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GEOPOL REPORTS

THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND THE POLISH-UKRAINIAN POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP

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POLISH - UKRAINIAN POLITICAL RELATIONS: BIBLIOGRAPHIC EXTRACTS

'Eugeniusz Romer' Program of Polish Studies (editing: John Karkazis)

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373830592_'EUGENIUSZ_ROMER'_PROGRAM_OF_POLISH_STUDIES

THE PARADOXES OF POLISH-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS (extracts)

Wilson Center, Wojciech Kononczuk, 23/5/2018

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/the-paradoxes-polish-ukrainian-relations>

..."To sum up, disagreements over history did not remove Ukraine from a position of top priority in Poland's foreign policy. Polish support of Ukraine in matters of strategic importance was and remains unequivocal and unconditional, though this stance toward its neighbor unfortunately is usually missed in Ukraine. And this is the biggest paradox of the bilateral relationship. What is needed now is a rebuilding of the undermined confidence and better communication, as well as more good will as the two countries tackle difficult historical issues they have in common. Finally, both sides should bear in mind the many common interests they share."....

HOW POLAND BECAME A MAJOR EUROPEAN PLAYER (extracts)

New Lines Institute, Luka Ivan Jukic, 20/4/2022

<https://newlinesinstitute.org/political-systems/how-poland-became-a-major-european-player/>

..."Poland is every NATO and EU country's most important ally in eastern Europe. But it is an ally with its own history, its own interests, and its own view of the world. While it was passive regarding issues that did not directly affect it, Poland has taken a much more active role to counter the threat of Russian aggression in Eastern Europe. In addition to increasing its own defense spending, Poland has played a key role in providing humanitarian aid and passage to Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion, as well as an entire supply network for military aid into Ukraine."....

..."For the foreseeable future, Poland will continue to attempt to deepen military ties with the U.S. and other NATO allies to ensure there is no question around Article 5, and state and society alike will do everything in their power to ensure that the country's neighbors to the east are free and independent."....

UKRAINE: THE VIEW FROM WARSAW (extracts)

Subtitle: More than offering neighbourly support, Poland wants to ensure Russia suffers a strategic defeat.

The Interpreter - Lowy Institute, Melissa Conley Tyler, 27/5/2022

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/ukraine-view-warsaw>

..."Poland will continue to be an important part of building this common commitment. What I took from Warsaw is how strongly Poland believes that it is its duty to do everything possible to support Ukraine to achieve what Ukraine defines as victory – and the energy it is willing to expend to achieve this. As the Polish Institute of International Affairs Director Sławomir Debski put it, 'we know who we are, we know what we're fighting for, and we are not lacking in determination.' "....

AMBASSADOR MARK BRZEZINSKI'S INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL SMERCONISH, CNN (extracts)

U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Poland, 28/5/2022

https://pl.usembassy.gov/amb_cnn_smerconish/

..."**Michael Smerconish, CNN:** things just haven't changed. It was Lech Walesa standing up – in the height of the cold war – to the Soviet Union and now it's President Zelenskyy, supported by the Poles and the United States, standing up to Putin and to Russia.

Ambassador Brzezinski: Well, that's true, but things have changed. I was a Fulbright scholar in this country 30 years ago, and it wasn't a member of NATO. Today as US ambassador, there are 12,600 American

military personnel here. We have Patriot systems in this country; we have F35s. We have Abrams tanks, and the Poles are buying hundreds more. And things are changing to make sure Central Europe is safe and secure. But we have to expect a long term struggle here. It would be great if Putin left Ukraine next week. I'm not sure that he will. We have to be prepared for a long term struggle. And I know that we are because I know my fellow Americans understand what is at stake here. This is a collision between democracy and authoritarianism."....

UKRAINE AND POLAND: WHY THE COUNTRIES FELL OUT IN THE PAST, AND ARE NOW CLOSELY ALLIED (extracts)

Conversation, Christoph Mick, 15/6/2022

<https://theconversation.com/ukraine-and-poland-why-the-countries-fell-out-in-the-past-and-are-now-closely-allied-184906>

..."Poles cannot forget the mass murder of Polish villagers in Volhynia in 1943 and in East Galicia in 1944, which cost the lives of 70,000–100,000 people. The perpetrators were nationalist Ukrainian partisans, members of the Ukrainian insurgent army (UPA) which was controlled by the Bandera faction of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). They were attempting to 'ethnically cleanse' the region to prevent it from ever becoming Polish again. OUN members and leaders are venerated in western Ukraine and were treated as heroes by several Ukrainian governments."....

..."Historically, people in the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands spoke both languages and had mixed ancestry. Today, Poles and Ukrainians are discovering in their daily encounters how much they actually have in common. According to an opinion poll from February 2022, taken before the Russian attack, more Poles now like than dislike Ukrainians – a sign of how much things have changed."....

SPOTLIGHT ON POLAND

Pew Research Center, Jacob Poushter Christine Huang and Laura Clancy, 22/6/2022

<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2022/06/22/spotlight-on-poland-negative-views-of-russia-surge-but-ratings-for-u-s-nato-eu-improve/>

Main points:

- Polish views of Russia at all-time low as U.S., EU & NATO ratings hit record highs
- As critical views of Russia, Putin reach new highs, Poles turn to U.S.
- In Poland, high levels of support for taking in refugees, arming Ukraine through NATO
- Polish opinions of the European Union are increasingly positive

THE EU AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE: THE CURSE OF BEING IMPORTANT. A VIEW FROM POLAND (extracts)

Subtitle: **Poland's actions following the outbreak of war in Ukraine—its break with Hungary, its openness toward the refugees—do not necessarily signal a shift back to liberal democratic values. The national populist government's focus is Ukraine's and, invariably, Poland's right to self-determination.**

Internationale Politik Quarterly, Jarosław Kuisz and Karolina Wigura, 30/6/2022

<https://ip-quarterly.com/en/eu-and-war-ukraine-i-curse-being-important-view-poland>

..."On the one hand, the current government will aspire to become more of a regional power. This has already been visible in Poland's attempts to lead a foreign policy independent from its Western allies—for example when the Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, along with his Czech and Slovenian counterparts as well as Jarosław Kaczyński, went to Kyiv at the very early stage of the war. Also, the government politicians in Poland have already expressed their wish to build a kind of an alliance with Ukraine against Western Europe. 'A strong Polish-Ukrainian alliance could hold all the cards in Central and Eastern Europe,' Deputy Infrastructure Minister Marcin Horała said at the beginning of June."....

POLAND AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE: A CONVERSATION WITH ZBIGNIEW RAU, POLAND'S MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (extracts)

Center for Strategic and International Studies, 28/9/2022

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/poland-and-war-ukraine-conversation-zbigniew-rau-polands-minister-foreign-affairs>

...."**Mr. Bergmann:** Mmm hmm. I want to ask you about democracy and the rule of law. President Biden has called the war in Ukraine a contest between democracy and autocracy. But the U.S. and EU have also had concerns about rule of law in Poland. Has this been a topic of conversation in your engagement here in Washington?

Min. Rau: As far as Ukraine is concerned here, Ukraine, there's no doubt in my mind, is making a considerable progress in terms of rebuilding its state institutions. And quite frankly, what is most important, I must say, it's a very, very democratic society. It's a very democratic society. Of course, perhaps there are issues that we can talk about this or that element of business, the business culture, and so on and so on. But Ukraine has proven many times on many occasions that as a society that value human rights and democracy, not less, than any other country of the free world."....

WHY RUSSIA KEEPS INSISTING THAT POLAND IS PREPARING TO PARTITION UKRAINE (extracts)

Carnegie Endowment, Stanislav, Kuvaldin, 7/12/2022

<https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88585>

...."The Kremlin's logic appears to stem from its thesis about the 'artificial' nature of Ukrainian statehood. If Ukraine was 'constructed' by Lenin in 1918, as Moscow now insists, then it can be just as easily and legitimately 'deconstructed': its neighbors have the right to claim Ukrainian territory, which Russia will not oppose. Indeed, it has already made a head start by declaring the annexation of four Ukrainian regions in September."....

POLAND IS LEADING EUROPE'S RESPONSE TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE (extracts)

Atlantic Council, Diane Francis, 28/1/2023

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/poland-is-leading-europes-response-to-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/>

...."Germany eventually relented but the incident, along with the Nord Stream 2 saga, has diminished Berlin's stature. Germany's apparent ambivalence toward a predatory Russia and Berlin's ties to the Kremlin have allowed Poland to assume a position of moral leadership on issues of European security. This has included criticism of Austria and Hungary for allegedly pandering to Putin. Poland has also called out Germany for foot-dragging over sanctions. In April 2022, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki accused Germany of 'standing in the way' of harder sanctions against Russia. 'Anyone who reads the notes of EU meetings knows that Germany is the biggest impediment when it comes to more decisive sanctions,' he told journalists in Warsaw."....

...."Polish leadership of the European response to Putin's invasion is forging unprecedented bonds between the Polish and Ukrainian people. These two nations have had their share of fights and historical disagreements in the past. However, they now find themselves united by the existential threat coming from today's Russia. Ukrainian opinion polls regularly identify Poland as the country's closest partner."....

...."While the Kremlin cynically cloaks its genocidal invasion of Ukraine in the language of Slavic brotherhood, it is Ukraine's fellow Slavic neighbors in Poland who have demonstrated truly brotherly support. This will shape the future geopolitical landscape of the region. Once Russia is defeated, Ukraine will likely deepen its partnership with Poland to form a powerful bloc within European politics. Together, the two nations will have an authoritative voice in the wider democratic world. Europe's geopolitical center of gravity is shifting eastward, and Poland is leading the way."....

