our nanny decided to fill her days off with a weekend job.

Living with a perfect Ukrainian nanny reinforced what I first learned from living with my grandma: by Ukrainian standards, I am very far from perfect. Many days, I'm wearing sweatpants to my work-from-home job and have no time to put on makeup. My nails are short and bare. My kids have messy hair and choose their own clothes. Some nights, I get a delicious home-cooked dinner on the table, other nights it's unappetizing leftovers. My wardrobe is more practical than stylish, and I'd rather be warm than pretty on a cold winter's night.

What's more, I don't use sacrifice as a yardstick of my parenting abilities. Sometimes, I take the best chocolate for myself. Sometimes, I turn on YouTube for the kids so I can go for a run. Sometimes I go out with friends and miss bedtime.

And I would like to humbly suggest that this is okay.

While meeting high expectations can make us feel good in the moment, in the longer-term, perfection is a heavy burden. Passed down from our parents and grandparents, impossible standards haunt us day to day, sucking away freedom and soul and fun: What will people say? How can I leave my house like that? What kind of mother does this?

When we let go of perfection, we can leave space for the most magical moments – messy baking projects, an indulgent bath, fascinating conversations, cuddles on the couch. We give ourselves the grace to be tired, to be free, to be ourselves. We give our kids the gift of being allowed to fail, to be average, to forget the extra math problems and just play. We offer our friends the prospect of jumping off the conveyor belt with us.

So, my fellow Ukrainian women, let's take a break from working towards perfection and see ourselves as perfect just the way we are.

UKRAINIAN NEWS

Total enemy combat losses



According to the General Staff, the total combat losses of the enemy from February 24, 2022 to March 31, 2024 are approximately as follows

Personnel – about 442,170 people were eliminated,

Tanks – 6,966 units,

Armored personnel carriers – 13,304 units,

Artillery systems – 11,050 units,

MLRS – 1,023 units,

Air defense systems – 743 units,

Aircraft – 347 units,

Helicopters – 325 units,

Operational and tactical level UAVs – 8,731 units,

Cruise missiles – 2,048 units,

Ships and boats – 26 units,

Submarines – 1 unit,

Vehicles and tankers – 14,717 units,

Special equipment – 1,823 units.

Military aid for Ukraine



The **United States** has announced the first military aid package to the Ukrainian armed forces in several months. The total cost of the weapons to be delivered to Ukraine is \$300 million. It is known that the aid package

includes HIMARS missiles, artillery ammunition and other weapons.

On March 12, the United States allocated additional HIMARS missiles, artillery rounds of various calibers, anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons, other ammunition and maintenance supplies in a new aid package to Ukraine.

The **UK** will allocate more than 300 million pounds for drones for the Armed Forces of Ukraine – it is known that London will allocate 325 million pounds to manufacture and supply more than 10,000 drones for the Ukrainian army.

Denmark is preparing another military aid package for Ukraine worth \$330 million. In the new package, Denmark will provide Ukraine with Caesar self-propelled artillery systems, 120 mm mortars and ammunition.

The **Bulgarian** government has completed the delivery of 110 BTR-60 armored personnel carriers to Ukraine.

The press service of the country's Defense Ministry reported that the task of transporting the APCs to Ukraine was completed "efficiently, safely and on time."

Argentina's newly elected President Javier Milei handed over two Mi-17 helicopters to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. According to media reports, the helicopters are two Arctic-modified Mi-17s ordered from Russia in 2011.

German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius promised new military aid to Ukraine in the amount of 500 million euros. Specifically, Germany will provide Ukraine with 10,000 artillery shells from the Bundeswehr's stockpile, 100 armored infantry vehicles, and 100 transport vehicles.

France has ordered 100 drones for Ukraine from Delair, a drone manufacturer. The equipment is expected to arrive in early summer.

Delair specializes in developing drones for various purposes, including border control, reconnaissance and special operations. The French army has also chosen the company to develop attack drones. It was also noted that the state has ordered 2,000 remote-controlled munitions, some of which will be used in France and the rest will be delivered to Ukraine.

The **Dutch** government will provide Ukraine with a new military aid package. It is noted that the armed forces will receive 14 rigid hull inflatable boats, 8 paramilitary river patrol boats and one CB90 amphibious assault boat.

The **Netherlands** also pledged to contribute 250 million euros to the Czech initiative to order artillery shells

for Ukraine. In addition, the country will provide additional assistance in the form of ammunition worth more than 100 million euros.

The governments of two EU countries – **Belgium** and the **Netherlands** – will prepare a 412 million euro military aid package for Ukraine's armed forces. It is expected that Ukraine will receive 300 Lynx multipurpose armored vehicles and three undisclosed minesweepers.

The initiative provides for the organization of basic training for the Ukrainian military and the training of Ukrainian crews of minesweeping vessels. Other details of the aid package are currently unknown.

Kosovo announced at the 20th Ramstein meeting that it would provide Ukraine with a second package of military assistance consisting of mortar shells.

EU foreign ministers increased funding for the European Peace Fund by 5 billion euros for additional military aid to Ukraine.

Financial assistance for Ukraine



European Commission disburses first tranche of €4.5 billion to Ukraine – On March 20, Ukraine received the first disbursement of €4.5 billion from the EU's €50 billion Ukraine assistance fund.

This was announced by Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal. He thanked the EU and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen for their support, which strengthens our economic and financial stability.

Lithuania will provide 5 million euros to rebuild schools and kindergartens destroyed during the war in Ukraine.

Lithuanian Finance Minister Gintare Skyste is convinced that the European Union cannot delay and must provide military and financial support to the country resisting Russian aggression in the face of the US delay in providing

aid to Ukraine.

The **EU** plans to allocate 3 billion euros to Ukraine from the frozen assets of the Bank of Russia – amid the decline in economic support for Ukraine from the United States, the European Union insists on allocating up to 3 billion euros to Kyiv this year from the profits received from the frozen assets of the Bank of Russia.

According to European officials, the European Commission is preparing a plan to confiscate the profits from the sanctions, which have been imposed since February, from the central securities depository Euroclear.

The first tranche of funds could be paid out in July if Brussels receives approval from EU member states.

In total, Ukraine is expected to receive between €2 billion and €3 billion this year, depending on interest rates. EU officials estimate that the total profit from Russia's frozen assets in Euroclear could reach 20 billion euros by 2027.

Several countries join Czech initiative to buy hundreds of thousands of artillery shells for Ukraine



• **French** President Emmanuel Macron has promised to support the Czech Republic's proposal to buy 800,000 artillery shells for Ukraine outside the European Union. Macron discussed the purchase plan with Czech Prime Minister Peter Fiala during a trip to Prague.

• The **Polish** government has also joined the Czech initiative.

According to Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski, Warsaw has already made a "substantial" financial contribution to the program.

"We are in business, it's true," Sikorski said. However, he refused to

disclose the exact amount of money Poland has provided for the Czech initiative.

• **Latvia** has joined the Czech initiative to buy hundreds of thousands of artillery shells for Ukraine.

Latvian Defense Minister Andris Spruds announced this on the social network X on March 6.

"Latvia will join the Czech initiative, this is an opportunity to defeat Russia, and we must do everything possible to support Ukraine. Together to victory!" he wrote.

• **Lithuanian** authorities have joined the Czech initiative to purchase 800,000 rounds of ammunition for Ukraine outside the European Union.

It is known that Prime Minister Ingrid Šimonite discussed assistance to Ukraine with Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala.

And on March 20, Lithuania provided 35 million euros for the purchase of ammunition for Ukraine as part of the Czech initiative.

• **Germany** will finance the purchase of 180,000 rounds of ammunition for the Ukrainian armed forces as part of the Czech initiative.

The ammunition will be delivered in stages, starting this summer.

• **Portugal** has joined the Czech initiative to purchase artillery ammunition for Ukraine from third countries and will provide 100 million euros.

The goal of this initiative is to quickly deliver as much ammunition as possible in various calibers, especially 155 mm.

• The **Finnish** government has also joined the Czech initiative.

According to the country's Defense Minister Antti Haakkänen, Finland will allocate 30 million euros to the program.

However, the minister did not specify when exactly these funds would be made available.

• The **Swedish** government has decided to join the Czech Republic's initiative to purchase ammunition for Ukraine and is ready to provide 30 million euros.

The funds will be provided as part of the 15th package of Swedish aid to Ukraine, which is currently being considered by the country's parliament.

On February 17, Czech President Petr Pavel said that Prague had found hundreds of thousands of artillery shells abroad that it could deliver to Ukraine.

And on March 13, the Czech Republic clarified that artillery ammunition purchased in non-EU countries could be delivered to Ukraine in June.

Ukraine manages to return more children from the occupation



On March 11, another group of children and their families were returned to the government-controlled territory of Ukraine.

This was reported by the head of the military administration of the Kherson region, Oleksandr Prokudin.

He said that families with 5 children and an 18-year-old orphan returned from the temporarily occupied territories.

On Monday, March 18, three more families with children left the temporarily occupied parts of Zaporizhia and Donetsk regions for the government-controlled territory.

It should be noted that one of the families lived in Enerhodar. They are employees of the currently occupied Zaporizhia nuclear power plant and have a three-year-old child. Having refused to cooperate with the Russian occupiers, they survived searches, threats, intimidation, coercion, physical violence, detention and interrogation.

