

REINFORCING THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT FOR THE SAKE OF UKRAINE'S VICTORY

The year 2022 has been the hardest in the history of independent Ukraine. Russia's full-scale aggression has become an existential challenge for the country, its institutions, and every Ukrainian man and woman. Likewise, it has been the most difficult year for Ukrainian diplomacy. At the same time, it has revealed the extraordinary bravery, courage, and resilience of Ukrainians, who have stood up in defence of their country. Therefore, this has also been a year of stellar historic achievements.

It is in the times of greatest challenges that we get the chance to discover ourselves for who we truly are and reveal our true potential and will to fight and prevail. Ukrainians have demonstrated that no foe can ever possibly crush us. Ukraine's victory on the military and diplomatic frontlines is inevitable. It is the only conceivable outcome of the presently unfolding scenario.

As Ukraine found itself amid its darkest times, the diplomatic team of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy ensured unprecedented international support for Ukraine and serious pressure on Russia. It rallied the world around the goal of achieving our victory and defending the UN Charter.

Ensuring potent military aid to Ukraine from allies has been the top priority of our military diplomacy. It is thanks to the teamwork at all levels, including that of the Head of State, Office of the President, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Infrastructure, Defence Intelligence, and Foreign Intelligence Service that we were able to attain considerable results in acquiring cutting-edge equipment, weapons, and ammunition from our international partners. We perform this work daily, turning 'no' into 'yes' in the key capitals and overcoming one psychological barrier after another. That is how we implemented the retrofit of our army with NATO-standard weapons, procured multiple launch rocket systems, and accomplished other important milestones. We are doing our utmost to make sure that our warriors have all the weapons they need to liberate our lands. We are also working on developing Ukraine's own military-industrial complex, involving foreign partners and their technology. It is important to bolster the capabilities of our own defence complex as well as import weapons to Ukraine.

Modern arms are not just saving Ukrainian lives and allowing us to defend our soil; they are dramatically transforming the strategic situation and the logic

of this war. Having seized the initiative, the Ukrainian army liberated thousands of square kilometres of our land within mere weeks and is now getting ready to liberate the rest.

We continue relaying the key message to our allies: unless Russian aggression suffers definitive defeat, no country will know security. Indeed, on 24 February, Putin did not just assault Ukraine; he assaulted European and global stability and security, and assailed the fundamental principles of the UN Charter.

More weapons, more sanctions against the terrorist state, more financial aid – all these words stand for more than just our work's creed. They represent the results, which our president's diplomatic team is delivering at this very moment.

Upon the instructions of the Head of State, Ukrainian diplomats are pressing for the decisions vital to Ukraine. Gradually, this work has allowed us to transform the stances of our allies and nominally neutral countries, find common ground, and outline shared benefits and interests.

That is exactly what the art of diplomacy entails. It is about performing the most difficult tasks and protecting the national interests of Ukraine in all corners of the world. Not just to 'be friends against', but to forge a proactive partnership, which would strengthen both Ukraine and our friends.

In the early days of the war, the diplomatic frontline became a genuine battlefield in the struggle for Ukraine. During the early days, our international partners even hesitated to cut off Russian banks from the SWIFT payment system. What we have today are the unprecedented sanctions against Russia, efficacious solidarity of our Euro-Atlantic partners, total isolation of the terrorist state from the greater world, and crucial restrictions on Russian energy sources. This list is far from exhaustive.

We are systemically narrowing the range of options available to Moscow and starving Russia of financial assets and tools needed to sustain the aggression. Ukrainian diplomats will continue ramping up the pressure on the enemy until the terrorist state is defeated.

Owing to the heroism and courage of the people of Ukraine, I am confident that the war will end in Ukraine's victory and the liberation of our people as well as our territory within its internationally recognised borders. On the diplomatic level, we perform result-oriented work daily to reinforce the de-occupation efforts. We do not tire of convincing our partners that Ukraine's victory remains in everybody's best interest and that the support to our country is not charity but the soundest investment into their national and regional security.

On 24 February, Russia turned its aggression against Ukraine into the largest war in Europe since World War II. The full-scale onslaught of the Russian invaders was a testament to the fragility of the global security institutions, which had failed to contain the aggressor. Ukraine, together with other responsible countries, seeks to fill the void of leadership for the sake of stability and peace. We are leading and

consolidating the entire democratic community towards addressing our shared security challenges, defending freedom, stability, and normal living on both sides of the Atlantic and on every continent.

It is crucial not to just stop at consistently responding to Russia's crimes and attempts at escalation stemming from the Kremlin authorities but to develop a joint strategy and a new security apparatus and start taking decisive and proactive action. Ukraine is adamant about the need to build an effective global security architecture, founded on respect for international security and strict security guarantees, not declarations. Our country is ready to spearhead such processes in the global dimension.