ZELENSKY: 'RUSSIA CANNOT WIN IN EUROPE WHEN A UKRAINIAN AND A POLE STAND SIDE BY SIDE' (extracts)

Kyiv Independent, Anastasiya Gordiychuk, 6/4/2023

https://news.yahoo.com/zelensky-russia-cannot-win-europe-030000930.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAAQ7hQf9kWTGylWrWeJduDnB6BZDsNVVjFpYxuyGcWEgXRo-TUhZGprym-yx5ZfXo76oeqJv6BkyAjX33NN4JZPM9cLjvGN2Is2Dw7beERXwh295JOiLyH2eql7cxsNETilccCuSwMWIUWTZuFv1y8S2fBHMOQE38d8JCySA4z

..."Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky delivered a speech before Poles and Ukrainians at Castle Square in Warsaw on April 5. 'It is an honor for me to be here. I speak to you with words of gratitude and strength. Gratitude, because there are no such moments anymore when we would be divided, when we would not be united,' Zelensky said in front of the crowd outside of the Royal Castle. 'Ukrainian and Polish hearts are fighting for one freedom, for the mutual independence of our states, for our native Europe - our common home, and we will be victorious!' "....

POLAND AND UKRAINE: THE EMERGING ALLIANCE THAT COULD RESHAPE EUROPE (extracts)

Atlantic Council, Taras Kuzio, 12/4/2023

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/poland-and-ukraine-the-emerging-alliance-that-could-reshape-europe/>

..."Today's Poland stands shoulder to shoulder in support of Ukraine as it shields Europe from the renewed threat of Russian imperialism. If Putin's invasion is defeated, this Polish-Ukrainian partnership will likely grow stronger still and could become a major force in European politics."....

..."With a combined population of over eighty million along with two of Europe's most powerful armies, a shared strategic vision, and huge scope for further economic growth, Poland and Ukraine have the potential to form a formidable geopolitical double act. Together, they could prove capable of challenging the traditional dominance of Western Europe and permanently altering the balance of power on the continent."....

DON'T TAKE POLAND'S ROLE FOR GRANTED: A FAR-RIGHT GOVERNMENT MAY NOT SUPPORT UKRAINE (extracts)

German Marshall Fund of the U.S., Mikolaj Bronert, 9/5/2023

<https://www.gmfus.org/news/dont-take-polands-role-granted-far-right-government-may-not-support-ukraine>

..."Post-electoral scenarios are countless. It is impossible to predict the results five months before the elections, and Konfederacja is a diverse organization with numerous camps: nationalists, libertarians, and conspiracy theorists among them. As is typical for protest parties, they also struggle to maintain a consistent political position. For this reason, a scenario in which a victorious PiS manages to further divide the various fractions and pull some of Konfederacja's representatives into the parliamentary majority is also possible. Regardless of the particular scenario, a potential PiS-Konfederacja coalition would have grave consequences for Poland and the transatlantic community, especially in the context of the war in Ukraine. Despite the politically diverse array of Poland's governments over the past 30 years, two constants in Polish foreign policy persist: support for Ukraine and other East European countries with pro-Western aspirations, and reliance on the West, particularly the United States. Konfederacja is the first political entity with a realistic prospect of breaking this 30-year-old consensus."....

THE U.S. NEEDS TO KEEP POLAND CLOSE. BUT IT MUST TREAD CAREFULLY (extracts)

The Washington Post, Henry Olsen, 5/6/2023

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/06/05/poland-united-states-ukraine-politics/>

...."Poland's staunch support of Ukraine and its key location in Eastern Europe make the nation one of the United States' most important European allies. But given its fractious domestic politics, the United States should tread carefully as it deepens its relationship with the country."....

POLAND ISN'T THE FRIEND THE WEST THINKS IT IS (extracts)

The New York Times, Jaroslaw Kuisz and Karolina Wigura, 6/6/2023

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/06/opinion/poland-ukraine-west-nato.html>

...."Poland's support for Ukraine is no sign that now, after nearly a decade of democratic backsliding, it's coming around to the importance of democracy. What the government is defending, really, is sovereignty and the right to self-determination — an existential rather than a political commitment. In the rush to acclaim Poland and present a united front, Western politicians have overlooked something at their cost. Far from receding, Polish illiberalism is alive and well."....

JUDY ASKS: IS POLAND'S DEMOCRACY IN DANGER? (extracts)

subtitle: **Poland's ruling party appears determined to hang onto power at all costs. Recent protests against the government's illiberal measures suggest Poles are willing to defend democracy.**

Carnegie Europe, Judy Dempsey, 8/6/2023

<https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/89911>

...."Most importantly, Poland's anti-democratic vector threatens European unity at a critical moment. To defend Ukraine and stand up to Putin's murderous war, Poland must look beyond military alignment with the United States. As a new front-line state, it also needs full support of its European allies, notably Germany. To tamper with a "legal Poxexit" is irresponsible and deepens a democratic fault line in the West. It risks the security of Europe—and the security of Poland itself. It is time the United States drummed this into the PiS government—and the Polish opposition into its own society."....

WHAT KIND OF MAJORITY COALITION IS POSSIBLE IN POLAND FOLLOWING THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS ON 15 OCTOBER? (extracts)

Fondation Robert Schuman, Corinne Deloy, 19/9/2023

<https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/718-what-kind-of-majority-coalition-is-possible-in-poland-following-the-parliamentary-elections-on-15-october>

...."During its 8 years in office, the PiS has pursued a policy that combines social redistribution and conservatism. 'The government is offering a vision of solidarity that draws on the legacy of the Solidarnosc movement and is guided by the main principles of social solidarity. This is our vision for Poland. It is this vision that we want to continue to produce,' declared outgoing Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki."

...."On 4 June, a symbolic date - since it celebrates the anniversary of the first semi-free elections in Poland in 1989, which marked the country's democratic opening after more than 40 years of communism - half a million people, again a number not seen since 1989, and all the opposition parties marched through the country's streets in protest against the high cost of living, fraud and lies, against PiS, in favour of democracy, free elections and the European Union. The event was organised at the initiative of Donald Tusk. 'I want to make a solemn vow. We are going to these elections to win, to call the guilty to account, to right the wrongs and (...) to reconcile Polish families', he declared."....

WARSAW MAKES A RISKY POLITICAL BET IN ATTACKING UKRAINE (extracts)

Subtitle: **Electoral calculations for Poland's governing PiS party are putting relations with Kyiv in jeopardy.**

Politico, Jan Cienski, 21/9/2023

<https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-pis-risky-political-bet-attack-ukraine/>

...."In New York, Duda compared Ukraine to a desperate, drowning person. 'A drowning person is extremely dangerous, he can pull you down to the depths ... simply drown the rescuer,' Duda said. That got a thumbs-up from the Kremlin. 'Never before did I agree with Duda as strongly as I did after this statement. Everything he said is correct,' [said](#) Russian foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova. Radosław Sikorski, a former Polish foreign minister and now a member of the European Parliament for the Civic Coalition, called Morawiecki's comments 'criminally stupid.' "....

IS POLAND'S GOVERNMENT SHOOTING ITSELF IN THE FOOT WITH ITS COOLING STANCE ON UKRAINE? (extracts)

Times of Israel, Paul Hockenos, 1/10/2023

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/is-polands-government-shooting-itself-in-the-foot-with-its-cooling-stance-on-ukraine/>

...."Running for reelection, the ruling Law and Justice party is flailing in every direction to keep its populist credibility, but its latest pivot may have far-reaching implications."....

...."A September 21 comment made by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki that Poland will stop arming Ukraine, which he later walked back on, set off alarm bells from Kyiv to Washington. 'The message is not that Poland is pulling its support from Ukraine,' said Konstanty Gebert, a Warsaw-based author and analyst, 'but rather that Ukraine is much too ungrateful toward its colonial benefactor. It should simply accept what it gets from Poland and be thankful.' "....

THE POLISH-UKRAINIAN BOND IS HERE TO STAY (extracts)

Carnegie Europe, Wojciech Kononcz, 3/10/2023

<https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/90686>

...."Poland also remains Ukraine's most loyal ally and has said it will support Kyiv as long as it takes. This is a serious statement that speaks to the bond between the countries. Rather than posturing, Ukraine and Poland should learn how to master the art of tension management that occasionally occurs between neighbors."....

A NEW CRACK IN POLISH-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS POSES RISKS FOR BOTH COUNTRIES (extracts)

Wilson Center, Andrian Prokip, 5/10/2023

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/new-crack-polish-ukrainian-relations-poses-risks-both-countries>

...."Poland and Ukraine have both mounted emotional responses in the grain dispute, even though the problem was predictable and could have been prevented. They will find a way to compromise. The larger question is the fate of the bilateral relationship. Both states will lose if the dispute is allowed to develop further. And Poland will not win if Ukraine loses. As the twentieth-century Polish writer, lawyer, and political activist Jerzy Giedroyc said, 'There can be no free Poland without a free Ukraine.' "....

...."Ukraine and Poland should behave as they did during the late Soviet era when they supported each other's struggle for independence and the Kremlin was the enemy of both. It still is. By working together, Kyiv and Warsaw can [thwart](#) Russia's imperialist dreams."....

POLAND HAS EVERY RIGHT TO PRIORITIZE ITS OWN SECURITY—AND SO DOES THE U.S. (extracts)

The Heritage Foundation, Wilson Beaver, 16/10/2023

<https://www.heritage.org/europe/commentary/poland-has-every-right-prioritize-its-own-security-and-so-does-the-us>

...."There are plenty of wealthy Western European countries that could do much more in Ukraine if they were so inclined, freeing the United States to focus on China. It should not be impossible for the European members of NATO to defeat Russia, as Russia's economy is a mere fraction of Europe's. Yet most of Europe still doesn't meet the 2% of gross domestic product defense spending threshold that NATO members all agreed to almost a decade ago.