Another family, a mother and her eight-year-old son, were hiding with their grandparents. The boy studied online at a Ukrainian school. One day, Russians came to their house to search it.

Another child returned to government-controlled territory is a nine-year-old boy from the temporarily occupied part of the Donetsk region.

IAEA Demands Urgent Return of Zaporizhzhya NPP to Ukrainian Control



On March 7, the IAEA Board of Governors voted overwhelmingly in favor of a Ukraine-drafted draft resolution on nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine that calls on Russia to leave the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant.

The document calls for the urgent withdrawal of all unauthorized personnel, together with the military, from the ZNPP and the immediate return of the plant to the full control of the competent authorities of Ukraine in accordance with the license issued by the State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine. This is necessary to ensure its safe and reliable operation.

The adopted document also expresses serious concern about the unstable state of nuclear safety and security at the ZNPP. In particular, there is a lack of adequately qualified personnel at the site, gaps in scheduled preventive maintenance, lack of reliable supply chains, vulnerable water supply, external power supply, and the installation of anti-personnel mines in the buffer zone between the inner and outer perimeter of the facility.

In the summer, Ukraine will have 6 F-16 fighters and 12 trained pilots



By this summer, 12 Ukrainian pilots are expected to be ready to fly F-16 fighter jets after 10 months of training in Denmark, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The New York Times reports this with reference to sources.

According to the newspaper, fighter jets and instructors are already waiting for the new training center in Romania, but the Ukrainian pilots have not yet arrived and it is unknown when they will start training there. The NYT notes that this delay is evidence of the "confusion and chaos" that has arisen in NATO's F-16 delivery.

But the training of Ukrainian pilots is continuing: 12 of them are now expected to be ready to fly F-16s in combat by the summer.

EU announces deadlines for delivering half of promised one million shells to Ukraine



The European Union plans to deliver half of the promised one million rounds of ammunition to Ukraine's armed forces by the end of March.

This was announced by the European Commission's spokesman for foreign and security policy, Peter Stano, during a briefing.

"The goal remains unchanged: we will deliver 1 million artillery rounds to Ukraine this year. And at the end of March we will reach the figure of half a million shells," he said.

He recalled that the EU had originally planned to deliver all the promised ammunition by the end of March.

"Yes, we have not delivered one million shells. But Ukraine will receive even more than a million if we take into account the existing capacities and orders placed," the European Commission representative summed up.

Reinmetall plans to

open at least four weapons plants in Ukraine



The German defense corporation Rheinmetall plans to build at least four arms factories in Ukraine.

The plants will produce grenades, military equipment, gunpowder and air defense systems.

"Ukraine is now an important partner for us, and we see a potential of two to three billion euros in annual sales," said Rheinmetall CEO Armin Papperger.

The publication notes that the total sales of Rheinmetall's Düsseldorf operations reached €7.2 billion in 2023 and are expected to reach around €10 billion this year.

Ukraine Signs Bilateral Security Agreements with the Netherlands and Estonia



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte have signed a bilateral agreement on security cooperation.

The document provides for 2 billion euros in military aid from the Netherlands this year, as well as further defense assistance over the next 10 years.

The agreement also defines priorities for assistance in the areas of air defense, artillery, maritime and long-range assets, with a special emphasis

on strengthening the air force of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

The agreement formalizes the Dutch position on sanctions against Russia and assistance to Ukraine in the economic, cyber and other fields.

The Estonian government, following other Western countries, also intends to sign a bilateral security agreement with Ukraine, having already provided 1.4% of GDP in aid and is preparing a new arms package.

It became known how the number of women in the armed forces has increased.



At the beginning of 2024 there were 62 thousand women in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Of these, 45,587 are servicewomen, which is 2,108 more than in October.

This data was published by the Military Media Center on March 8.

At the same time, in 2014 there were more than 49,000 women in the armed forces, but only 16,557 were servicewomen.

To date, 13,487 women have the status of combatants and more than 4,000 are in the combat zone.

5 million men can be mobilized in Ukraine

According to Texty, Ukraine can mobilize 5 million men.

However, the calculations take into account only some population groups, so the actual number may be lower.

The current reserve is 1.1 million people, including those killed, wounded and excluded due to the occupation. Another 570,000 have been lost



to the occupation, and there may be about 659,000 men abroad who can be mobilized. In addition, 1.02 million disabled and several other groups are not included in the reserve. In total, the possible reserve is about 707 thousand people between the ages of 18 and 26. This does not include some categories that are exempt from mobilization, such as parents, adoptive parents and close relatives of those killed in the ATO.

If the age of mobilization is extended to 18 years (excluding students), the reserve could increase to 434 thousand people.

For the first time in history: Ukrainian film "20 Days in Mariupol" wins an Oscar



Mstyslav Chernov's film "20 Days in Mariupol", about the siege of Mariupol by Russian troops in February-March 2022, won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. This is the first film award for Ukraine in the history of the award.

"I would give this Oscar if Russia did not attack Ukraine, did not occupy our cities, did not kill our people. But together we can make sure that the truth wins. Glory to Ukraine!" said Mstyslav Chernov upon receiving the award.

Earlier, the film 20 Days in Mariupol won the prestigious British BAFTA Award.

BATTLE FOR LANGUAGE:

Russia commits total linguistic genocide in the occupied regions of Ukraine

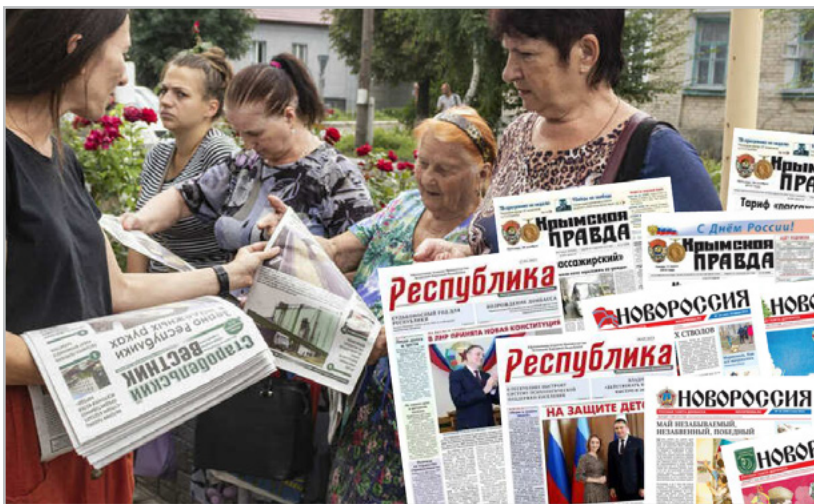
Inna Mikhno

The Russian authorities never tire of repeating that they are resolving the "conflict" in Ukraine exclusively with the "Kyiv regime" and Ukrainian "Nazis" who allegedly oppress the Russian-speaking population. But in reality, all the documented facts committed by the Russian military and authorities in the temporarily occupied territories point to a clear crime. Russia is waging a war against the Ukrainian people and language. After almost 33 years of independence, systematic bans on Ukrainian culture and language repression have returned to Ukraine with the sole purpose of erasing Ukrainian identity and assimilating it into Russian. Today, the linguistic war and the propaganda of an exclusively "Russian world" can be considered one of Russia's greatest genocides against the Ukrainian people.

The Special Operations Forces of the Ukrainian Armed Forces established a governmental organization, the Center for National Resistance of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (CNR), to coordinate resistance movements against the occupation of Ukraine, collect information about the enemy, and help the partisans. The National Resistance Center also collects information about events in the temporarily occupied territories and provided Hromada with facts that testify to the suppression of the Ukrainian language.

In particular, the National Resistance Center said that the suppression of the state language from all spheres of life in the occupied territories has been going on for 10 years – since the beginning of the occupation of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and the Crimean peninsula in 2014. And after the start of the full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022, this "action" began to take on a much broader character.

"This is a deliberate and open policy of the Kremlin. The relevant directives come from Moscow for implementation by the local occupation administrations. As is typical of the Moscow totalitarian regime since the days of the tsarist and Soviet regimes, many collaborators and guest managers,



trying to serve and demonstrate their effectiveness, independently initiate so-called "witch hunts". What does this mean? They encourage local people sympathetic to Russia to report facts about the use of the Ukrainian language, singing songs and reading books. In return, they offer financial rewards, coupons, or participation in various organizations close to the authorities. This is a modern analog of the Komsomol and vigilante groups of the Soviet era. The most active group is the Crimean Smerch group (*Smerch* is the name of a number of independent counterintelligence organizations in the Soviet Union during World War II. And 'Crimean Smerch' is a community of informers who seek out Crimeans with a pro-Ukrainian position – around Hromada), the National Resistance Center said.

Thus, the occupation authorities use only the Russian language for information and force its use in institutions, educational institutions and public spaces. The Ukrainian language is also excluded from the educational process.

In addition, the occupation authorities restrict access to literature and printed materials in Ukrainian, especially those published after 1991. Moreover, the Russians intend to ban Ukrainian books by law, and Moscow has drafted a law to regulate the entry of such books into library collections.

And when asked whether there are specific strategies for the Russification of citizens and whether it is similar to the former totalitarian methods, the Resistance unfortunately also answered in the affirmative.

