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Biden to hold talks with Zelenskyy after voicing opposition to Ukraine joining NATO

While Kyiv vows to increase use of drones



Office of the President of Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (right) walks with U.S. President Joe Biden at the White House on September 21, 2023.

RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service

U.S. President Joe Biden will meet with his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, during a trip to France this week to seek ways to further support Kyiv in its fight against Russia's unprovoked invasion, though not with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership reassurance that Ukraine is seeking.

The White House said the two leaders will meet some time during commemorations of the 80th anniversary of the Allied landings in Normandy during World War II.

Mr. Biden, who arrived in France on June 5, was scheduled to visit the beaches of

Normandy on June 6 and the cemetery where rows of graves of U.S. soldiers who died in the battle are marked by white headstones.

Mr. Biden was also scheduled to speak on June 7 at Pointe du Hoc, a spot on the French coast where U.S. Army Rangers scaled sea-side cliffs to overcome Nazi defenses.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Mr. Biden will stress how “the dangers of isolationism, and how if we bow to dictators ... they keep going and ultimately America and the world pays a greater price.”

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‘We will not walk away from Ukraine,’ Biden pledges at D-Day commemoration

U.S. vice president to attend Ukraine peace summit in Switzerland



Office of the President of Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (second from the right) and French President Emmanuel Macron (right) were joined by French First Lady and Ukrainian First Lady Olena Zelenska during a ceremony honoring the dwindling number of surviving World War II veterans in Colleville-sur-Mer on June 6.

RFE/RL and RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service

U.S. President Joe Biden, marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day, said the free world stands with Ukraine and won't cave in to Russian aggression, drawing a parallel with the Allies' fight to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany's subjugation in World War II.

The United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) “will not walk away” and abandon Ukraine, Mr. Biden said in a speech at commemorations in Normandy on June 6 to mark the anniversary of the 1944 Allied landing in Normandy, a turning point that contributed decisively to

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Zelenskyy greeted with applause in France on D-Day anniversary

As Russia advances along four axes, Kharkiv offensive stalls

by Mark Raczkiewicz

CHICAGO – Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was met with applause and ovations as he arrived in France on June 6 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day when Allied forces launched the world's biggest amphibious invasion during World War II.

When asked in English by a journalist from the France 3 television broadcaster if he would like a similar “landing” in Ukraine, Mr. Zelenskyy said, “I hope so” after being greeted by his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron.

Afterward, the Ukrainian president met with a wheelchair-bound U.S. veteran who told him he is “a savior to your people,” to which Mr. Zelenskyy replied, “No, no, you

saved Europe,” referring to Nazi Germany's attempt to conquer all of Europe.

U.S. President Joe Biden arrived the previous day and gave interviews to U.S. journalists ahead of his scheduled talk with Mr. Zelenskyy amid Russia's ongoing war on Ukraine, the deadliest on the European continent since World War II.

White House National Security adviser Jake Sullivan told journalists that the two presidents would discuss “how we can continue and deepen our support for Ukraine.”

Mr. Biden reaffirmed his administration's policy change to U.S. journalists during the trip by saying that Kyiv now has limited permission to use weapons provided by Washington to strike targets within

(Continued on page 11)

Zelenskyy's peace summit garners global support amid tensions with China

by Roman Tymotsko

LVIV – More than 100 countries and international organizations will take part in Ukraine's Global Peace Summit set to take place in Burgenstock, Switzerland, on June 15-16.

The summit is expected to address critical issues of nuclear and food security in Ukraine, as well as humanitarian efforts and the return of Ukrainian children abducted by Russia.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's press secretary, Serhiy Nikiforov, said the president met with leaders from several countries during his visit to the Shangri-La Dialogue security forum in Singapore and those leaders confirmed

their participation in the summit.

“107 countries and international organizations have confirmed their participation in the Peace Summit. We are talking about the Philippines, Singapore and Timor-Leste being represented in one form or another. The president of Ukraine met with the leaders of these countries in Singapore and Manila,” Mr. Nikiforov said.

The summit will focus on three critical points of Ukraine's Peace Formula: nuclear security, food security and humanitarian efforts, which include the return of children forcibly taken to Russia, Mr. Zelenskyy said.