It is, therefore, more than a little unfair to direct criticism over insufficient support for Ukraine at Poland—let alone the United States. Poland meets the spending threshold for NATO, has been contributing more to the efforts in Ukraine than many far richer countries, and is already budgeting for building one of the most capable militaries in Europe by the end of this decade.

Supporters of increased weapons shipments to Ukraine have plenty of NATO governments they could criticize. Washington or Warsaw aren't among them."....

25/10/23: DONALD TUSK IS ELECTED PRIME MINISTER OF POLAND

IS POLAND BACK ON TRACK? (extracts)

Chatham House, Melania Parzonka, 23/10/2023

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/10/poland-back-track>

...."But most importantly, the new Polish government needs to reaffirm solidarity with Ukraine. It can assert its role, alongside the UK, in active support in Ukraine's early recovery while capitalizing on pre-existing trilateral security assurances between Poland, Ukraine, and the UK. In doing so Poland may yet emerge, not as a regional superpower, but as a country with modern army and strong and trusted alliances."....

POLAND'S DEMOCRATIC RESURGENCE: FROM BACKSLIDING TO BEACON (extracts)

Subtitle: **Poland's recent elections signify a major shift from democratic backsliding to a recommitment to EU values and democratic principles, with implications for regional stability and U.S. foreign policy.**

American Progress, Robert Benson, 14/11/2023

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/polands-democratic-resurgence-from-backsliding-to-beacon/>

...."The incoming coalition faces substantial challenges in Poland, chiefly restoring judicial independence, ensuring media freedom, and realigning with the European Union's democratic values. Working with, or around, a president aligned with the previous government will undoubtedly prove difficult. Yet defying the odds has become somewhat of a Polish hallmark. Amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and regional democratic backsliding, Poland's potential success in these endeavors could transform it into a standard-bearer of democracy in Europe—a status that appeared elusive just a few short weeks ago."....

...."A future Tusk government also holds the promise of progress in pivotal areas such as migration, climate policy, and EU treaty reform, where Poland has the capacity to act as a pivotal link within the European Union. Additionally, a reinvigorated commitment to democratic principles will bolster U.S. foreign policy objectives, enhancing bilateral and multilateral relationships during a period marked by heightened global strategic rivalry."....

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM POLAND'S NEXT GOVERNMENT (extracts)

Subtitle: **A center-left ruling team is about to replace a conservative one in Warsaw. Expect improved relations with Brussels and Berlin and shifts in many current policies.**

GIS, Matt Boyse, 6/12/2023

<https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/what-to-expect-from-polands-next-government/>

...."However, President Duda has a prominent constitutionally-prescribed role in the transition and is making full use of its possibilities, even as critics consider them unconstructive or 'political theater.' PiS leaders are aware that any divergence from the timeline would arouse widespread protests, not to mention pressure from the EU and other partners.

The incoming government is likely to devote particular attention in its first year to domestic affairs, given the number and complexity of policies it has pledged to modify. The EC and Mr. Tusk are both eager to demonstrate to Polish voters that pro-EU policies generate more benefits for citizens than the EU-skeptical

policies PiS pursued, which increases incentives on both sides to bring about the release of the withheld funds quickly.

Changes in foreign policy will be less immediately tangible for citizens. However, these will also be the incoming government's priority, as a strong EU focus remains central to its identity."....

POLAND'S FOREIGN MINISTER ON CONCERNS THE U.S. WILL ABANDON UKRAINE, EUROPE (extracts)

PBSO News Hour, 19/2/2024

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/polands-foreign-minister-discusses-the-war-in-ukraine>

...."Nick Schifrin:

If Ukraine doesn't get these weapons, should it negotiate an end to the war?

Radoslaw Sikorski:

Well, then it will be U.S. responsibility for having brought that about, for having allowed Putin to abolish a taboo that we established after two bloody World Wars, that you may not change borders by force. It would then get noticed by dictators and aggressors around the world that, yes, the West will huff and puff, the America will — America will encourage to fight, but when it comes — when push comes to shove, you can get away with it. And that would then be a very costly proposition."....

POLAND HAS OPENED ITS ARMS TO NEARLY 1 MILLION UKRAINIAN REFUGEES, BUT WILL THEY BE ABLE TO STAY FOR THE LONG TERM? (extracts)

The Conversation, Sergei Grits, 27/2/2024

<https://theconversation.com/poland-has-opened-its-arms-to-nearly-1-million-ukrainian-refugees-but-will-they-be-able-to-stay-for-the-long-term-219481>

...."According to the European Union, around [4.2 million Ukrainians](#) currently receive temporary protection in EU countries, which entitles them to residence permits, working rights and access to health care and education.

The largest number are in Germany, where 1.2 million Ukrainians were living as of November 2023. Surprisingly, the second-largest number of refugees (960,000) are in Poland, a country with [no significant history of accepting forced migrants](#)."....

...."How Poland responds to these needs will influence whether Ukrainian refugees feel welcome to stay and further integrate into Polish society, particularly under the newly elected, more liberal Polish government."....

POLAND, THE WAR IN UKRAINE, AND THE PROBLEM OF MORAL REARMAMENT (extracts)

Public Discourse, [Christopher Garbowski](#), 3/3/2024

<https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2024/03/92826/>

.... "In an interview Stawrowski gave a couple of years after he published *Solidarity Means Bonding, AD 2020*, he noted a spectacular rebirth of solidarity after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine: 'The second miracle of solidarity.' He claimed it was analogous to what happened when Solidarity was founded in 1980, with the difference that at the time solidarity spread in the Polish neighborhood, so to speak, while currently it was offered to the neighbors from the other side of the border. Moreover, Poles discovered solidarity among themselves, since the greater part of society had the same stance against the awesome injustice that Ukrainians experienced. He summarized this Polish experience:

Ukrainians escaping from the war entered our ethical world, bringing with them the image of demonic evil—metaphysical evil, that we thought our world had forgotten—and it simultaneously aroused within us deeply hidden levels of good. . . . The theological dimension of these events is extremely deep and I have the impression, that we are witnesses to the actions and struggles of tremendous spiritual powers present in our world."....

WHY PUTIN IS HAUNTED BY THE SPECTRE OF POLISH POWER (extracts)

Engelsberg Ideas, Luka Ivan Jukic, 4/3/2024

<https://engelsbergideas.com/essays/why-putin-is-haunted-by-the-spectre-of-polish-power/>

..."Poland no longer threatens the Triune Russian Nation – no such nation exists – but it does continue to pose the greatest regional threat to Russia's imperial ambitions. Not because of the strength of Polish culture, but because of a new attitude Poles developed in the 20th century that – unlike Russia – has allowed them to make peace with their neighbours and build constructive alliances with nations they once saw as little more than subordinate to their own."....

..."Polish nationalism underwent a fundamental shift in the latter half of the 20th century. It transformed its 'ideal fatherland' from a multiethnic commonwealth under Polish leadership to a narrowly defined Polish nation-state, one it prefers to see surrounded by similarly independent pro-western nation-states."....

UKRAINE'S EUROPEAN ALLIES ARE EITHER BROKE, SMALL OR IRRESOLUTE (extracts)Subtitle: **In search of the perfect partner to derail Russian aggression**

The Economist, 21/3/2024

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2024/03/21/ukraines-european-allies-are-either-broke-small-or-irresolute>

..."Ukraine needs allies that are hefty, big military spenders and decisively on its side. As things stand, countries are either too small to matter, too broke to help or too hesitant to use their power—if not all three. A new approach to meld the 27 countries of the EU into one sizeable and decisive ally is necessary yet elusive."....

Supporters of increased weapons shipments to Ukraine have plenty of NATO governments they could criticize. Washington or Warsaw aren't among them."....

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE SECOND YEAR OF THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

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Introduction

In February 2022, Russian forces started an offensive against Ukraine and gained some rapid advances on the ground. With its regional and global repercussions, this anniversary certainly merits an analysis.

The full-scale invasion of 2022 was a continuation of the conflict that started in 2014 in Crimea and eastern regions of Ukraine, namely Donetsk and Luhansk. In addition to the ethnic Russians living in the area, Sevastopol in Crimea was home to the Russian Black Sea Fleet, which had significant strategic importance for Russia. Following the Euromaidan protests against his rule, the pro-Russian President Yanukovich fled the country. The chairman of the Ukrainian Parliament (*Verkhovna Rada*), Oleksandr Turchynov, served as acting president until the elections. Using the armed groups formed by the ethnic Russians living in the area and Russian military personnel, Russia took control of Crimea. Despite the boycotts from the people and international organizations about its illegality, the Crimean Autonomous Assembly, the legislative body of the autonomous republic, organized a sham referendum to declare independence and join Russia in March 2014 with a 95 percent approval rate. Addressing the Russian State Duma deputies and Federation Council members on March 18, 2014, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin claimed that Crimea was part of Russia and its residents complained about being handed over to Ukraine in 1991 “like a sack of potatoes” while he defended the annexation on the grounds of Ukraine’s violation of the rights of the Russian people:

However, we expected Ukraine to remain our good neighbour, we hoped that Russian citizens and Russian speakers in Ukraine, especially its southeast and Crimea, would live in a friendly, democratic and civilised state that would protect their rights in line with the norms of international law. However, this is not how the situation developed. Time and time again attempts were made to deprive Russians of their historical memory, even of their language

and to subject them to forced assimilation. Moreover, Russians, just as other citizens of Ukraine are suffering from the constant political and state crisis that has been rocking the country for over 20 years.¹

In May 2014, independence referenda were held in Donetsk and Luhansk. This region, known as Donbas, came under Russian control and officially joined Russia in 2022.² Russia has a successful record of taking advantage of ethno-religious conflicts, building spheres of influence, and military intervention (open and covert), as cases of the autonomous regions of Georgia (Abkhazia and Ossetia) show. Following Russia's quick victory against Georgia during the war in 2008, these regions declared their independence, to be recognized by Russia first and a few other countries later. Russian President Dimitri A. Medvedev blamed the Georgian government and leadership for the outcome (unlike the regions of Ukraine, these runaway republics did not join Russia).³ The striking point is that these revisionist moves came after the United States' loss of prestige and credibility with the invasion of Iraq, the deepening rift between the US and its allies worldwide (especially the European Union countries), and the American public's divided stance on the subject and decreasing willingness to be involved in foreign wars became more evident. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center between 2003 and 2008 showed that the percentage of the people who thought the decision to use military force in Iraq was "wrong" rose from 22 percent in March 2003 to 54 percent in February 2008.⁴ On top of that, some domestic and economic issues led the US and EU countries to focus on the domestic arena: in the war against Georgia in 2008, the Great Recession that impacted the national economies for four more years; in 2014, in the annexation of Crimea, the post-recession recovery efforts and the forthcoming presidential elections in the US; and in 2022, in the invasion of Ukraine, the post-COVID19 recovery efforts, the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, inflation, and growing fears about a recession.