"This process was worked out in detail even before the start of the full-scale invasion, and tested in the temporarily occupied territories of ORDLO (Separate Districts of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions – Hromada) and Crimea since 2014. Russian as the language of information for general information and advertising, announcements and signs. The occupiers were the first to change street signs at the entrance to cities to Russian, and also began to restore Soviet street names or rename existing ones. All symbols of Ukrainianness were removed from public space. There is a complete Russification of space: signs, place names, streets, advertising signs – everything is exclusively in Russian," the Resistance Center notes.

For example, the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language, Taras Kremenia, reported several hundred cases of linguistic violence that Russians have already recorded, which is systematically carried out in the temporarily occupied territories, accompanied not only by threats and intimidation, but also by the use of physical force, restriction of freedom, abduction, torture and, unfortunately,

murder.

Occupied education

The Kremlin is concentrating its main efforts on imposing the Russian educational system on children of primary school age, i.e. on the minds of those who are easier to influence.

"The Ukrainian language, literature and history of Ukraine are being removed from school curricula by the occupiers and replaced with Russian ones with the appropriate ideological content. Textbooks and fiction are being physically destroyed, teachers are being forced to adopt Russian 'learning standards'. All references to Ukraine are being removed, even the word "Ukrainian" itself: for example, the phrase "classrooms with Ukrainian as the language of instruction" has been changed to "classrooms with instruction in the language of the peoples of Donbass," the Center said.

According to the Resistance, the Russian administration in the occupied territories pursues a harsh policy of suppression not only of the Ukrainian language, but also of the Crimean Tatar language. Thus, in 2019 there was not a single Ukrainian school left in Crimea. According to Ilmi Umerov, the deputy head of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, there are seven out of 15 national Crimean Tatar villages left, but in fact none, because all subjects are taught in Russian.

"The occupiers have banned the teaching of the Ukrainian language in schools. They are forcing Ukrainians to use Russian in official work. Activists fighting for the preservation of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages are being persecuted. In the occupied territories of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, the Russians are also restricting access to learning the Ukrainian language. The number of hours devoted to this subject in schools is being reduced. Traditionally, this is said to be a response to complaints from parents. Teachers who try to preserve the hours of Ukrainian language instruction in schools are considered "waiters" by the occupiers. That's what they call those who wait for the liberation of the territories," says the National Resistance Center.

In addition to all this, Russian literature is being imported from Russia, allegedly necessary for the educational process.

"The occupiers are constantly developing additions to the curriculum for schoolchildren and students in the TOT (Temporary Occupied Territories). The total volume of imported waste paper amounted to more than 2.8 million co-

pies. These are, in particular, new history textbooks for grades 10-11 of Russian schools, which promote the Kremlin's position on Russia's full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine, deny Ukraine's statehood and historical identity," the Resistance noted.

Big Brother

The occupation authorities invest significant resources in information propaganda, promoting it not only through educational institutions but also through the media, blocking Ukrainian information in order to Russify the occupied territories. Libraries, museums and Ukrainian symbols are destroyed.

"First of all, full control over the media is needed. Media not controlled by the authorities are not allowed to exist. The main propaganda messages of Russia are delivered through television, radio and print media, as well as through public propaganda events. Even during the blackout, car TVs are sent to cities to broadcast "news bulletins" in public places. Information about offers of personnel and humanitarian aid is transmitted through those who were the first to cooperate with the occupiers. They are the main intermediaries," the resistance is sure.

According to the Center, Russian propagandists are trying to justify their aggression against Ukraine in every possible way, "searching" for historical justification or creating fake accusations. And the "word" is becoming the main weapon of Russian propaganda.

"Through its own media, the enemy is spreading narratives about the historical affiliation of Ukrainian territories to the Russian Federation, and that Russia is a victim of aggression by the "collective West", and that Ukraine is dominated by the Nazi regime and that it is the latter that is shelling civilians. It also spreads fear and undermines the credibility and trust in the Ukrainian army by spreading lies about the losses of the Ukrainian army, the inability of the Ukrainian armed forces to change the course of the war, and the West's refusal to help Ukraine. Instead, Russia is actively promoting the idea of the success of the Russian economy and economic improvement in the occupied territories after the arrival of Russian troops," the resistance said.

According to the Resistance, in 2014 Ukraine lost 503 television broadcasting frequencies in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and another 175 in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. And since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, more than 200 additional frequencies have been lost. The

resistance has noted the active shutdown of Ukrainian media and Internet resources.

Instead, Russia has already created a number of its own TV channels to spread its propaganda, with a limited package of channels broadcasting exclusively the "Russian world" (Tavria TV (Kherson region), Mariupol 24 (Donetsk region), Zaporizhzhia News Agency (Zaporizhzhia region), etc.). They also distribute free newspapers (Horlivka Segodnya, Respublika, Novorossiia, etc.). And in Crimea, the occupiers distribute the newspaper Krymska Pravda, which has been controlled by the Russians since 2014, for free. And this is far from the limit.

"The Kremlin is using electronic warfare (EW) to block the transmission of television and radio signals of Ukrainian media. The activities of Ukrainian GSM operators are also blocked. Internet providers are controlled by the FSB and Roskomnadzor. The main model of Russian propaganda is the lack of alternative sources of information, within which all media are blocked except for the state-owned ones. Russia is creating its own information space and trying to close it off from the outside world as much as possible," says the Resistance Center.

The Russians pay most attention to propaganda among schoolchildren and students, who read less newspapers and watch less television. For this purpose, they create centers of pseudo-civil movements, which organize youth events. In particular, in the TOT of the Luhansk region alone there are more than 65 "public organizations". The most common are the "First Movement", the "Young Guard", and centers for military training of children – "Yunarmiya" and the "Voluntary Society for Assistance to the Aviation Army".

According to the Center, the top political leadership of Russia wants to speed up the integration of the occupied regions into the political, legal, social and economic space of Russia.

Unfortunately, this is only a part of the recorded facts aimed at the total destruction of the Ukrainian identity and consciousness. All the data on the situation in the TOT of Ukraine in 2023 were collected by the specialists of the National Resistance Center in a large [study](#), which describes the crimes of the Russian Federation, which left a devastating mark on all spheres of life in Ukraine. The monitoring continues on the basis of data obtained both from confidential sources and official government agencies.

Information Hygiene in Wartime: *How Not to Fall for Russian Propaganda in the Sea of Information*

Karina Nikitishina

According to USAID, by 2023, 57% of Ukrainians do not consider disinformation to be an urgent problem. At the same time, we consume an incredible amount of content every day, and most of us trust not only media from the "white list", but also anonymous Telegram channels, opinions of "experts" on Facebook, YouTube and TikTok, which are directly involved in the same disinformation. "Hromada spoke with Oksana Moroz, the founder of the information hygiene initiative "How Not to Become a Vegetable": a communicator with 20 years of experience, a guest speaker at Kyiv Mohyla Business School, and a well-known writer and author of books on information hygiene.

According to your observations, how has Russia's approach to the production of fake news in general changed in the third year of the full-scale war? Has it become more difficult for ordinary Ukrainians to distinguish truth from falsehood?

Let's start with the period from 2014 to April-May 2022, which is quite a long period, and let's call it the first one. We will classify it as a period when Russia acted quite directly: they tried to praise Putin, Russia, the "Russian world," and simply lied, talking about crucified boys and so on. After April-May, when Russian troops were expelled from Kyiv and Sumy regions, when the world saw Bucha and other atrocities, the propaganda paused. They switched to another format – traditional information operations, where they work in large numbers on our internal problems. Yes, they were and are constantly lying, but they have stopped inventing anything substantial. Instead, they monitor the information space, take Ukrainian issues and try to distort the situation in the vectors they need. Sometimes they scare, sometimes they divide, disorient, discredit, but always the truth is at the core.

That is, when the mobilization is discredited: they take one case of a real unlawful case like "grabbing in the streets" and then create the impression in the information space that ab-



solutely all 100% of situations are like that. Not a few percent, not a single case, but absolutely all. When they work with the topic of corruption, they will not talk about individual cases of corrupt officials, but: "Everyone is stealing, everything is missing, there is betrayal everywhere, no help is given!" That is why it becomes more and more difficult for Ukrainians to recognize Russian propaganda. Because it is difficult for a person who is not a researcher to determine what percentage is truth and what percentage is exaggeration. Perhaps the only thing we can focus on is emotionality. The task of Russian propaganda is to arouse emotions in us so that we do not discuss this or that case rationally, for example, corruption, but so that we shout emotionally, humiliate each other, and so on. On this emotional basis it is easier for them to achieve their goals of dividing, disorienting and demotivating Ukrainians.

Quite often, after the emergence of new information on sensitive issues for the Ukrainian society, one

can observe a whole wave of comments on social media, where users discuss such news from their own point of view. This is done not only by ordinary users, but also by millionaire bloggers, opinion leaders and various experts. Often such news is "overgrown" with Russian fakes, which are then unknowingly spread by Ukrainians themselves. In your opinion, is it possible to try to make people understand that they should not write comments or video their assumptions until more official information is released? After all, we are actually achieving the Russians' goal with our own hands.