“We have taken three points – nuclear

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Moscow's first move against NATO could take place in Norway's Svalbard Archipelago

by Paul Goble
Eurasia Daily Monitor

Given Moscow's bellicose rhetoric about the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and threats to attack one or more of its members if the West continues to support Ukraine, many in Russia and the West have been speculating about where such a Russian move might occur. Most have focused on Poland, the Baltic countries and Finland as possible targets, but perhaps the most likely one is elsewhere: the Svalbard archipelago. Svalbard is part of Norway, a NATO member, but it is demilitarized by the provisions of the 1920 Svalbard Treaty, which has currently been signed by 46 countries, including the United States, Norway and France. Because of that agreement, NATO remains deeply divided as to whether, in the case of a Russian move, all the members of the alliance would want to invoke the provisions of Article 5 of the NATO charter, which requires alliance members to view an attack on one as an attack on all. That division, of which Moscow is well aware, may lead the Kremlin to decide that an attack on Svalbard is less risky than an attack on any

other NATO country.

The Svalbard archipelago, often referred to as Spitsbergen, the largest and only populated island in this group, lies approximately 1,000 kilometers (about 620 miles) northwest of Norway and covers 22,000 square kilometers (about 8,500 square miles) of territory. The island has fewer than 3,500 residents, of whom approximately a fifth are Russians and a handful are Chinese. Because of its isolation, Svalbard was one of the last European territories whose status remained undefined into the 20th century, with various countries, including Norway, Sweden and Russia, using it as a base for shipping and mining and even claiming it as their own. In 1920, however, the Western powers, without Russia's participation, signed a treaty that declared that Norway had sovereignty over the islands but required that Oslo kept the archipelago demilitarized and permitted the development of other national communities, including, most prominently, the Russians (On these unusual arrangements and their consequences, see Christopher R. Rossi, "A Unique International Problem": The

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The Kremlin spells out terms of Ukraine's surrender

Part II

by Vladimir Socor
Eurasia Daily Monitor

Moscow has recently expressed interest in holding talks with Kyiv without clarifying whether such talks would end with a formal "peace" settlement, an informal "ending [pausing] of the war," a formal armistice or an informal suspension of hostilities. The only certainty is that Moscow would use such talks to impose terms amounting to Ukraine's surrender or, failing that, continue offensive military operations and blame this on unreasonable Ukrainian intransigence.

Russia does not need to offer a ceasefire to incentivize Ukraine to enter into talks. On the contrary, Moscow is intensifying its offensive military operations to force Kyiv into talks. But Moscow could very well offer an armistice, were Kyiv to accept the Kremlin's settlement terms. These include demilitarizing Ukraine and turning it into an unprotected neutral state, as discussed in March-May 2022 (a framework agreement was initiated in Istanbul on March 29 of that year – see Eurasia Daily Monitor, March 30, 31, April 4, 5, 2022, for Jamestown coverage). Additionally, Russia seeks Ukrainian acceptance – possibly without official recognition – of Russia's territorial gains achieved (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, May 29).

On May 17, 24 and 28, Russian President Vladimir Putin made three extensive statements proposing to reactivate the talks that broke down in the spring of 2022. Putin blamed Kyiv for repudiating the "Istanbul agreements" (Putin's shorthand for that whole process, in which Istanbul was but a fleeting moment). Putin is factually correct, recalling that Kyiv cast aside those documents and backed out of the negotiations. The Kremlin, however, invokes that fact only to blame Kyiv for the breakdown in negotiations.