¹ "Address by President of the Russian Federation," President of Russia, March 18, 2024.

<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603> .

² Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia held referenda to join Russia, and Russia officially declared its annexation of these four regions on September 30, 2022. "Putin signs annexation of Ukrainian regions as losses mount," Associated Press, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-international-law-donetsk-9fcd11c11936dd700db94ab725f2b7d6> .

³ "Medvedev's Statement on South Ossetia and Abkhazia," *The New York Times*, August 26, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/27/world/europe/27medvedev.html> .

⁴ "Public Attitudes Toward the War in Iraq: 2003-2008," Pew Research Center, March 19, 2008, <https://www.pewresearch.org/2008/03/19/public-attitudes-toward-the-war-in-iraq-20032008/> .

Under these circumstances, Russia started its offensive against Ukraine in February 2022. Given the power asymmetry between the two countries, it was expected that Russia would win a quick victory. However, thanks to the successful Ukrainian resistance, the Russian advance slowed down and occasionally came to a halt. The invasion turned into a prolonged war, with Russia failing to subdue Ukraine.

How did Ukraine survive?

Survival is the utmost aim of states in the international system. Yet, the material power capacity of states, especially military and economic capabilities, determines states' survival capability. Since power is relative, an inseparable part of the equation is the adversary's material power capacity, which leads to either a power symmetry or asymmetry. In the context of the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia, given the power asymmetry between the actors, what factors can explain this prolonged war? How can a relatively weak state, regarding material power capacity, continue fighting against a more powerful state?

Small states are generally examined in the context of material power capacity, and they are considered weak and local actors, rather than global, that fail to develop and follow a 'grand strategy.' As a result, they are regarded as less important members of the international system. On the other hand, despite their relatively limited material power capacity, they may enjoy a disproportional weight in international institutions.⁵In military conflicts, small states can sometimes put up unexpectedly strong resistance against a more powerful enemy and slow or halt the enemy's advance. Shortly after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact) on August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union demanded a territorial exchange and establish a military base in the Finnish territory. When Finland rejected its demands, it attempted to invade Finland on November 30, 1939. Finland successfully defended itself along the Mannerheim Line, stretching over the Karelian Isthmus for a few months. Still, in the end, in February 1940, it had to accept the Soviet demands after its defense lines were breached following

For a critique of the traditional approach to small states in the IR literature, see: Christine Ingebritsen, Iver⁵ Neumann, and Sieglinde Gstöhl, *Small States in International Relations* (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 2006).

a better-organized Russian offensive.⁶ Small states may also have unexpectedly higher capacity in the diplomatic arena to resist great powers' demands; Turkey, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Spain proved this capacity during the Second World War and remained neutral.⁷ The cases of Vietnam and Afghanistan, in which the two superpowers of the Cold War, the United States, and the Soviet Union, respectively, were forced to end the conflict and withdraw, also show that despite the power asymmetry, more powerful actors can be defeated. Below, the specific factors that made Ukraine's survival possible will be discussed:

a) Political leadership.

In a country facing military, economic, political, and humanitarian crises and struggling to survive, a leader's popular support is vital in uniting and mobilizing society for a common purpose, such as waging war. At the beginning of the invasion in 2022, many thought that President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine (elected in 2019), being an actor before going into politics, so inexperienced in government affairs, and facing the destructive power of a former superpower, would flee his country immediately, and as a result, the government organization and armed forces would collapse, and Russia would invade the country swiftly.⁸ So far, President Zelensky has shown strong leadership qualities and maintained public support even if his trustworthiness declined from 90 percent in May 2022 to 77 percent in December 2023.⁹

b) The power of identity

In 2021, Vladimir Putin penned an essay emphasizing the ethnic, religious, cultural, and historical ties between Russians and Ukrainians and their unity:

First of all, I would like to emphasize that the wall that has emerged in recent years between Russia and Ukraine, between the parts of what is essentially the same historical and spiritual space, to my mind is our great common misfortune and tragedy. These are, first and foremost,

See: Eloise Engle and Lauri Paananen, *The Winter War: The Russo-Finnish Conflict, 1939-1940* (New York: Routledge, 1985).

Annette Baker Fox, *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), p.3.

⁸ "Zelensky hastily fled Kiev, Russian State Duma Speaker claims," TASS, February 26, 2022, <https://tass.com/politics/1411855>; Henry E. Hale, and Olga Onuch, "Zelensky's Fight After the War: What Peace Will Mean for Ukraine's Democracy," *Foreign Policy*, July 4, 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/zelenskys-fight-after-war>.

⁹ Nate Ostiller, "Poll: Zelensky tops list as most trusted Ukrainian political figure," *The Kyiv Independent*, December 19, 2023, <https://kyivindependent.com/poll-zelensky-tops-list-as-most-trusted-ukrainian-political-figure/>.

the consequences of our own mistakes made at different periods of time. But these are also the result of deliberate efforts by those forces that have always sought to undermine our unity. The formula they apply has been known from time immemorial – divide and rule. There is nothing new here. Hence the attempts to play on the "national question" and sow discord among people, the overarching goal being to divide and then to pit the parts of a single people against one another.¹⁰

Studies about the role of identity in international relations gained momentum in the 1990s. While the end of the Cold War provided more room for novel approaches, given the decades-long dominance of the Realist IR theory in the discipline, the growing number of conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and Russian Federation required new explanations. For example, Alexander Wendt emphasized the centrality of identity in defining interests.¹¹ Do cultural differences lead to more conflicts? Using quantitative methods, Gartzke and Gleditsch found that the impact of cultural differences in conflicts is exaggerated. Instead, they found that dyads with similar cultures are more conflict-prone: "Dyads where a majority group in one state is the second largest group (minority) in the other state are especially prone to conflict."¹²

In February 2024, American journalist Tucker Carlson had an approximately two-hour interview with President Putin. In the first 20 minutes of the interview, starting with Prince Rurik's arrival in Novgorod in 862 and the emergence of the first Rus state, later regent Oleg's arrival in Kyiv in 882, and the acceptance of Christianity under Prince Vladimir in 988, Putin gave a historical narrative to prove his claim that Ukraine was a historical part of Russia. He blamed the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom and, later in the 19th and 20th centuries, the Austrian Empire's General Staff for promoting a distinct Ukrainian identity for their interests. According to Putin, Stalin wanted Ukraine to be an autonomous republic, but somehow, Lenin made it an independent state, "a state which had never existed before." He pointed out that Soviet Ukraine came to control the territories that Poland and Turks once controlled. After the Second World War, former Hungarian

¹⁰ "Article by Vladimir Putin 'On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians', " President of Russia, July 12, 2021, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181> .

Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, (1992): 391–425, 398.

¹²Erik Gartzke and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Identity and Conflict: Ties that Bind and Differences that Divide," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no.1 (2006):53-87, 76.

and Romanian lands also were given to Ukraine. He then added: “We have every reason to affirm that Ukraine is an artificial state that was shaped at Stalin’s will.” This statement led Carson to ask: “Do you believe Hungary has a right to take its land back from Ukraine and that other nations have a right to go back to their 1654 borders?” Putin’s answer was not satisfactory. He replied: “I am not sure whether they should go back to their 1654 borders. One may say they could claim back those lands of theirs while having no rights to that. It is at least understandable.” This reply triggered another question from Carson: “Have you told Viktor Orban that he can have part of Ukraine?” The answer was negative: “Never, I’ve never told him. Not a single time. But, I actually know for sure that Hungarians who live there wanted to get back to their historical land.” He then went on to share his experiences of a car trip in western Ukraine in the early 1980s and his visit to a town named Beregovoy. According to him, town names were either in Russian or Hungarian, not in Ukrainian. Upon Carlson’s insistence in asking why he decided to move against Ukraine now, not 20 years ago, Putin blamed the Yugoslavian crisis of the 1990s and the Western powers’ attitude against Yugoslavia and subsequent NATO expansions; about the NATO expansions, he commented: “You tricked us.”¹³

This revisionist history is dangerous and can lead to regional insecurity and conflicts. Inadvertently, it reminded me of Adolf Hitler’s demands to annex Czechoslovakia’s Sudetenland region, populated by ethnic Germans. In the name of protecting peace in Europe and finding a peaceful solution to the crisis, Germany, France, Britain, and Italy signed the Munich Treaty (September 29-30, 1938), which required Czechoslovakia to cede Sudetenland to Germany. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had previously met Hitler at Berchtesgaden and discussed the issue. Hitler claimed that 300 Germans were killed in Czechoslovakia, and he, even at the risk of a world war, could not let three million Germans stay outside of the Reich. At this point, according to the minutes of the meeting, Chamberlain intervened:

So I said “Hold on a minute; there is one point on which I want to be clear and I will explain why: you say that the three million Sudeten Germans must be included in the Reich; would you be satisfied with that and is there nothing more that you want? I ask because there are many people who think that is not all; that you wish to dismember Czechoslovakia.” He then launched into a

For the interview video, see: “Vladimir Putin Interview,” Tucker Carlson Network, February 8, 2024, ¹³
<https://tuckercarlson.com/the-vladimir-putin-interview/> .

long speech; he was out for a racial unity and he did not want a lot of Czechs, all he wanted was Sudeten Germans.¹⁴

However, later developments took a different turn. Appeasement did not work, and Sudetenland was not enough for Hitler. On March 16, 1939, he celebrated his victory in Prague as Germany took control of Czechoslovakia and issued a proclamation establishing the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia: “For a thousand years the provinces of Bohemia and Moravia belonged to the *Lebensraum* of the German people.” Hitler admitted his mistake six years later: “In March 1939, for the first time, we put ourselves in the wrong in the eyes of world opinion. No longer were we restricting ourselves to reuniting Germans to the Reich, but were establishing a protectorate over a non-German population.”¹⁵

Besides, identity is something that others cannot dictate. Even though Putin claims there is no Ukrainian nation, and they are all Russians, these people may choose to identify themselves as “Ukrainians,” The way they are fighting against Russian forces, rather than welcoming with flowers, is clear proof that they are not willing to accept this interpretation of history and an imposed identity. As symbols and symbolism gain more importance in politics at times of crisis, even in occupied Mariupol, against the Russian political symbol (Z), Ukrainians are chalking the symbol (ї) in public places, a letter of the Ukrainian script to signify their difference from Russia.¹⁶ Even if cultural affinities exist, identity cannot be the only determinant. Can one expect South Korean (the Republic of Korea) citizens to surrender their state voluntarily to North Korea (the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) despite their enormous differences regarding political systems, individual rights, welfare, and quality of life?

Wars, conflicts, defeats, and tragedies may serve as founding myths for nations or boosters of national identity. In this respect, it can be argued that the current war strengthened the Ukrainian national identity. The Holodomor, with its place in the Ukrainian collective memory, was one of the central themes. Yet, the current war added another element to this collective memory and

¹⁴ “Source 2a: Extracts from the Minute of the conversation between Neville Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler at Berchtesgaden (FO 371/21738),” The National Archives, accessed on September 10, 2024.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/chamberlain-and-hitler/source-2a/> .

Milan Hanauer, *Hitler: A Chronology of His Life and Time* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 142.¹⁵

¹⁶ Sergei Kuznetsov, “In occupied Ukraine, a letter in chalk symbolizes resistance,” *Politico*, September 8, 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-resists-russia-letter-chalk/>.

showed the Ukrainian people that to survive, they have to fight. This, in return, positively contributed to the social mobilization capacity and will to fight.

c) Offshore balancing and military aid

Social mobilization and the will to fight are essential for waging a war. While these factors make recruitment and conscription of troops possible and help maintain their resolve and resilience, waging war requires resources other than human resources. Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) had some disadvantages concerning weapons systems and ammunition. During the fighting in the Donbas area, the Russian Federation Armed Forces (RFAF), fired approximately 20,000 shells a day, while this number was 6,000 for the UAF.¹⁷ To overcome the difficulties, Ukraine used social media and crowdsourcing globally to raise funds to purchase military equipment and to receive humanitarian aid. Combined with the ingenuity of modifying commercial drones and turning them into unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and making them capable of delivering hand grenades or artillery shells over tanks, armored fighting vehicles (AFVs), and infantry units or using relay drones to extend their control range, and thus operation range of drones conducting an attack, the UAF managed to decrease the effect of power imbalance. In addition to other weapons systems (cruise missiles and other missile types), using naval drones or unmanned surface vehicles (USVs), the UAF inflicted heavy damage on the RFAF's Black Sea Fleet despite the very high power imbalance regarding surface vessels. Roughly one-third of the RFAF's Black Sea Fleet was destroyed (the latest, *the Sergey Kotov*, was sunk by an attack of Magura V5 USVs in March 2024).¹⁸ It is evident that developing counter systems against these lethal systems, which are also difficult to identify and destroy, will become a priority for the militaries worldwide.

Resources are scarce, and a war can deplete the conflicting parties' resources. Even Russia, despite its much bigger military complex compared to Ukraine, had to obtain artillery shells from North

Mykhaylo Zabrodskyi, Jack Watling, Oleksandr V Danylyuk and Nick Reynolds, *Preliminary Lessons in* ¹⁷ *Conventional Warfighting from Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: February–July 2022* (London: the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, 2022), 39.

¹⁸ Dinara Khalilova, "These are the most important Russian ships destroyed by Ukraine," *The Kyiv Independent*, January 30, 2024, <https://kyivindependent.com/these-are-most-important-russian-ships-destroyed-by-ukraine/> ; Kateryna Denisova, "Military intelligence: Attack on Russian Sergey Kotov vessel injures at least 27," *The Kyiv Independent*, March 6, 2024, <https://kyivindependent.com/military-intelligence-attack-on-russian-sergey-kotov-vessel-injured-at-least-27-crew-members/> .

Korea, Desert cross all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) from China, and Shahed drones from Iran.¹⁹ For Ukraine, the United States played the role of an offshore balancer.²⁰ In this respect, from February 2022 to December 2023, the US provided various weapons systems, ammunition, and equipment worth \$44 billion.²¹ The European Union (EU) and member states provided Ukraine approximately \$30 billion in military aid.²² It is an undeniable fact that the military aid it received helped Ukraine to survive and continue fighting.

An evaluation of the general situation

Budgets are documents that show countries' priorities. The NATO members failed to enhance their military capabilities despite the experiences of Operation Allied Force in 1999, which made the capability gap with the US more visible.²³ The declining defense budgets and limited capability growth of the NATO members led to the 2 percent and 20 percent rules as part of guidelines in the Wales Summit in 2014 in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Crimea:

- Allies currently meeting the NATO guideline to spend a minimum of 2% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defense will aim to continue to do so. Likewise, Allies spending more than 20% of their defense budgets on major equipment, including related Research & Development, will continue to do so.
- Allies whose current proportion of GDP spent on defense is below this level will:
 - halt any decline in defense expenditure;
 - aim to increase defense expenditure in real terms as GDP grows;

¹⁹ "Russian army snaps up Chinese off-road buggies popular in US," *Financial Times*, December 3, 2023, <https://www.ft.com/content/a1d6fd56-120c-4ce8-9684-738c1376e135>; "North Korea has sent 6,700 containers of munitions to Russia, South Korea says," Reuters, February 27, 2024; "Russia has fired 7,400 missiles, 3,700 Shahed drones in war so far, Kyiv says," Reuters, December 21, 2023; <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-has-fired-7400-missiles-3700-shahed-drones-war-so-far-kyiv-says-2023-12-21/>.

For the definition of the concept, see: John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Case for Offshore²⁰ Balancing," *Foreign Affairs*, July-August 2016: 70-83.

²¹ For a list, see: "U.S. Security Cooperation with Ukraine," U.S. Department of State, December 27, 2023. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-ukraine/>.

²² "EU Assistance to Ukraine (in U.S. Dollars)," Delegation of the European Union to the United States of America, February 22, 2024; https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/united-states-america/eu-assistance-ukraine-us-dollars_en?s=253.

"The NATO capability gap," *Strategic Survey* 100, no.1 (1999): 15-21.²³

- aim to move towards the 2% guideline within a decade with a view to meeting their NATO Capability Targets and filling NATO's capability shortfalls.²⁴

Kenneth Waltz defined the international system as one of self-help, unlike the national system.²⁵ In his view, states may increase their power by internal and external balancing. In internal balancing, states increase their military power or economic capabilities. In external balancing, states ally with other states in the system and form blocs.²⁶ For Waltz, power is not an end itself, and states have more important priorities under the conditions of anarchy:

In anarchy, security is the highest end. Only if survival is assured can states safely seek such other goals as tranquility, profit, and power. Because power is a means and not an end, states prefer to join the weaker of two coalitions. They cannot let power, a possibly useful means, become the end they pursue. The goal the system encourages them to seek is security. Increased power may or may not serve that end.²⁷

States that are relatively weak compared to their neighbors, regional hegemony, or major powers tend to balance against threats. According to Stephen Walt, states balance against threats, and alliances serve this purpose. However, very weak states may bandwagon the emerging power to protect themselves.²⁸ The current war in Ukraine and increasing perception of Russian aggression and revisionism led NATO member states in the Vilnius Summit in July 2023 to modify the two percent rule and a pledge to spend at least two percent annually for their defense budget, replacing the “aim to move towards the 2% guideline within a decade” phrase of 2014.²⁹ Recently, Polish President Andrzej Duda called on NATO members to increase their defense spending to three percent of their GDP.³⁰ The decisions of Finland and Sweden to join NATO (they officially became members in 2023 and 2024, respectively) due to the fears of possible Russian aggression targeting them and leaving their traditional neutrality policies are good examples of external

²⁴ “Wales Summit Declaration,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, September 5, 2014,

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm .

Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979), 104.²⁵

Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 118.²⁶

Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 126.²⁷

Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987),²⁸

²⁹ “What Happened at NATO's Vilnius Summit?,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 14, 2023,

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-happened-natos-vilnius-summit> .