This is a rational approach, as it should be, but it is as if we live in a perfect world. The Russians' job is to make the information event as emotionally charged as possible. Even people who understand how Russian propaganda and propaganda in general works, what manipulation is, find it hard to resist. A recent example: the Financial Times published an article claiming that the Americans had al-

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legedly banned Ukrainians from carrying out actions that could damage Russian oil refineries. This provoked a maximum reaction among Ukrainians. Almost everyone emotionally expressed their expert opinion on the matter. Everyone was mentioned: the Financial Times, journalists, and almost everyone in the world was to blame. At the same time, this is an absolutely classic "throw-in" that the [Financial Times](#), and not only it, has done more than once. The article is based on anonymous sources. If we analyze the context, we can recall that only Bloomberg seems to have written about this before them. There is no confirmation. The United States was asleep at the time the story was published, so there was no reaction from them at European time. The task here was to keep everyone emotionally engaged after the overnight bombardment. We absolutely succeeded. But how can we get people to behave rationally in such situations? We can't, because the shelling and the emotionally charged article coincided. We don't know whether it was a coincidence or not, we don't have any facts, we can only guess.

Russian propaganda does not work in a simple way: it models situations in which even rational people have to behave in the most emotional way possible. It takes a lot of endurance to "go the other way". Not everyone is capable of it. Any of us can be put in a situation where we will not be able to think rationally. We will follow the vector set by the manipulator. So I'm not inclined to urge people to act rationally, because they won't. We can only give them "beacons" to doubt their reactions and actions. If you read the information and have a strong emotion, be it anger, sadness, or even joy, that can be a signal for you to ask clarifying questions: "Who said this? Who is this anonymous source?" Clarifying questions can help the person reduce the emotion and doubt. But I realize that only a small percentage of people will use this approach. That is why the issue of countering disinformation in the modern world, in the context of the development of information technology, is very complex. This is a truly complex issue that can be the subject of scientific research and discussion. Therefore, we should not go into the details now. But it is worth remembering the importance of critical thinking and understanding information.

Have people started to be more critical of statements made by public figures, bloggers and experts?

For example, the fact that a blogger who used to be a member of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) shared a certain news item does not mean that his opinion is correct.

People tend to believe what they want to believe. If we look at the cases of the full-scale invasion and the release of Zaluzhny, for example, people did not want to believe. And they did not believe even though there were a lot of facts. When people don't want to believe, don't want to see, they ignore all the evidence. Ukrainians believe people and not institutions. There is a big problem with [pseudo-experts](#) and a very wide range of them, from magicians and tarot readers to former MPs. First, there are more of them in the information space. Second, anyone who has at least some connection with the armed forces already has a certain amount of trust. I don't see any sociological or scientific studies that confirm this. But I think this is a pretty significant problem. If we talk about experts and pseudo-specialists, they have always been highly trusted. For example, the same Arestovych. He has been working "in good faith" every day for a whole year to lose credibility. Now his credibility is at about the same level as old politicians like Tymoshenko and Poroshenko.

I see no evidence that people have become less trusting of pseudo-experts. They may trust one less and another more, but one is no different from the other. Because professional experts, politicians, and anyone with expertise do not answer the questions that people are worried about (when will the shelling start, when will the war end), all these questions are generously answered by all these pseudo "comrades". This big problem remains.

A very large number of people, both in Ukraine and in the United States, trust primarily the American media. Many of the materials of our news agencies are translations of English-language articles. Sometimes this attitude can be harmful, because in this way you can come across an English-language source that is secretly sponsored by Moscow, which you may not notice behind the opinion: "We can trust foreign media"? Can most of our journalists filter out such information so that it is not presented to their readers?

They have to filter according to all standards. But there are standards, and there are audience demands, hype. Here I would not distinguish between Ukrainian journalists and oth-

ers, the same rules apply to everyone: there are journalistic standards, and there are algorithms and monetization. In order to survive, every journalist balances the two. I'm not talking about conspiracy theories about who pays whom and who is influenced by whom. In my opinion, this is an unnecessary conspiracy in most cases, because many journalists follow the audience. They write what the audience wants to hear. For example, Tucker Carlson – is he like that on his own, or has he just realized what the audience needs? Is Oleksiy Arestovych just that, or has he realized what the audience needs? This is a philosophical question to which I tend to answer that he has found what the audience wants.

Ukrainian media and Ukrainians tend to trust any foreign media because of the February 24 syndrome. They warned us, we didn't believe them, but everything came true. "Ours did not warn, but theirs did. Before February 24, in my subjective opinion, there was no such level of trust, but now it has increased.

Going back to the issue of anonymous sources that you mentioned, how exactly can a person understand which materials from anonymous sources can be trusted and which cannot? After all, sometimes anonymity is justified by the security of the source.

The How Not to Become a Vegetable channel recently published a [video](#) with Kateryna Kobernyk, the editor-in-chief of Babel, on this topic: which anonymous sources can be trusted and when. I can talk about this from the point of view of information hygiene. In general, each media outlet has its own standards for working with anonymous sources. If it's a "white" media outlet, there will always be several different sources who don't know each other, and so on. It is the responsibility of the editor and the journalists to control this or not. But there are situations where we are dealing with a newsroom, an editor, a journalist who has learned something from several anonymous sources, but all other media or sources are silent about it. Then we have to wait for events to unfold, look at the context, and observe the dynamics of statements by people from different camps who have different points of view on the issue.

There is a situation where, as in the case of the Financial Times, they publish material based on anonymous sources. There is another situation when there is a high-profile issue, as was the case with the full-scale invasion

or the release of Zaluzhny, and all the leading media, their sources, are talking about the same thing. When they differ, the information is only detailed. They do not deny each other, they complement each other. That is already a signal: we definitely have a precedent. Then we look at it and see what kind of analysis we have. This is what happened with Zaluzhny: we see a series of events, when something happens once, twice or three times, and it becomes a trend. Then the trend is confirmed by a bunch of anonymous sources saying the same thing. That shouldn't make us jump to conclusions, but it's definitely a situation where you realize that something is definitely happening. And then we have to see how this situation develops.

In other words, if it's a single case, one or two sources from one or two newsrooms, then we need to look at the context and the development of events. If it is many sources from many media outlets, then we need to analyze it. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to dealing with these sources. Each case requires a different approach.

In your opinion, how can we promote the practice of info hygiene and fight Russian propaganda outside Ukraine, especially in the USA? There are many politicians who openly or not so openly support Russia. And the reason is not always connections or money; sometimes

it is Russian propaganda that works well here, trying to put pressure on sensitive issues (religion, for example) or creating an image of a state that just "rescues" poor people.

Counteraction always involves creating an alternative field. If a politician says something and you refute it by fact-checking the information, you are only appealing to those who are willing to hear this alternative opinion. That's why fact-checking works well for the community of experts, for the community of journalists, who then form an alternative field. Suppose a certain politician X comes out and says: "I will never give money to Ukraine because it is (...)". You see, we can go out and give our opinion to the community with our arguments, for example, if we are given time to do so after a sermon in church. At the same time, we realize that there is this politician who keeps saying the opposite. We don't have to say he lied. We have to prove it by someone's true story, which in comparison will show that it was a lie.

The movie "20 Days in Mariupol" is a very vivid example, because it is not propaganda, it is a story. Through this story they showed how Russian propaganda behaves, and everyone realized what really happened. You don't have to just shout about the horrors of war, it's not as effective, you have to tell people's stories in the context of war, it's much easier to perceive. For example, in the TV series The Carrier, war is

also present, but through the story it is perceived more deeply and understandably by people who have not experienced it themselves.

During our recent [interview](#), Pavlo Klimkin answered your question very well. If Ukrainian farmers go to visit American farmers and our clergymen go to visit American communities, it will be perceived much better because of the personal experience and stories they can tell than if MPs go there. In my subjective opinion, the time when we could get an audience just by having Zelensky speak is long gone. The time when a Ukrainian delegation came and lobbied for something is over.

It's time for culture to play an important role and become a new kind of diplomacy. It can be sports diplomacy, culinary diplomacy, etc., that is, something that conveys our emotions, our common areas of activity with foreigners. Communities will communicate with each other, share experiences. For example, your farmers are planting corn. Our farmers are also planting, but first they clear the fields of mines. People will have a common basis, but different experiences, and they will experience the same emotions. That is more convincing than just rational arguments. Even if you have arguments and facts, it doesn't work, especially in an election period like the United States and half the world is in right now.



"TO WASH YOURSELF FROM THE TRENCHES"

Anastasia Vararu

About the military center near Bakhmut, where defenders can come to "wash themselves from the trenches," send their clothes to be laundered, eat home-cooked meals, sit by the fire at night, and talk to chaplains and volunteers if they wish.

"The world around us responds to our actions, our resistance, or our inaction. Therefore, the choices we make, even on the most insignificant occasions, affect what will happen around us. This dictum of the American historian and writer Timothy Snyder well describes the situation of Serhiy, a chaplain and volunteer from the Donetsk region, whose everyday life is inseparable from the war. He and his family live in Druzhkivka (45.9 km from Bakhmut), a frontline town where the number of civilians equals the number of people in a pixel. Khaki pickup trucks and camouflaged cars are everywhere.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, he and his family have been actively volunteering: evacuating people, delivering water and food to those who refused to leave, and finding necessary items for the military. Last year, with the help of donations and friends, they renovated their parents' house, installing plumbing and heat. They turned it into a place where volunteers, residents of neighboring settlements, and soldiers returning from the front could stay for a while.