Putin made the following points in his

three extensive, though nearly identical, statements (Kremlin.ru, May 17, 24, 28):

Kyiv should bow to Russia's superior military position: "They threw it [the Istanbul process] away; they wanted to prevail on the battlefield, but it did not work out for them. So come back, here are our conditions;"

Talks should take the Istanbul "understandings" as a basis for an agreement. The "realities that are taking shape on the ground (i.e., Russia's subsequent territorial gains) are also a basis for talks as a matter of course;"

Moscow is ready for talks, but Kyiv remains recalcitrant: "We are ready to continue talks on that basis. We never renounced that process; the Ukrainian side did. I said this a thousand times, but it seems that they do not have ears to listen."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has further clarified the scope of Russia's territorial claims at the present stage. Moscow is ready for talks, although "not on the basis of current frontlines, but in order to achieve the goals of the Special Military Operation. These goals are clearly stipulated in Russia's constitution, which establishes the structure [sostav] of the Russian Federation, which includes four new territories" (TASS, May 24). The Kremlin thus reaffirms its claim to Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia and Kherson regions within their pre-war administrative boundaries, as officially incorporated into the Russian Federation's "sostav" and enshrined in its constitution. The current frontlines, however, cut across those Ukrainian provinces and are therefore unsatisfactory to Russia, as Mr. Peskov clearly implies.

Ukraine's Kharkiv province is also a potential Russian territorial claim. Russian forces occupied a large part of that province (without the eponymous city) in the spring of 2022 and installed a Russian mili-

(Continued on page 3)

NEWSBRIEFS

Macron to attend Ukraine peace summit

President Emmanuel Macron will attend a Ukraine peace conference later this month in Switzerland, the French presidential office has confirmed. A spokesman for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Serhiy Nykyforov, said 107 countries and international organizations had confirmed their participation in the June 15-16 summit, at which Ukraine hopes to win broad international backing for its vision of the terms needed to end the war with Russia. The United States will be represented by Vice President Kamala Harris and national security adviser Jake Sullivan. Russia has not been invited. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Zelenskyy holds talks on return of children

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived on June 5 on an official visit to Qatar for talks with the Qatari leader regarding the return of Ukrainian children deported by Russia. Mr. Zelenskyy said Qatar "helps Ukraine return children kidnapped by Russia" and that he planned to hold talks with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani about continuing this work within the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children and a peace summit that is scheduled to take place in Switzerland later this month. Qatar has been actively involved in preparations for the peace summit and is expected to become one of the Middle East's voices for the return of people, global food supplies and nuclear and energy security, Mr. Zelenskyy said on Telegram. He also planned to discuss bilateral economic and general security issues with Mr. Thani. A spokesman for Mr. Zelenskyy, Serhiy Nykyforov, said that 107 countries and international organizations had confirmed their participation in the June 15-16 summit. Mr. Nykyforov said on June 3 that Mr. Zelenskyy recently took part in the Shangri-La Dialogue security forum in Singapore, where he met with the leaders of several countries in the region who subsequently confirmed their participation in the summit. The spokesman also confirmed that three points of Mr. Zelenskyy's peace formula – nuclear safety, food safety and the return of children who have been forcibly taken to Russia – will be emphasized at the summit, and Ukraine expects a dialogue on

these issues. Russia has not been invited to the peace summit. Moscow has said that without its participation the talks will be meaningless. Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has said that any actions regarding Ukraine that "ignore Russia's position" are "detached from reality." The White House announced on June 4 that U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris will represent the United States at the summit. Kyiv on June 5 welcomed the announcement despite having urged President Joe Biden to attend. "It is important news that U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris has been confirmed to participate in the peace summit to be held on June 15-16 in Switzerland," Andriy Yermak, head of the president's office, said in a statement. Mr. Zelenskyy had earlier said that if Mr. Biden did not attend the summit, it would be like "applauding" Russian leader Vladimir Putin. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service, with reporting by AFP and Reuters)

Zelenskyy meets with U.S. lawmakers

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with a delegation of U.S. lawmakers in Singapore on June 1 to discuss further military assistance to Ukraine. Mr. Zelenskyy, who traveled to Singapore for the Shangri-La Dialogue conference, met with the bipartisan group, who are members of the U.S. House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee. "We talked about the frontline situation and military assistance, particularly additional systems and missiles to strengthen our air defense," Mr. Zelenskyy said on the social media platform X, formerly Twitter. "We paid special attention to increasing sanctions against Russia." The press service of the president's office said that the parties discussed "key areas of further military assistance to Ukraine, in particular, in strengthening air defense with additional systems and missiles." The delegation of U.S. lawmakers was led by the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Mike McCall (R-Texas). Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.), the ranking Democrat on the committee, and two other members also met with Mr. Zelenskyy. "The parties noted the importance of allowing Ukraine to use American