³⁰ “Poland's president calls on NATO allies to raise spending on defense to 3% of GDP,” Associated Press, March 11, 2024,

<https://apnews.com/article/poland-nato-defense-duda-tusk-us-visit-f6d25e41709e9757f7d40ce33add74de> .

balancing against perceived threats. At the same time, countries started to hasten their efforts for internal balancing. While Norway and Sweden introduced female conscription in 2015 and 2017, respectively, Denmark took this step in 2024 and plans to increase the military service duration from four months to eleven months.³¹ Even though the figures are still estimates, Poland's 2023 defense spending has reached 3.9 percent of its GDP, making it the biggest spender with regard to this ratio, followed by the US with 3.49 percent.³² Poland has also signaled its intention to purchase 96 AH-64 Apache helicopters from the US alongside other weapons systems.³³ Moldova, fearing that its breakaway region of Transnistria may call for Russian assistance and it could be the next Ukraine, signed a defense and economic cooperation agreement with France in March 2024 and France is going to establish a military mission in Chisinau.³⁴ Unsurprisingly, the countries fearing to become possible targets of Russian aggression stepped up their internal and external balancing initiatives.

As Ukraine continues to fight Russia, its resources, especially stocks of artillery shells, are depleted. The possibility of a Russian offensive targeting Odesa or Kyiv and the need to hold the front make a continuous flow of military supplies and ammunition a key issue for Ukraine's survival. A new \$61 billion aid package from the US was approved in the Senate, but it faced the Republican Party's opposition in the House of Representatives and failed to pass.³⁵ While this package is part of the political debate, the US Department of Defense announced an aid package of \$300 million in weapons in March 2024.³⁶ Victor Orban, prime minister of Hungary, met former president and Republican Party's candidate in the presidential elections, Donald Trump, and following the meeting, made the following statement: "He will not give a penny in the Ukraine-

³¹ Šejla Ahmetović, "Denmark to begin conscripting women for the military in rare move," *Politico*, March 13, 2024.

"Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2023)," The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, July 7, 2023, ³² https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2023/7/pdf/230707-def-exp-2023-en.pdf .

³³ "Readout of President Biden's Meeting with President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Donald Tusk of Poland," The White House, March 12, 2024, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/03/12/readout-of-president-bidens-meeting-with-president-andrzej-duda-and-prime-minister-donald-tusk-of-poland/> .

³⁴ "Moldova signs defence pact with France amid Russia fears," Reuters, March 7, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/moldova-signs-defence-pact-with-france-amid-russia-fears-2024-03-07/> .

³⁵ "How stalled U.S. aid for Ukraine exemplifies GOP's softening stance on Russia," PBS, February 19, 2024, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/how-stalled-u-s-aid-for-ukraine-exemplifies-gops-softening-stance-on-russia> .

³⁶ "Pentagon will give Ukraine \$300 million in weapons even as it lacks funds to replenish US stockpile," Associated Press, March 12, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-supplemental-war-russia-congress-4aa3731543757156858c2211773a5621> .

Russia war. That is why the war will end.”³⁷According to a survey conducted by PEW, partisan differences over Ukraine aid have widened.³⁸This political deadlock makes the EU’s military aid more essential. However, this requires more investment in the defense industry to increase production levels. By the end of 2023, the EU countries managed to increase their production level to 400,000 rounds (155 mm) a year, but this does not suffice to meet Ukraine’s needs and increase the stockpile. Also, compared to the US, where the armed forces control the production facilities, the private sector’s centrality in the EU countries decreases the flexibility in production and investments.³⁹ To add to the difficulty, there is a lapse of a few years between the start of an investment and production phases, and even after that, a facility will produce around 30,000 rounds annually, while Ukraine may need 200,000 rounds monthly to hold the 1,000 km front, former lieutenant-general Marc Thys from Belgium pointed out:

While European arms-maker KNDS plans to open a new production line for 155 millimeter artillery ammunition in Belgium, it will take two years just to install and set up machinery to build the round casings, let alone begin production.⁴⁰

While the concerns and problems regarding Ukraine’s urgent need for artillery shells continued, Czechia started an initiative that is a good example of small states’ capability to play a regional role disproportionate to their material power capabilities. President Petr Pavel, who previously served as Chief of the General Staff of the Czech Armed Forces, grasped the gravity of the military situation in Ukraine and acted quickly. He identified 800,000 rounds (500,000 rounds of 155 mm and 300,000 rounds of 122 mm type) from other countries and raised funds from 18 countries to purchase them, though the delivery would take some weeks.⁴¹

³⁷ “Trump will not give a penny to Ukraine - Hungary PM Orban,” BBC, March 11, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68533351> .

³⁸ Andy Cerda, “About half of Republicans now say the U.S. is providing too much aid to Ukraine,” Pew Research Center, December 8, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/12/08/about-half-of-republicans-now-say-the-us-is-providing-too-much-aid-to-ukraine/> .

³⁹ Sam Skove, “In race to make artillery shells, US, EU see different results,” Defense One, November 27, 2023, <https://www.defenseone.com/business/2023/11/race-make-artillery-shells-us-eu-see-different-results/392288/> .

⁴⁰ Joshua Posaner and Laura Kayali, “Europe’s arms production is in ‘deep shit,’ says Belgian ex-general,” Politico, February 8, 2024, <https://www.politico.eu/article/europes-arms-production-is-in-deep-shit-says-belgian-ex-general/> .

⁴¹ “Czechs raise funds to buy 800,000 artillery shells for Ukraine,” Politico, March 7, 2024, <https://www.politico.eu/article/czechia-crowdfunds-enough-money-in-eu-and-beyond-to-buy-800000-artillery-shells-for-ukraine/> .

At this point, Vladimir Putin denied the possibility of any negotiations with Ukraine: “For us to negotiate now just because they are running out of ammunition is somewhat ridiculous on our part.”⁴²The following day, Deputy Chairman of Russia’s Security Council Dmitry Medvedev announced a peace formula consisting of seven articles, such as “complete and unconditional surrender of the former ‘Ukraine,’ recognition by a provisional parliament of the former ‘Ukraine’ that its entire territory is the territory of Russia”, and “the UN recognizing that Ukraine has lost its international legal authority.” “Russia’s soft peace formula”, as Medvedev called it, also included forming temporary governing bodies in Ukraine which will arrange the due compensation Ukraine will pay to Russia, recognize that Ukraine is a territory of the Russian Federation, and arrange the formal reunification with Russia to be recognized by the United Nations.⁴³

Germany, led by a coalition government under Chancellor Olaf Schulz, has provided a significant amount of military aid to Ukraine; however, despite the opposition’s willingness and Ukraine’s demands, the ruling coalition has so far refrained from providing Taurus missiles (500 km range) to Ukraine. The German parliament rejected a motion for Taurus missiles on March 14, 2024.⁴⁴

On the same day, France’s President Emmanuel Macron appeared on French TV channels for a live interview. Calling Russia an adversary, Macron changed his policy over Ukraine as he had previously opposed the deployment of French troops in Ukraine. This time, he took a more hawkish stance. After emphasizing that at stake was Europe’s security and credibility, he said it was important for Europe not to draw red lines, which would signal weakness to the Kremlin and encourage it to push on with its invasion of Ukraine.⁴⁵The nature of future French deployment in Ukraine is unknown, but this is a big shift in French policy. France aims to rise to the occasion and lead the EU during this crisis since only with solidarity, coordination, and consensus can a successful Ukraine policy be implemented, and Ukraine can be saved from destruction.

⁴² Yuliya Talmazan, “Russia is ready for nuclear war, Putin warns the West,” NBC News, March 13, 2024, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/russia-ready-nuclear-war-putin-warns-west-rcna143119> .

⁴³ “Medvedev slams ‘brain-dead’ Zelensky formula, proposes abolishing Ukraine,” TASS, March 14, 2024, <https://tass.com/politics/1759529> .

⁴⁴ “Germany’s parliament rejects a new opposition call to send Taurus missiles to Ukraine” Associated Press, March 14, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/germany-ukraine-taurus-missiles-parliament-4be4a844fd60200cb95f44a34b85ac9c> .

⁴⁵ “Macron warns Europe’s security ‘at stake’ after uproar over Ukraine ground troops comment,” France 24, March 14, 2024, <https://www.france24.com/en/france/20240314-%F0%9F%94%B4live-macron-interview-after-uproar-ukraine-ground-troops-comment-france> .

Conclusion

The recent Russian demands for peace would mean eliminating an independent country from the map. Yet, even if Russian demands over Ukraine are accepted, there is no guarantee that Russia will not resort to the same methods and use the presence of Russian ethnic minorities or 'cultural affinity' with the former Soviet republics as a pretext for aggression and political and territorial demands.

Military aid to Ukraine must continue to avoid Ukraine's fall since it would diminish the US, NATO, and EU's credibility, invite further demands from Russia, and open the door for the violation of internationally recognized borders worldwide. In the face of the calls for isolationism both in the US and EU and to avoid involvement, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's reply in a press conference in December 1940 to the critics of the Lend and Lease Agreement and his 'garden hose' metaphor can be instructive today as well, because this fire is viable to spread; yet, the focus must be on distinguishing the fire, not getting the garden hose back:

Well, let me give you an illustration: Suppose my neighbor's home catches fire, and I have a length of garden hose four or five hundred feet away. If he can take my garden hose and connect it up with his hydrant, I may help him to put out his fire. Now, what do I do? I don't say to him before that operation, "Neighbor, my garden hose cost me \$15; you have to pay me \$15 for it." What is the transaction that goes on? I don't want \$15--I want my garden hose back after the fire is over. All right. If it goes through the fire all right, intact, without any damage to it, he gives it back to me and thanks me very much for the use of it. But suppose it gets smashed up--holes in it--during the fire; we don't have to have too much formality about it, but I say to him, "I was glad to lend you that hose; I see I can't use it any more, it's all smashed up." He says, "How many feet of it were there?" I tell him, "There were 150 feet of it." He says, "All right, I will replace it." Now, if I get a nice garden hose back, I am in pretty good shape.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ "Franklin Roosevelt's Press Conference, December 17, 1940," Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/odllpc2.html> .