As a result, the Druzhkivka volunteer met with the soldiers more and more often. He saw how much they lacked support from the local population, which can be hostile and suspicious in front-line areas. According to the young people who regularly worked with Serhiy, because of his simplicity, sincerity and selflessness, more and more boys began to seek his help. When his chaplain friend from the Rivne region brought a mobile "chaplain's bath" to their village in Druzhkivka, and Serhiy decided to open a recovery center for the military – by purchasing additional washing machines and dryers – the trust built up over months of volunteer work paid off.

The project is now 5 months old. It has become a place where defenders can come to "wash themselves from the trenches," send their clothes to be laundered, eat home-cooked food, sit by the fire in the evenings, and talk to chaplains and volunteers if they wish.



Serhiy Severin / Photo by Tim Pushkariuk

All services to the defenders are free. The Hub is currently funded by donations and various volunteer fees. Each month about 4,000 hryvnia are spent on utilities. There are also additional costs for repairs and the purchase of building materials and products.

On average, 10-15 people visit this military transit point every day. Depending on the situation at the front, about 100-150 people can use the services of the hub in a week. The guys just come in, greet each other, hand over a package of clothes with their call sign for laundry, and go straight to the bathhouse. Afterwards, those who want can get a massage if one of the volunteers is a rehabilitation therapist or masseur. In the evening or the next day, they come to pick up their laundry, and if they have time, they stay for lunch or dinner together. Serhiy's wife Olena and his two daughters are at the center almost every day and do the lion's share of the work, creating a cozy and welcoming atmosphere. Several times a month, teams of vo-

lunteers from different regions of the country come to the center, most of them young people from Protestant churches. They temporarily relieve the family's busy schedule by doing laundry, cleaning, heating the bathhouse, and cooking. They help with construction, communicate with the military, and often, almost "by force," try to "supply" them with dried meat, nuts, and other goodies. Such support from the volunteers is very encouraging for Sergiy. He says that when civilians are busy and combine their efforts and resources to help the military, they have neither the desire nor the time to argue. No one is competing, no one is competing, but simply contributing to our common cause of victory. In this case, by performing an important function of comprehensive support for the military who are having a hard time at the front.

"Taking care of the military is an opportunity to show gratitude and share at least part of the burden and trials they face every day. You should hear

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the stories of how they have to walk to their positions: 11 kilometers in -17°C, across a field deformed by ruins and craters, dotted with "petals" (antipersonnel mines), with the weight of ammunition on their backs, under drones and mortar fire, and how due to the lack of people they have to return to their positions every 2-3 days, not once a week. So they don't have time to regain their strength. And there are many more stories that I am not allowed to tell. But when you hear them, see them, and hug them, you realize that this center is the smallest thing we can do for them here and now," says Sergiy.

At the end of March, the Center hosted a general meeting of chaplains from the Eastern Front. About 20 full-time and part-time chaplains from various denominations came to the meeting to discuss the possibilities of further cooperation in joint efforts for

the benefit of the military. According to Serhiy, several of them are also considering establishing similar centers along the entire front line. Of course, the activities of Ukraine's militarized cities are mainly focused on creating services for the military. There is no shortage of them, as entrepreneurs open laundromats, set up recreational facilities and food outlets. But the Recovery Hub is not just about meeting basic needs; it is not a commercial approach, but a human one.

"We wait for the guys every day. When I see how exhausted and tired they come, sometimes just to look into their eyes, to say thank you, to heat a bath for them, to wash the dried mud off their uniforms with a Kercher: this is the little that gives me the strength to live and to take responsibility for my role in this cause of victory. I simply cannot and do not want to take money from them," says Serhiy, whose

blue eyes radiate kindness, care and strength when he speaks of the soldiers, most of whom have become his family.

Serhiy's daughter Liza told us how she heard from the boys several times, not realizing that they were talking about her father: "Where is that bald priest? I want him to baptize my boys". According to her, more and more often the boys ask if their father is there when they take their laundry to be washed. She also says that Serhiy receives calls from commanders who want to get their boys to the center as soon as possible. "The caring leadership of the military is very inspiring. They bring their units to the Hub and hand the boys over to their father. It only takes a couple of hours. But after the horrors of Ground Zero, you come back to comfort, and those few hours among people you trust are often vital.

ABOUT THE MOVIE "BUCHA"

Myroslav Hrehk

As we reported in our last issue, the Consulate General of Ukraine in San Francisco hosted a screening of the feature film "Butch" at 5 p.m. on February 26. After the screening, the film's screenwriter and producer, Oleksandr Shchur, gave an interview and answered questions from the audience. As we promised in the previous issue of our newspaper, we now provide a short recording of this interview. But first, about the film itself.

"BUCHA" is a feature drama based on real events that took place in the towns of Bucha, Vorzel and Gostomel (Kyiv region) during the Russian occupation in the first months of the war in February-March 2022. The protagonist is a foreigner who has decided to fight evil in Ukraine, the country that has become his home. The main roles in BUCHA are played by the famous Polish theater and film actor Cezary Lukaszewicz and the star of Ukrainian cinema Vyacheslav Dovzhenko. The movie will tell the story of the rescue of local residents by Kostiantyn Gu-dauskas, a citizen of Kazakhstan, who was granted asylum in Ukraine and lived in Bucha. Since the beginning of the Russian invasion, his Kazakh passport has allowed him to travel to the territory occupied by Russian troops and evacuate civilians. Konstantin not only saves people, but also sees the horrors of war and occupation with his own eyes. The film also includes a scene of the rescue of the famous Ukrainian composer, Shevchenko Prize winner Ihor Poklad, who was staying at his home in Vorzel during the events of the film.

Filming took place in the Kyiv region in March and April 2023 and took 28 days of shooting, and the last shots were shot in August this year on Mount Hoverla. The film was completed this winter. The movie was produced by LEVEL film company.

The original music of the movie was composed by Isa Melikov, a famous Azerbaijani composer and producer. The main soundtrack was the song "The Last Day of Summer" by BAH.ROMA. The movie also uses music by Scala & Kolacny Brothers Radi-ohead – Creep, Christine and Queens – Let me touch you alone (feat. 070 Shake), Igor Poklad "How Cossacks Walked at the Wedding", Dmytro Pavlychko, Oleksandr Bilash "Two Colors".



Now let's return to the interview with Oleksandr Shchur. This interview is a free selective translation from English, so I apologize in advance if there are any inaccuracies.

Tell us how you made this movie, under what conditions?

We tried to be as close to reality as possible. For example, we filmed in the house of Igor Poklad, the composer mentioned earlier, and the rest of the movie was shot in Bucha and the surrounding area. The Ukrainian checkpoint we shot at the end of the movie is a real checkpoint. Many of the people in the film are real people who survived the occupation and were filmed as volunteers. There is a scene in the movie where a car is stopped at a racist checkpoint and they say they are going to shoot the porters, then people come out and say shoot us all, and it really was such an event, it is true. I have connections with our military and they also helped us recreate the events that took place. Although the movie is fiction, most of the scenes and episodes are taken from reality. I talked to Olha, her mother Iryna Filkina is known all over the world, she was killed in Bucha and it was her hand with a red manicure that was shown in the documentary. Olha had her last conversation with her mother before she was killed, and she told me word for word what she said, and I reproduced it in the movie.

Speaking about Bucha, before the war it was a beautiful, wealthy, well-maintained town in the suburbs of Kyiv, where many young people with children lived. When the Russians came there and saw all this, they did not believe that people in Ukraine could live like this, and it turned out that they had come to "liberate" Ukrainians from a good life. For them the protagonist Konstantin's Tesla seemed like a

kind of space rocket. From that time until now I remember a feeling of unity, when strangers helped each other, tried to avert trouble, to resist it. For example, one woman in Kyiv threw a jar of cucumbers at the drones, and it was really true. Now it's time to unite again if we want to defeat the enemy. And this Russian officer shown in the movie is a synthetic portrait copied from all the Russian invaders like Girkin and the like. We wanted to show the real face of racism. I had a problem finding an actor for this role, about 50 Ukrainian actors I approached refused to play it.

Why did you show at the end of the movie that he was only wounded, not killed?

I am often asked this question. I wanted to show that the evil has not yet been fully punished, that this officer will go to occupied Kherson and commit his crimes there. Speaking of Kherson, the Russians had more time to retreat and more opportunities to hide the traces of their crimes there. And in Bucha, they had no time, so they killed people and left them in the streets. The Russian army is a medieval army. There are orders in it that an officer is a "master" and a soldier is nobody. When there is a robbery, the soldiers take only kettles, while the officers take gold and everything precious. This is shown in the movie.

I know people who fled the war three times. For example, a Crimean woman fled from Crimea to Donetsk, then from Donetsk to Bucha when the war started, and from Bucha she fled for the third time. One thing is clear, Russia is not going to stop, so we have to fight and win.

Tell us more about the main character of the movie, Konstantin.