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ADMINISTRATION OF THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY AND SVOBODA

Walter Honcharyk, administrator
and advertising manager

(973) 292-9800, ext. 3040
fax: (973) 644-9510
e-mail: advertising@ukrweekly.com

Subscription Department

(973) 292-9800, ext. 3040
e-mail: subscription@ukrweekly.com

UNWLA holds national campaign to raise awareness of plight of Ukrainian children



Marta Fedoriw addresses participants of an ecumenical prayer event at Ukraine House in Washington, D.C.



Ukraine's Ambassador to the U.S. Oksana Markarova (center, left) and Metropolitan Antony of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the U.S.A. (center, right) were among the participants of an ecumenical prayer event in Washington, D.C.



Members of the UNWLA and their guests take part in a national prayer campaign for Ukrainian children in Chicago.

by Anna Berezhnyak

NEW YORK – The Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA) conducted a national campaign, Children Praying for Children, to raise awareness of the impact of the Russian war on children in Ukraine.

On June 1, International Children's Day, the UNWLA organized a national prayer campaign to attract public attention to Ukrainian children who have suffered as a result of Russia's war on Ukraine.

More than 10 UNWLA branches nationwide organized prayer events on June 1. The events took place in various cities in Pennsylvania, Texas, New York, Florida, New Jersey, Connecticut and Washington, D.C.

In Washington, D.C., the UNWLA, in cooperation with the Embassy of Ukraine

in the U.S.A., organized an ecumenical prayer event at Ukraine House. The prayer was led by leaders of religious congregations in Ukraine and the U.S. Among them were Metropolitan Antony of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the U.S.A.; Rev. Roman Kapran, president of the Ukrainian Baptist Convention of the U.S.A.; Rev. Robert Hitchens; Rev. Marko Morozovych; Rev. Andriy Chornopysky; Rev. Oleksandr Dumenko; and Rabbi Hyim Shafner of Keshet Israel and the Georgetown Synagogue, who addressed the gathering via video message.

Children from the Ukrainian school in Washington, D.C., joined the event and sang the song "When the Child is Praying."

Distinguished speakers Christopher Anderson, director of European and Eurasian Affairs at the Department of State; Christian Levesque, director of the War

Crimes Accountability Team (WarCAT) and lead prosecutor for Ukraine at the Department of Justice; and Rep. Susan Wild delivered remarks during the event.

Ukraine's Ambassador to the U.S. Oksana Markarova also attending the event in Washington, D.C.

"We all are praying and working hard to make sure that the world didn't forget about Ukrainian children. We still do not know the fate of many of our children, particularly those who have been abducted. We have registered 20,000 cases of children being abducted by Russia. But we all know that Russia itself boasts of having 'saved' over 600,000 Ukrainian children, with or without their families," Ms. Markarova said.

According to various sources, more than 500 children have been killed in Russia's full-scale war, though it is widely believed that many more children have died since Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a full-scale war on Ukraine in February 2022. Since that time, more than 1,292

children have been injured, and more than 20,000 children have been forcibly deported to Russia, with some two million children fleeing Ukraine since 2022.

"By holding the Children Praying for Children service we created a sacred space for children to come together in prayer, solidarity and compassionate action for their peers who are affected by the tragic circumstances of the Russian war on Ukraine," said Marta Fedoriw, chair of the UNWLA's initiative Return Ukraine's Children.

"This weekend's prayer events organized by the UNWLA branches and our partners not only honored the children of Ukraine and their resilience but also served as a beacon of hope and solidarity for the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States and the global community."

UNWLA officials expressed their gratitude to all members of the Ukrainian-American community who kept Ukrainian children in their prayers and have kept advocating for the safe return of all Ukrainian children to their homes and families.

The Kremlin...