The mission of Ukraine, and of our diplomacy, is to continue rallying the world in its resistance against terrorist Russia and other revisionists. This runs parallel to the vital interests of the absolute majority of sovereign countries, which respect the UN Charter. Just as normal and stable life in every corner of our planet depends on the consolidation of the global community, so does the future of the global order and democracy. The alternative would be a global regress to the state of 'war of all against all' and multi-level crisis across continents.

While the mission of Ukraine as a leader is an ambitious undertaking, during the year of the dreadful war we have proved countless times that nothing is impossible for Ukrainians. Ukraine's new global role also requires a new quality from our foreign policy, which must be truly global in scope.

We are consistently conveying to our African, Asian, and Latin American partners that Russia threatens the whole world, stability and welfare of people across different regions. Moscow has already weaponised energy sources and grain and resorted to blackmailing dozens of countries with famine and cold dwellings. One would be hard-pressed to find a better strategy for countering these threats than fully committing to supporting Ukraine and allowing us to vanquish the aggressor and deprive it of the means of further blackmail.

Ukrainian diplomacy is broadening the international coalition of our country's supporters, whilst also strengthening Ukraine's standing in the Global South as part of our long-term course of opening up new horizons. The proactive work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already yielded results. Suffice it to recall the historic vote for the resolution titled 'Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations'.

A record 143 countries voted in favour. Among them there were many African and Asian states, which had by then reversed their stance and are now gradually moving away from the policy of unconditional neutrality. All African countries, which I visited in October as part of the first Africa tour of the Head of the MFA in the history of Ukraine's diplomacy, supported our country as well. We are opening new opportunities for Ukrainian businesses and citizens beyond the Euro-Atlantic

scene. In doing so, we are proactively defending Ukraine's standing because our interests are in all regions: Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Ukrainian diplomats are also actively countering Russia's commitment to sowing schism among our Euro-Atlantic allies. The Russian Federation employs all methods in the book, including energy blackmail, belligerent propaganda, and manipulating the rhetoric of 'peaceful negotiations' amidst nuclear threats. However, Ukraine and its allies continue, through well-coordinated efforts, regularly defeating Russian diversions. Our allies have never been as consolidated as they are now. The democratic world shares Ukraine's vision of victory, which entails the complete restoration of the territorial integrity of our country. Our strategic partners are ready to support Ukraine for as long as it takes us to win.

Even amid the war, Ukrainian diplomacy has maintained its strategic perspective. We are actively shaping the future of the region, as well as that of the international order in which Ukraine shall take a worthy place and play a crucial role in the global arena. This is evident from the success of the Crimean Platform. Within the first year of its existence, it united the community of Ukraine's truest friends, who support our country at all levels: heads of state and government, ministers, parliaments, and experts. Its membership and scope of representation even continue to increase despite the full-scale war; therefore, I believe that with such global support we will certainly fulfil the goal of the Crimean Platform – the full de-occupation of the Ukrainian peninsula.

Ukraine has achieved historic feats on its path towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration. It is imperative that Ukraine join the Euro-Atlantic community not as a victim or a beggar but as a dynamic and proactive actor. Our country will reinforce the EU and NATO, strengthen the potential of those alliances, fundamentally alter the global strategic balance, and present it with new perspectives, benefits, and ambitions.

Ukraine's candidate status for EU accession is a historic achievement of 2022. It was the result of the systematic and coordinated work of the president, government, diplomatic corps, and all Ukrainians. Ukraine's EU candidacy used to seem distant and nearly unattainable; and yet we are now advancing further – towards becoming a full-fledged member of the European Union.

On 30 September, Ukraine applied for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Russian aggression urged NATO to reassess its procedure for the accession of new members, as evidenced by the accelerated integration of Sweden and Finland.

Ukraine's application for fast-tracked NATO accession will promote the realisation of the will of the Ukrainian people and give an impetus to the Euro-Atlantic integration of our country. Ukraine is not just ready; it already is a responsible contributor to the Euro-Atlantic security system. Ukraine's NATO membership is just as inevitable as our victory in this war for freedom.

Nevertheless, even accelerated NATO accession requires time. That is precisely why the International Group co-chaired by Andrii Yermak, Head of the Office of the President, and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO Secretary-General in 2009–14, has developed the draft Kyiv Security Treaty. We have already introduced Ukraine's strategic allies and potential security guarantors to it. The initiative will serve as a potent framework of security guarantees for Ukraine pending our country's NATO membership, whilst also accelerating the process of NATO accession itself.

Ukraine is now at the forefront of global processes. Strategic thinking, proactivity, and patriotism have turned Ukrainian diplomacy into a robust instrument of safeguarding the interests of the Ukrainian state, businesses, and citizens. As to our military successes and capable foreign policy, they have proven that today's Ukraine in the international arena is a powerful state and a distinct entity.