PARTITION OF UKRAINE. NO SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE

'Eugeniusz Romer' Program of Polish Studies, John Karkazis

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373830592_'EUGENIUSZ_ROMER'_PROGRAM_OF_POLISH_STUDIES

In 28/7/2023 Andrew Korybko's Newsletter published an article under the title "**HERE'S HOW POLAND IS SLYLY TAKING CONTROL OF WESTERN UKRAINE**"^[10]. The author at the beginning focuses on Warsaw's great efforts to help Ukraine in the military and the economic front paying special attention to the Polish-Ukrainian development cooperation and reconstruction plans. In the above context the author writes following:

[10] <https://korybko.substack.com/p/heres-how-poland-is-slyly-taking>

"Poland's Plenipotentiary for Polish-Ukrainian Development Cooperation Jadwiga Emilewicz opened Warsaw's first 'Ukraine Reconstruction Service' (URS) office in Lvov on 17 July in an event that attracted scant international media attention outside of those two countries. URS' activities in these parts of Western Ukraine that most Poles still consider to be an inextricable part of their millennium-old civilization are the natural outgrowth of two interconnected developments from May 2022. Polish President Andrzej Duda visited Kiev and spoke at the Rada (Supreme Council of Ukraine) on the 22nd of that month, during which time he and his Ukrainian counterpart Vladimir Zelensky pledged to accelerate their countries' comprehensive integration".

Regarding **joint integration plans** the author reports the following:

- "Meanwhile, Zelensky said that they'll create a joint border and customs control. He also declared that Kiev will give Poles practically the same rights in his country as Ukrainians have. Additionally, Duda's remarks about how 'The Polish-Ukrainian border should unite, not divide' and Zelensky's about how 'there should be no borders or barriers between us' strongly suggested the intent to eventually merge into a de facto confederation as was assessed in this analysis at the time here".

Regarding Poland's **military aid and security guarantee demands** for Ukraine the author gives the following information:

- "The security aspect of these plans is also moving forward. The Polish Finance Minister announced in March of this year that Warsaw gave Ukraine around €6.2 billion worth of military aid in 2022, which made Poland the third-largest state-level financier of the NATO-Russian proxy war there. Reports about Polish mercenaries fighting for Kiev have also circulated since the start of Russia's special operation, and the 'Polish Volunteer Corps' even took credit for a raid into Russia's Belgorod Region in May".

- "Poland's repeated calls for 'security guarantees' for Ukraine could serve as the tripwire for it to formally deploy its conventional forces there in the event that such are extended, whether multilaterally via Warsaw's participation in this scheme or bilaterally with Kiev, even if the latter is reached in secret. Politico's report last November about Poland's unprecedented military buildup suggests that it's planning to have the excess capacity required for a large-scale foreign deployment sometime in the future".

Regarding **Poland's defense plans and military buildup** the author writes:

- "Of pertinence, its defense spending will be raised to 5% of GDP, it'll have 300,000 active troops by 2035, and it's buying billions in modern equipment from the US and South Korea. Russian Foreign Intelligence Service chief Sergey Naryshkin warned about Poland's military buildup near the Ukrainian border on 21 July during a Security Council meeting whose English-language transcript can be read in full at the official Kremlin website here. 'Putin Exposed Poland's Regional Plans In An Attempt To Deter Them', but he also

said that 'If [Kiev] want[s] to relinquish or sell off something (to Poland) in order to pay their bosses, as traitors usually do, that's their business. We will not interfere'".

Finally the author makes the following concluding remarks:

- "As it presently stands, Poland has already slyly taken control of Western Ukraine without having to fire a shot. Its political power was cemented last summer after the Rada granted Poles practically the same rights as Ukrainians in accordance with the promise that Zelensky made to Duda in May 2022, while the economic aspect was advanced through mid-July's opening of the first URA office in Lvov. With these concerns in mind, which have very serious political and even latent security implications, the scenario of one day formalizing the currently de facto Polish-Ukrainian confederation is much more realistic than Warsaw biting off the western part of that former Soviet Republic".

On the issue of Poland's designs for western Ukraine TASS reported in 7/7/2023 the following in an article under the title **"POLAND'S DESIGNS ON WESTERN UKRAINE ENDANGER EUROPE, SVR CHIEF CAUTIONS"**^[11]:

[11] <https://tass.com/politics/1477001>

- "The Director of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) Sergey Naryshkin told journalists on Thursday. 'This (Poland's plans - TASS) is dangerous for Ukraine and for all of Europe. The thing is that there are quite a few locations on the European continent where neighbors are silently interested in the territories of adjacent states. So if Poland opens this Pandora's box, there will be hell to pay,' the intelligence chief said following a joint session of the boards of the SVR and the Belarusian State Security Committee".

- "Earlier, Secretary of Russia's Security Council Nikolay Patrushev noted that Kiev's Western partners have 'special plans' for Ukrainian lands. According to him, Poland, by all appearances, has already started to make moves on occupying western Ukrainian territories".

In 7/12/2022 Stanislav Kuvaldin, a journalist and historian, published in Carnegie Endowment for International Peace a study under the title **"WHY RUSSIA KEEPS INSISTING THAT POLAND IS PREPARING TO PARTITION UKRAINE"**^[12]. The key points of this study are the following:

[12] <https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88585>

- "In the Kremlin's twisted logic, Ukraine is an artificial construct, and only Russia—as the successor of the country that once granted Ukraine its current borders by seizing land from its neighbors—can now ensure the inviolability of Ukraine's western territories".

- "The Russian leadership has repeatedly made the outlandish claim that Poland is preparing to annex territories in western Ukraine. Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) director Sergei Naryshkin recently made this assertion, and he was not the first to do so. Over the past months, Russian President Vladimir Putin several times stated that the idea of absorbing Ukraine is still alive and well in Poland, while Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev warned that Warsaw 'is already making moves to seize western Ukrainian territories' ".

- "Starting with his February 21, 2022, address recognizing the independence of the so-called Luhansk and Donetsk people's republics, Putin has referred to western Ukrainian territories exclusively as land 'seized and transferred' from Poland, Hungary, and Romania".

- "The Kremlin's logic appears to stem from its thesis about the 'artificial' nature of Ukrainian statehood. If Ukraine was "constructed" by Lenin in 1918, as Moscow now insists, then it can be just as easily and legitimately "deconstructed": its neighbors have the right to claim Ukrainian territory, which Russia will not oppose. Indeed, it has already made a head start by declaring the annexation of four Ukrainian regions in September".

In 12/7/2023 Al Jazeera published an article titled **"TOP RUSSIAN OFFICIAL SAYS POLAND WANTS TO SEIZE PARTS OF UKRAINE"**^[13].

[13] <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/11/top-russian-official-says-poland-wants-to-seize-parts-of-ukraine>

The article reports among other the following:

- "In an interview with Al Jazeera on Tuesday, Russian foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said: 'There is now an obvious desire of Poland to invade the western part of Ukraine. This is why Ukraine is not invited to NATO' ".

- "NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg has promised the alliance will send a 'clear, united and positive message' on Ukraine's potential membership, but those comments were not strong enough to satisfy Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who said it was "absurd" that a timeline for joining the alliance was not set".

- "While most members back Ukrainian membership in the long term, some countries, such as the United States and Germany, have said Kyiv's application can only be seriously considered after the war ends because any moves before that would risk a direct confrontation between NATO and Russia".

In 24/1/2023 First Post published an article under the title **"POLAND CONSIDERED PARTITIONING UKRAINE, SAYS FORMER POLISH FOREIGN MINISTER"**^[14].

[14] <https://www.firstpost.com/world/poland-considered-partitioning-ukraine-says-former-polish-foreign-minister-12038982.html>

The article reported the following:

- "Former Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski has said that the government in Warsaw considered partitioning Ukraine in the first weeks of the military conflict between Kiev and Moscow....His comments drew a strong retort from the Poland Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki who accused Sikorski of behaving 'like a Russian propagandist' ".

- "In April last year, Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) chief Sergei Naryshkin said that the US and Poland were plotting to gain a sphere of influence in Ukraine, insinuating that the war could end with the forced partition of Ukraine between the West and Russia".

- "The US was discussing with Poland a plan under which Polish 'peacekeeping' forces without a NATO mandate would enter parts of western Ukraine where the chance of confronting Russian forces was low, the statement added".

In 30/10/2014 Edward Lucas published an article in Politico titled **"PUTIN DOES THINK ABOUT PARTITIONING UKRAINE"**^[15].

[15] <https://www.politico.eu/article/putin-does-think-about-partitioning-ukraine/>

Regarding the revelations of the former foreign minister of Poland Radek Sikorski the author reports the following:

"So I was not surprised by the recent article^[15a] by Ben Judah in Politico, quoting among others Radek Sikorski, the former foreign minister of Poland, who is now speaker of the Sejm, the Polish parliament (full disclosure: both men are friends of mine). Sikorski described Putin telling the then Polish prime minister, Donald Tusk, at a meeting in Moscow that: 'Ukraine is an artificial country and that Lwów is a Polish city [...] why don't we just sort it out together? Luckily Tusk didn't answer. He knew he was being recorded'

[15a] http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/10/vladimir-putins-coup-112025_Page3.html

In 19/9/2022, Andrei Chirilease published an article in Romania Insider titled **"FORMER ROMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MAKES CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENT ON UKRAINE'S 'ARTIFICIAL' BORDERS"**^[16].