Now about the main character, who was called Vorzel's angel, how we

filmed him. It was important to show how a foreigner living in Ukraine reacts to the war. Konstantin is a Jew who was granted asylum in Ukraine. He was known to a woman from the SBU, who had the idea to send him to bring people from Bucha and the surrounding area, because he had a Kazakh passport, and Russians consider people from Kazakhstan as their friends, and they let him through at checkpoints, so he brought 230 people from the occupied territories to Ukraine. This is how the family of one of Budanov's assistants was transported. As shown in the movie, the Nazis had lists of people to kill, and they went from house to house in towns and villages with these lists, dragging people out and killing them. The real Konstantin we talk about in the movie now lives in Vorzel. He loves the feeling of freedom, he is a friend of Poklad and he advised us in the making of our movie. During the transport he had a recorder hidden in his pocket, so he recorded many conversations of the Nazis, which we were able to reproduce in the movie.

Tell us more about the rescue of Poklad and about him.

He is a legend of Ukrainian music, he is 70 years old, he wrote many operas, music for songs, for example, songs for the famous cartoon about Koshchaks, his song "The Bird's Landing" is very famous. He was a famous composer in the old days, in the old Soviet Union. In Russia they knew about him, they knew about his talent, and yet they wanted to destroy him and his whole family. They even put a bomb in his piano. With Konstantin's help, he and his family managed to get out of the occupied territory.

What was the reaction of the audience when you showed this movie?

Many people, even Ukrainians, do not know the details of what happened in the occupied territories, and it was important to show these crimes. To show that Ukraine existed and will continue to exist.

It is important to do this because Russia also makes movies about the occupation. For example, they made a film about Bucha called Witness. It is about a Jew who supposedly came to Bucha and supposedly saw the crimes of the Ukrainian military. In this movie they showed Ukrainians with Nazi swastikas, Ukrainians standing next to a portrait of Hitler (just laughter and lies). And this film was released in English. But they made this movie badly, probably a lot of money was stolen, and the movie turned out to be useless. It has a very low rating – 0.1



UCU Foundation Welcomed 42 of the Brightest Ukrainian Entrepreneurs to Palo Alto for the Stanford Ignite Ukraine Program

On March 22, Ukrainian Catholic University Foundation and the Consulate General of Ukraine in San Francisco hosted a Networking Reception for 42 Ukrainian business leaders participating in the Stanford Ignite Ukraine educational program. The program is a joint initiative launched by the Stanford Graduate School of Business and CfE accelerator of Ukrainian Catholic University, designed to support Ukrainian entrepreneurs poised to drive their nation's economic reconstruction.

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(if the rating is counted from 1 to 10). Even in Russia, when it was shown there, it mostly got a rating of 1. In America, about a thousand people saw this movie, and only three viewers gave it a high rating, I think those three were Donald Trump, Elon Musk and Tucker Carlson (laughter in the audience).

Why did you make a feature film instead of a documentary?

Because we wanted to make a mo-

vie for a large audience, because we understand that documentaries are watched by a small group of people and features by a larger group of people. We especially wanted to show it to Americans. After all, it is based on documentary facts, but it is simply artfully presented. We showed this film in Los Angeles to the public and to American producers, and our goal is to show it to a wide American audience.

THE INVISIBLE WOUND OF WAR. CONCUSSION AND HOW SPORTS CAN HELP

Snezhana Gusarevych

The term acubarotrauma, or as it is more commonly known, shell shock, first appeared in an article by Cambridge medical psychologist Charles Samuel Myers in the *Lancet* in 1915. During World War I and World War II, British medical minds tried to interpret the meaning of the symptoms, but acubarotrauma leaves no organic or physical stigma. That's why, during the military conflicts of the twentieth century, doctors prescribed electroshock treatment for "ineffective" soldiers who had suffered concussion as a result of a mine blast. Concussion is a brain injury that shows no physical signs on various tests, making it one of the most common invisible wounds of war. Oleh Bereziuk, head of the mental health service at the First Territorial Medical Association of the Unbreakable Rehabilitation Center, explains how the brain works when a person suffers a traumatic brain injury: "During a TBI, the brain is compressed and decompressed at the same time, and the threads of connections between neurons are broken. The brain disintegrates. It is not destroyed, only damaged, and does not understand what is happening. That is why you see chaotic symptoms, changes in mood, quality of life, and everything else that follows. The brain is the most plastic organ and its neuroplasticity is incredible. The brain has a compensatory function, restoring these connections, "bypassing" the affected areas. A fit man wearing a T-shirt that reads "Fighters whose will is stronger than their bodies" enters the large assembly hall of a sports training base in Kyiv. He is Ihor Salii, a soldier in the Ukrainian Armed Forces and a member of the Ukrainian team for the U.S. Air Force and Marine Corps Games for Veterans and Wounded Warriors. These are the qualifying games for the Warrior Games, a tournament for all branches of the United States Armed Forces. At the time of our conversation, Ihor was preparing to leave for America – he was attending a training camp in archery, track and field, and sitting volleyball. In March, the team traveled to Las Vegas as invited participants. Our 30 athletes competed in the following adaptive sports: archery, track



and field, cycling, powerlifting, rowing, sitting volleyball, swimming, basketball and wheelchair rugby. Each participant competed in multiple sports in different categories.

Returning to the Army

At the beginning of the full-scale war, Ihor Salii joined the army as a volunteer soldier, although he had 13 years of service and an officer's rank. In November 2013, during the Revolution of Dignity, he left the service and began civilian life. "When the war broke out (in 2014), I did not receive any calls. Now I realize I was wrong. After the Maidan, I thought it was a big political game by our then president. Now I understand everything, I want to apologize to the guys who were in the ATO (anti-terrorist operation)," says the soldier. In his civilian life, he was a real estate agent and also sold things from China. On the second day of all-out war, Ihor put his wife and two children

on a train. "I will remember it for the rest of my life, a crowded station, several people per seat. It broke my heart. I will never forgive the Russians. Then I went to the Security Service of Ukraine archive where my case file was, but I could not get the documents. I didn't have an officer's commission. So, when the territorial defense asked me if I had any documents and combat experience, which I didn't, I said yes and was drafted as a soldier," the soldier said. After three weeks of service, Salii proved his abilities and was promoted to squad leader. Later, when the documents were sorted out, he was promoted to company commander and sent to the Donetsk sector.

An invisible injury

During his first week at the front, Ihor suffered a traumatic brain injury that resulted in epileptic seizures, loss of vision, and a mine blast that blew out his thyroid gland. "I came to in a hospi-

tal in Dnipro. I was very scared because I could hardly see anything, only silhouettes. I realized that it was better to lose my limbs than my eyesight," Saliy says. After the examination, the doctor assured Ihor that his sight would return, but the hospital failed to give a clear diagnosis and explain why his thyroid was not functioning.

"Sometimes, when you ask a soldier during an examination if he had an acubarotrauma, they answer that they don't know of such a diagnosis, when you ask if he had a concussion, he says that he did, but none of them are registered. This is the danger of these invisible injuries, but in fact they are serious wounds that reduce the quality of life, health and lead to destructive changes that are close to death. They increase the risk of suicide, psychosomatic diseases, somatic diseases and other problems. The earlier treatment is started, the better it is," says Oleh Bereziuk, head of the mental health service.

After two weeks of treatment, Ihor Saliy returned to the front. He explained his return by saying that he could not afford to leave his company without a commander. The unit immediately went on the offensive and held its positions for three months. "I tried to control everything and support the guys, because their morale was at zero. We had losses after losses. It was very difficult. I was sleeping three hours a day. I went to the doctor and he said I should have treated the bruise normally. I said okay, but I am not leav-

ing the guys. They gave me some sedatives and I sat down hard on them, but I couldn't cope any other way," Ihor says. After a long stay on the battlefield, the unit was withdrawn and the personnel were decompressed. Ihor did not pass. He was sent to a neuropsychiatric hospital, where they tried to treat him with tranquilizers.

"I had epileptic seizures and could not think clearly. You use 20% of your physical resources. For example, you have walked 50 meters and you feel heavy. The music is loud and your brain says: save yourself. I went up the stairs to smoke, but I felt like I had run half a marathon. The doctor who treated me recommended that I try archery," says Ihor.

Archery as a method of traumatic brain injury treatment

According to psychiatrist Oleh Bereziuk, the most effective means of treatment of head trauma is systemic movement, which leads to qualitative neuroplastic processes in the brain and normalizes its function. It is the systematization of breathing movements, when a person is taught to breathe in a special way. Normalization or systematization of this movement leads to such consequences as psycho-emotional calmness, reduction of various painful sensations in the body. "There is a whole tool called EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing), which normalizes many human functions, including balancing intercortical interaction, through systemic eye movements. Another

method is systemic movements of touching different parts of the body. Special oculomotor exercises and vestibulomotor exercises, where the sense of balance is combined with movement," explains Bereziuk.

A set of all these exercises has an impact on normalizing brain function, promoting neuroplasticity and restoring neural connections lost during traumatic brain injury.

After leaving the hospital, Ihor Saliy found the archery range of archery coach Dmytro Lvivskyi and began actively attending classes and participating in sports competitions. A month later, he felt more focused and healthier.

"In order to hit the target, you have to make certain movements. You concentrate for one second, shoot and relax. After 20 seconds, you repeat those movements again. Cockroaches don't have time to get in your head during those 20 seconds. I train my brain all day long. I concentrate, relax, concentrate, relax. My brain does not allow me to concentrate for a long time," says Saliy.