[16] <https://www.romania-insider.com/user/andreich>

The author of the article reported the following:

- "Andrei Marga, former minister of foreign affairs and education, also head of the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca (but with no political involvement at this moment), made striking statements apparently in support of Russia's rhetoric against Ukraine on the occasion of the launch of his book 'The Fate of Democracy' at the Alba Transilvana Book Fair. He spoke about the 'artificial' borders of Ukraine, which should cede more territories to Russia, Hungary, Poland and Romania. 'It must cede territories: Transcarpathia to Hungary, Galicia to Poland, Bucovina to Romania and Donbas and Crimea to Russia. They are the territories of other countries,' he stated, according to Hotnews.ro^[16a] ".

[16a] https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-razboi_ucraina-25794870-video-fost-ministru-roman-externe-sustine-dezmembraea-ucrainei-trebuie-cedeze-rusiei-donbasul-crimeea-bucovina-catre-romania.htm

- "Romania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that such comments are unacceptable and breach Romania's official position^[16b]".

[16b] https://www.mae.ro/node/59631?mc_cid=921760a32e&mc_eid=cd1f92f96c

- "Russia accuses Romania of secretly shipping weapons to Ukraine^[16c]".

[16c] <https://www.romania-insider.com/russia-romania-secretly-shipping-weapons-ukraine>

In 24/2/2023 Fact Check, a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, published a study of Vanessa Nikolova, a Bulgarian writer and journalist, titled **"THE DISINFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTITION OF UKRAINE"**^[17].

[17] <https://factcheck.bg/en/the-disinformation-about-the-partition-of-ukraine/>

At the beginning of the study the author presented the following main contradictory and even mutually exclusive claims that are propagated insistently and simultaneously by the Kremlin:

"Poland, Hungary and Romania want to divide the territory of Ukraine. NATO supports these demands, and Russia is the sole guarantee of Ukraine's survival. At the same time, Ukraine has no historical right to exist as a state and has not even 'registered' its borders with the UN".

The author, next, reported that former Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski, in an interview with Politico magazine, claimed that "as early as 2008-2009, Russian President Vladimir Putin raised the topic of dividing Ukraine in meetings". She also reported that in 2014 "The then deputy speaker of the State Duma and leader of the Liberal Democratic Party to Poland, Romania and Hungary with a proposal to divide the Ukrainian territories. Zhirinovskiy's offer was not taken seriously by any of those countries". Nikolova revealed also that "Russian sites and Russian social media profiles are actively sharing various maps depicting the possible partition of Ukrainian lands. Poland is the most accused of such plans, whereas Hungary and Romania are being pointed out to a lesser extent".

The author presented the following disinformation incidents regarding partition of Ukraine:

- February 2022: "When Putin recognized the independence of the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics, he referred to Ukraine's post-1939 borders as the historical' territories of its neighboring countries. In fact, we are talking about lands acquired by the mentioned countries only after the end of the First World War. The process of redrawing the borders ended partially with the end of World War II [17a].

[17a] <https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88585>

- May 2022: "Medvedev 'warned' of Warsaw's aim to reclaim historical lands from Ukraine".

- July 2022: "Medvedev shared a map on his Telegram channel, which he said was made by Western experts and presented the prepared future territorial division of Ukraine".
- March 2022: "Just a month after the start of the war, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko talked about the "plans" of Poland and NATO to return Ukraine's borders to their pre-1939 form"^[17b].
[17b] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/lukashenko-accuses-west-attempting-dismember-ukraine-2022-05-23/>
- March 23, 2022: "According to an article Polish politician and leader of the right-wing conservative party 'Law and Justice' Jaroslaw Kaczynski stated that it is necessary to send a NATO peacekeeping mission to Ukraine. And this, according to the article, proves the existence of the plan and the Alliance's support for its implementation. In the same article, it is claimed that military equipment has been accumulated along the Romanian-Ukrainian border, with which Romania intends to invade Ukraine and take its 'share'".
- January 2023: "Laszlo Toroczkai, founder of the movement 'Our Homeland', defined by Hungarian media as far-right, congratulated Poland on its independence day with the following message on Twitter: 'God bless Poland! Let's meet again at the Polish-Hungarian border!' The congratulation was accompanied by a black-and-white photo of Polish and Hungarian border guards shaking hands at the Uzhok pass"^[17c].
[17c] <https://hungarytoday.hu/brand-new-far-right-party-emerges-from-the-ashes-of-jobbik/>

According to the autor there is also a Bulgarian contribution to the repertoire of claims against Ukraine – for example, that there are originally Bulgarian lands in Ukraine that should become autonomous regions or belong to Bulgaria, or that Ukrainians are Bulgarians.

- February 2022: "Two days after the Russian attack on Ukraine, on February 26,2022, in the program 'Benovska pita', the chairman of 'Vazrazhdane' Kostadin Kostadinov expresses the opinion that there should be a Bulgarian autonomous region in Ukraine:
'We have two territories that are densely populated with Bulgarians, the greater part is in the southern part of Odesa region, Bessarabia, or Southern Bessarabia. And the smaller part are the Bulgarians in Tavriya, the Azov region, around Mariupol. Will we have our own Bulgarian autonomous region there? Or it, because together with the Bulgarians an overwhelming majority of Russians live there, it will be included in one part, let's say, of Novorussia, which will be created in the belt from Odessa to Kharkiv, that will depend only and only on us. But will we have statesmen to ask this question? I'm telling you now – no. And this will be another act of national treason.' "

Finally, Vanessa Nikolova reports at this point the following:

"According to the 2001 census in Ukraine, in the mentioned Odesa region, Ukrainians are 1.5 million people or 62.8% of the entire population of the region. Russians reach 508 thousand or 20.7%, and Bulgarians – 150 thousand or 6.1%. Although some settlements in the region are densely populated with Bulgarians, their number is nevertheless insignificant against the background of the ethnic distribution in the entire Odesa region. Another 50,000 ethnic Bulgarians live in the rest of Ukraine, according to the 2001 census".

In 15/5/201 Andrew Gardner published an article titled "**ORBÁN TO UKRAINE: GIVE HUNGARIANS AUTONOMY in POLITICO**"^[18]. The author reports that, "In an address to the Hungarian parliament on the eve of referendums in eastern Ukraine that led to ethnic-Russian separatists declaring independence from Ukraine, Orban said that ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine 'must be granted dual citizenship, must enjoy all of the community rights and must be granted the opportunity for autonomy'. The Hungarian prime minister added that 'The Hungarian issue is a European issue. Border changes in the wake of the First World War left 2.5 million Hungarians outside the borders of the vestigial Hungarian state that emerged from the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian empire' "

[18] <https://www.politico.eu/article/orban-to-ukraine-give-hungarians-autonomy/>

THE NORTH EASTERN QUESTION - THE POLES

Georgios Poukamissas*¹

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The N.E. Question is about the geopolitical condition of Poland, sandwiched between Russia, Prussia and Austria in the late 18th century, divided from 1795 to 1918 between these empires, with the lion's share going to the Tsardom of Russia, again sandwiched 1919 to 1939, and more so when transferred westwards as a result of the WW II. Poland lost large territories around Lviv (Lvov, Lemberg) and was compensated to the west with historic German lands, namely East Prussia, Dantzig (Gdansk), Pommerania, Silesia. Yet, after the re-unification of Germany (1990) Poland feels again uneasy; to the west a strengthening Germany, to the east Russia, Belarus and a Russian-friendly initially, mainly Orthodox, Ukraine. Traditionally pro-polish France and an enlightened Germany under Helmut Kohl endeavored to accommodate history grown, justified concerns of Warsaw. They set up the Triangle of Weimar (1991), sort of unspoken guarantee of Poland's security and territorial integrity, in the way of its NATO and EU accession. This was never enough. Polish Diaspora worked for anchoring Poland to the US under the guidance of Zbigniew Brzezinski, sidelining both Paris and Berlin.

The prospect of deepening ties among the Franco-German tandem and the Russian Federation was a constant nightmare for Polish people. Energy links, the backbone of co operation between Russia and geographical western Europe, became an anathema to the national minded circles in Warsaw. They revisited the "Intermarium" of the inter war era, a loose, swallow geo political project of their historic leader marshal Pilsudski, in their angst to create geopolitical breathing space between weimar/nazi Germany and Soviet stalinist Russia. Thus, they devised, not to the enthusiasm of Brussels EU, the so called Three Seas Initiative (2015), encompassing all the formerly communist Eastern European countries -in the meantime members of NATO and the EU- plus the legally neutral Austria. In the wake of this, they neglected the Weimar Triangle and became receptive to the idea that Poland is bound to become the new leading EU country. They

relied excessively on Washington to the point that former and current Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski celebrated the destruction of the sea bottom gas pipeline Nord Stream I and II, September 2022. But Russia, after 2014 and even after its wholesale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, unsurprisingly has so far exhibited resilience and endurance, while Ukraine, deprived of geopolitical compass, its expanses having being a millenary apple of discord between Poland/Lithuania and the Tsardom, is being hard pounded. Now, a new realism seems to be dawning in Warsaw, notably after the pro European political forces under Prime Minister Donald Tusk regained power; the sleeping beauty of Weimar triangle was called back to life. The three countries met at Foreign Minister s level in Paris, a month ago. The summit of Berlin involving Macron-Scholz-Tusk (15.03.2024) after prolonged indifference by Warsaw, signifies a return to European political and geopolitical pragmatism. Admittedly, even without re-election of Donald Trump in November 2024, prudence requires a better calibrated policy of Poland between its European allies, partners and neighbors on the one hand and the Anglo-saxon allies on the other.