The coach told Ihor about adaptive sports for the military and veterans, the Invictus Games and the U.S. Air Force competitions. In December 2023, Ihor was selected and joined the Ukrainian national team, which won 76 medals in the March 2024 competition. Ihor competed in archery, athletics and sitting volleyball. He won gold in group archery and gold in sitting volleyball and is currently serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.



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STANFORD LIGHTS THE HEARTS OF UKRAINIAN BUSINESS

Lukian Selskyi

The Armed Forces of Ukraine today can be called one of the strongest armies in the world. This opinion is shared by the most prominent military leaders, including the Commanders-in-Chief of many NATO member states. It is also a well-known fact that a strong and growing economy is necessary to support the Ukrainian army and the proper functioning of the state in general. In fact, this is another front that Ukrainian entrepreneurs are doing their best to maintain.

Commercial adaptability, maintaining operations and a team, searching for new ideas and ways of development, and keeping their spirits up under rocket fire are the cases that thousands of businessmen operating in Ukraine can share. Many of them are ready today to reach new levels, to test their own strength in the wider international market. And sometimes a little push is all it takes to take a big step.

The goal of the Stanford Ignite Ukraine program, initiated in partnership with the Ukrainian Catholic University, is to create the conditions for hundreds of Ukrainian entrepreneurs to take that leap. On March 22, the Consulate General of Ukraine in San Francisco and its head, Consul General Dmytro Kushneruk, held a ceremonial event at Stanford University (California) with the support of the first group of entrepreneurs.

Ivan Petrenko, the inspiration and project manager, says that 42 participants were selected from nearly a thousand applicants, and the criteria were quite strict. "They had to be the owners of their business, the business itself had to be registered and pay taxes in Ukraine, and they had to create a competitive product. It was also very important to answer the question "What is your motivation? Why do you want to do this?" because a simple desire to study at Stanford is not enough," Ivan explains, adding that it is very important to see and measure the effectiveness of the program throughout its duration and especially within one year after the end of participation. Were new contracts signed? How much new investment was attracted? How many new jobs were created? Finally, what was the increase in suc-

cess due to this project? These questions are answered by the participants themselves, demonstrating their ability to go beyond their current perception of their own success.

The geography of the participants is quite broad – applications came from literally every region of Ukraine that was not destroyed by the war. Naturally, the largest percentage of winners – about a third – came from the capital, but location was not the main selection criterion.

For example, one of the Stanford Ignite Ukraine participants, Ruslana Rymska, organized a business in the village of Sokyrnytsia in Lviv Oblast. A small production of high-quality, gluten-free snacks and cookies called Smakuli grew into a competition with the highest criteria for ingredient selection and high entrepreneurial ambitions. "It all started with family challenges – my nephew was allergic to gluten, my daughter to lactose. We experimented, baking bread, cakes and then cupcakes. We were successful and people started ordering from all over Ukraine. I immediately had a global goal. I didn't want to do something small. And now we are already negotiating for the US market," Ruslana says enthusiastically. She is confident that she will face many challenges and difficulties, but she wants her Ukrainian products to be known in both Europe and America. "It has been three long years of hard work: implementing quality standards, safety control, labeling, registration. We have a new, innovative line. Functional food, safe and healthy ingredients. I have made a big export plan for America and I know which way to go. And this is where I will make up for my lack of knowledge and fill in the missing pieces.

Creating companies with ethical approaches that are integrated into global markets will strengthen Ukraine at home and its brand in Europe. This statement was made by U.S. Special Envoy for Economic Recovery Penny Pritzker. She argued that such events are crucial for establishing cooperation between Ukrainian entrepreneurs and the U.S. business and technology community.

"I believe that the Stanford Ignite Ukraine model will become a project that we will scale across the country. I have often said that one of Ukraine's

greatest assets is its incredibly innovative and talented people. And the U.S. government will be there to support you along the way," said Penny Pritzker.

To enter the American market, to become a world-class Ukrainian brand – this is the task that Andrii Bandrivskyi, the founder of the Turbat company and the all-Ukrainian chain of tourist equipment stores Gorgany, has set for himself and his team. During the full-scale invasion of Russia, the company came in handy for the Ukrainian military – in 10 days they developed a unique sleeping bag for the strict requirements of the front line, and therefore every day they are engaged in extensive volunteer activities, offering a whole system of special prices and sales discounts for the needs of the Armed Forces. In this way, Andrii is investing in victory while creating a business expansion strategy far beyond the borders of Ukraine. "We all have our own dreams and ambitions. Stanford Ignite Ukraine is an opportunity to break out of your bubble and look at business from a new perspective... With the war we have all changed, the pace has increased and it seems that everything is possible. I want to develop, work and not be afraid to make a mistake. Local professors advise us to start with a big vision and build a business around it. So, if the goal is to become a world famous brand, then it is quite clear how many steps need to be built to reach this great goal," the businessman shares his thoughts.

Entrepreneurs who have just arrived from Ukraine are emotionally dissonant with the calm and cautious representatives of the local American elite. Daily challenges, sometimes bordering on the need to fight for life, left in each participant a mark of reactivity and a high level of attention to everything that happens around them. It is impossible not to notice the colossal energy and thirst for new knowledge, contacts, growth and challenges. They are ready to experiment, explore and take risks.

The war has created a unique condition in Ukrainians, which will certainly make Ukraine one of the most successful and dynamic economies in Europe in the coming decades. This is the opinion of Stanford professor Michael McFaul, former U.S. ambassador to Russia, who is a special guest at meet-

ings with Ukrainian businessmen.

"The dynamism of the Ukrainian private sector will make your country one of the leaders in Europe at a time when, frankly speaking, Europe is sorely lacking in economic leaders. First, you will be an engine, an exporter of wealth, not an importer of aid. And second, you will be an exporter of security. Now, because of this terrible barbaric invasion, your soldiers have become the best fighting force in all of Europe," McFall told the gathering, adding, "Ukraine has turned a corner. You are part of Europe. You are part of the democratic world!

Many stages of learning and gaining new experiences await the project participants. They will work in groups, discuss the most unexpected ideas,

listen to lectures, and most importantly – already today they are creating a network of new knowledge and approaches.

"This is our main goal – to scale the spirit of business and innovation for Ukraine and help entrepreneurs go beyond their own limits," explains Natalia Anyon, Director of the UCU Foundation and one of the patrons of the SIU program. In fact, the idea to create this large-scale project is hers. "I believe that this program will provide an opportunity to develop existing and create new businesses, and thus build bridges between Ukraine and the leading countries of the world, where the Ukrainian product will prove its full competitiveness, and the economy of the state, which steadfastly defends its

independence, will receive an additional boost", – emphasizes Mrs. Anyon.

Taking into account the strategic goals of support and development of small and medium-sized businesses in Ukraine, the initiators of the Ignite Ukraine project have long-term plans. The next group of new participants-entrepreneurs is planned to be gathered already this fall. You can get acquainted with the current group and their businesses by following the link:



UKRAINIAN KOZAK WOMEN REVISITED

Jaroslav Zurowsky

Ukrainians do not know their own history. (But then which society really does.) They were told myths promoted by one side or another and have accepted them. One of these falsehoods pertains to the role of women in Ukrainian cultural and political life during the Kozak period. According to popular lore, the Kozak period was one run by men. Yet this is not so. Historical examples exist of influential aristocratic and merchant class women controlling great fortunes. Some used their influence for good while others entered history as villains.

Women who used their riches for good included Halska Hulevych who funded the Kyiv Brotherhood (Guilds) and their civic activities. Hanna Hoyska funded the expansion of the Pochayiv Monastery. In 1630, Raina Vyshnevetska-Mohylyanka, a relative of the Kyiv Metropolitan Petro Mohyla, funded the expansion of the Mharsky Monastery. Olena Chortoryyska, not only funded the rebuilding of a monastery, but also built a free hospital, and a school for all children, regardless of class. Madame Chortoryyska did not adopt her husband's surname, retaining her mai-

den name. Rayina Yarmolynska also financed monastery expansion.

However, there were villains. In 1609, Sofia Ruzhynska led a force of some 6000 men and stormed the Koretsky Castle in the Carpathian town of Chermosh. Witnesses described the ensuing looting and killing as similar to that of the Tatars, who at time were greatly feared.

In the 1570s, the sisters Maria Holshanska and Hanna Mulska fought each other on the battlefield. Hanna Mulska even donned armor and led her troops into the fray. Unfortunately, the reason for this feud has been lost.

A more colorful "villain" was Hanna Borzobohata. Very quickly upon her marriage, she usurped all control not only in her husband's household, but also in her father-in-law's chancellery, who happened to be the Bishop of Lutsk. She even raided neighboring estates, which led to complaints about her being raised with the Polish king, Stefan Bathory, the center of power at that time. After she refused to comply with requests to desist in her activities, denying any authority over herself, and essentially turning her nose up at the Polish Crown, the king had no option but to lead an army against her. On

August 11, 1582, finding herself surrounded in her castle, Borzobohata donned armor, and with music playing and cannons blazing, led the charge against the Polish king, routing him decisively.

Another good Orthodox relative of Petro Mohyla, Anna Mohylyanka-Pototska, in the mid 17th century was listed as being Hospodarynya [Governess] of Moldavia and Voyevodnya [Military Governess] of Krakiv [Cracow]. She must have wielded significant power and influence to be listed as such. Please note the Pototsky family later joined the Polish Roman Catholic side. Let us also not forget that many consider 16-17th century Moldavia to be under the Ukrainian sphere of influence, with Lviv as being a major cultural educational centre for Moldovans. In fact, Petro Mohyla began his Orthodox studies in Lviv.

There were many others such as Anna Khmelnytska who played an important role in the Kozak administration. But history is being taught with the goal reflect of deifying the status quo, and thus we do not know of these ladies who were important in their time. And unfortunately, little is being done to remedy this situation.

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SCALES: WHAT INFLUENCES THE ATTITUDE OF UKRAINIANS TO THE UNITED STATES

Anastasiia Krupka

Against the background of the pre-election campaign in the USA, there are many political statements related to the war in Ukraine. In particular, it is about the failure to provide the necessary weapons and financial aid. Delays in these issues, as the survey data show, lead Ukrainians to be disappointed in the United States as a partner country. What else is influencing this process, and what role does the presidential candidacy of Donald Trump play in it? We talk about this with Lyubomir Mysiv, deputy director of the sociological group "Rating" and Volodymyr Dubovyk, director of the Center for International Studies, associate professor of the International Relations Department of Mechnikov Odessa National University.

Mr. Lyubomyr, the sociological group "Rating" recently published the results of a study on Ukrainians' perception of other countries. According to him, the majority of respondents consider the USA and Great Britain friendly to Ukraine: both countries received 81% of Ukrainians' trust. The Ukrainian society showed a high level of trust in Poland and Lithuania (79% each), Canada (78%), France (70%) and Japan (55%). What influences these indicators?

It is worth mentioning that we have been researching the attitude of Ukrainians to different countries for about ten years. When it comes to the dynamics of friendship, our closest neighbors are usually in the first place. Now these are Poland and Lithuania – the countries that provided and continue to provide Ukraine with quite a lot of assistance during the full-scale invasion. Canada, which is considered a "light version" of the United States, is also very often in high positions. As for the USA itself, it is worth understanding that Ukrainians have certain stereotypes, primarily related to NATO. At least until 2022, in our studies among the older generation in the south and east of the country, we recorded Soviet views about the United States. Therefore, it is not surprising that these respondents had a negative attitude toward the United States based on post-Soviet ideological markers.

According to a new study, despite the fact that the majority of Ukraini-

ans continue to perceive the United States as a friendly country, the share of those who say the United States is unambiguously friendly has decreased, choosing instead the "somewhat friendly" option. This indicator fell from 61% in June to 35%. What is the reason for this?

Of course, during a full-scale invasion, stereotypes change, and the United States enjoys high levels of support across multiple indicators. However, it is necessary to understand that in the conditions of war, society reacts very sensitively to any statements of politicians and, above all, to any of their actions in relation to our state – and now this primarily affects the evaluation of friendship. Nowadays we have super-fast media, news reaches people instantly: as a result, fluctuations in evaluation are constant and depend on what is currently on the agenda.

For example, we have an assessment of Ukraine's accession to NATO. Despite the fact that the alliance has huge support among Ukrainians, the number of people willing to join it in April 2022 has dropped sharply. However, it was not because we no longer need to join NATO – it was the emotional reaction of people to the actions of Western politicians. Because, if we remember, at that time each of us appealed to the world to close the skies over Ukraine, but the position of the representatives of the Alliance was unclear and rather weak: the skies were never closed, and they did not give clear explanations as to why.

Does Donald Trump's candidacy for the presidency affect the status of the United States among Ukrainians?

Yes, we are now seeing a certain decline, a change in the attitude of Ukrainians towards the United States against the background of the discussions about the upcoming presidential elections. It is also influenced by the situation related to the allocation of aid. Of course, Ukrainians still consider the United States one of their main allies in the confrontation with Russia. However, on the other hand, there is a public demand for the fulfillment of the US promises of financial and military aid, because the delay leads to the problems we are currently experiencing at the front, especially the lack of ammunition. Also, against the background of the statements

made by the American administration, the number of people who believe that the United States is a neutral state in the matter of Ukraine's victory is partially increasing.

Analyst Martin Wolf told the Financial Times that Donald Trump could soon "hand his friend Vladimir Putin a victory over Ukraine". Meanwhile, The Washington Post writes that Trump's vague peace plan casts a shadow over Ukraine's future. Mr. Volodymyr, what is Trump's image among Ukrainians against the background of the elections? What attitude does he create with his statements?

Of course, the image of Trump among Ukrainians is negative, because the politician is responsible for delaying the adoption of a new package of aid to Ukraine, and in general speaks against the provision of such aid against the background of Russia's aggression. Therefore, Ukrainians cannot think of anything positive about him. However, people are still trying to understand why Trump takes this position, to explain it by some factors: either because he cares about Americans and does not want to spend such money abroad, or because he considers Ukraine too corrupt, or does he really sympathize with Russia?

How do you think the situation in relations between Ukraine and the USA will change in the coming months?

L. Mysiv: I think that Ukrainians should wait for the elections in the USA, because it is obvious that there is a political struggle going on there. Ukrainian society is watching this situation, because this event is constantly on the agenda and we are dependent on it, although there is a misunderstanding about who will win the elections. In my opinion, the relationship between Ukraine and the US will change depending on how much the US government continues to help Ukraine in the war. Here it will not matter who becomes president. In this sense, the hypothetical election of Donald Trump is a factor of unpredictability.

V. Dubovyk: In my opinion, the image of the USA for Ukrainians in the coming months will be influenced by the provision of military aid: how quickly, in what amount and under what conditions. Also, the range of weapons

EVENTS 2024

APRIL

Ha/Su	Пн/Mo	Вт/Tu	Ср/We	Чт/Th	Пт/Fr	Сб/Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

13 APR

UKRAINIAN
FILM NIGHT –
"EURODONBAS"

Volunteer Movement Ua-Usa

Where: The Polish Club Inc. of San Francisco, 3040 22nd St, San Francisco, CA 94110

When: Saturday, 5 PM

This film was made with the support of the Ukrainian State Film Agency and The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine.

5:00 pm: Doors open – food, drinks, vendors, mingling

6:00 pm: Film begins

Film: "Eurodonbas" (2022) – 1hr 13 min

Genre: Investigative Documentary
Language: Ukrainian and Russian, with English subtitles

Synopsis: Donbas is a region in Eastern Ukraine that is currently recognized worldwide due to the fierce war with Russia.

Although, not everyone is aware that

at the end of the 19th century, Donbas was the center of Belgian, German, French, British, and American settlements. This region housed entrepreneurs from different countries who built architecture, enterprises; and introduced progressive technologies to this region.

After the revolution of 1917 and the USSR's rise to power, the factories and private property were taken from the European and North American settlers, destroying the memory of European history there.

Admission: **We kindly encourage a donation of \$20 for admission** (cash/Venmo/PayPal/Zelle) at the door. Half of your donation can be tax deductible, we are happy to provide a receipt if you are interested! e-mail: volunteermovement.ua.usa@gmail.com

Donations collected will be shared between two reputable organizations that help Ukraine:

Volunteer Movement UA-USA: 501(c)(3) non-profit charity getting tactical medicine, protective gear, tech support and more to Ukraine. Works in collaboration with Volunteer Movement, a Ukrainian-based charity established in 2014.

Army SOS: supplying non-lethal equipment and technology to enhance Ukraine's defense capabilities since 2014.

We will have Ukrainian vendors showcasing and selling their arts, crafts and talents – proceeds will go to support various Ukrainian causes.

The Polish Club will be selling delicious Polish food and drinks before the film.

Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy Ukrainian cinema, build community and make a positive impact on the lives of Ukrainian defenders and civilians!

<https://www.facebook.com/events/s/ukrainian-film-night-eurodonba/1438728440334936/>

20 KBI/APR

10TH ANNUAL
PYSANKA
WORKSHOP IN
SAN FRANCISCO

St. Michaels Ukrainian Orthodox Church & Ukrainian School of San Francisco / Українська Школа Сан-Франциско

Where: St. Michaels Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 345 7th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

When: Saturday, 3:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Would you like to create your own pysanka for Easter?!

Join us for Pysanka workshop on Saturday, April 20th, 2024, at 3:30 pm at the Hall of St. Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Church (345 7th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103) and explore the art, symbolism, and joy in creating own pysanka.

Pysankas are Ukrainian Easter eggs, decorated using beeswax and dyes that are applied in layers.

No experience is necessary. Each participant will make a unique and beautiful egg in this hands-on workshop.

All instructions and materials will be provided, though might be limited.

Suggested fee is **\$20** per adult, **\$5** for kids 12-18 y.o., **free** for the kids under 12 y.o.

We will have coffee, teas, desserts, cheese and fruits.

All proceeds will go to the humanitarian help for Ukraine and emergency medical supplies.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/s/10th-annual-pysanka-workshop-i/297546210012774/>

that will be sent to Ukraine will be important. And also whether the attitude in Washington will change regarding how the war should end, whether there will be pressure from the US side on Kyiv with the aim of pushing the Ukrainians to make concessions to

Russia and negotiations with Moscow. It is very unfortunate that all this threatens the relations between the USA and Ukraine. After all, in the last two years we have received a lot of American aid, the United States has coordinated a coalition of countries that

support us. I think it is important that the delay in the delivery of weapons to Ukraine does not cost too much, because in this case Ukrainians will remain resentful of the United States.



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