(Continued from page 2)

tary-civil administration there, just as they did in the occupied Zaporizhia and Kherson regions. This type of administration is a Russian instrument for the transitional period between military invasion and outright annexation, as demonstrated in those two regions (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, April 7, 12, 13, July 21, 22, 28 [1], [2], 2022). By contrast, Ukraine liberated the Kharkiv region almost entirely in the autumn of 2022. Russia, however, is currently re-installing its military-civil administration in Ukraine's Kharkiv region (under the same chief as in 2022, Vitaly Ganchev) in lockstep with the Russian troops gaining ground there, potentially reopening another territorial claim.

Russia's declared goal to establish "sanitary zones" in Ukrainian territory could result in further territorial claims or, alternatively, de facto occupation of certain areas without formal territorial claims. Such zones would be located on the Ukrainian side of the contact line and would be demilitarized – i.e., by not allowing Ukrainian troops there. Such an arrangement should protect Russian or Russian-occupied territories from Ukrainian missile or drone strikes across the contact line. Putin and Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Sergei Lavrov have warned several times in recent months that Russia could establish such "sanitary zones" if Western powers supply long-range missiles to Ukraine. These warnings obviously seek to discourage the delivery of missiles to Ukraine or at least to induce Ukraine's partners to impose limitations on missile use.

On May 17 and 28, Putin stated that Russian troops are currently creating a sanitary or buffer zone in the Kharkiv region to

protect Russia's Belgorod and nearby regions from Ukrainian air strikes. "I have been publicly saying for the last half a year," Putin warned, that "we could also do this elsewhere in Ukraine if it uses long-range precision weapons" (Kremlin.ru, May 17, 28). In the Kharkiv region, this putative zone would evidently lay on the Russian, not Ukrainian, side of the contact line and would, therefore, not be demilitarized.

With the military balance heavily favorable to Russia at present but not necessarily in the medium term, it is hardly surprising that Moscow seeks to ensnare Ukraine into political talks. Moscow seeks to capitalize on the fait accompli it achieved in 2022 so long as it remains in place. One of Moscow's principal gains from 2022 – namely, Ukraine's status of unprotected neutrality – is now vanishing as Ukraine signs agreements on security cooperation with many Western states. Russia cannot reverse that process but hopes to throw it into confusion by resurrecting the "Istanbul 2022" documents.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's term of elected office expired on May 20 but it is being prolonged at 90-day intervals in accordance with the constitution and several legal enactments, including the law on the state of war. Putin is making ambivalent statements regarding Mr. Zelenskyy's authority to direct any talks on behalf of Ukraine. The Kremlin is, in any case, not offering a ceasefire or "freeze" to facilitate talks. On the contrary, it continues to intensify its military operations to force Kyiv into talks – or at least damage Ukraine to the maximum extent possible for refusing to surrender.

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Macron promises to provide Ukraine with Mirage combat aircraft



Public domain

A French Air Force Mirage 2000C drops away from a United States Air Force KC-135R Stratotanker (not shown) after refueling during a combat patrol mission while participating in a North Atlantic Treaty Organization operation in 1999.

by Andrew Nynka

WALTHAM, Mass. – France announced that it will provide Ukraine with Mirage combat aircraft, French President Emmanuel Macron told France's public broadcaster on June 6. He added that a new cooperation agreement with Ukraine, to be announced on June 7, will include the sale of the French-made Mirage 2005, which will

"allow Ukraine to protect its soil, its airspace" against Russian attacks, the Associated Press reported on June 6. Mr. Macron added that France will start training Ukrainian pilots on the fighter jets, according to the AP. His comments followed an appearance alongside Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in France where both leaders attended the 80th anniversary commemoration of the Allied D-Day invasion.

Female convicts to the front: How the Kremlin tried, and failed, to bolster the Ukraine invasion

RFE/RL's North.Realities

At the end of 2022, reports emerged that female convicts in Russia – just like their male counterparts – were being recruited to serve in the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. About 1,000 women, according to human rights groups, were sent to war. Some of the women died; some returned home after being pardoned of their crimes. RFE/RL spoke to one of the lucky few who both survived and was released after serving.

[Editor's note: The people in this story have had their names changed to protect their identities due to Russia's labeling of RFE/RL as an "undesirable organization."]

In the summer of 2023, Yelena enlisted to join Russia's invasion of Ukraine from a prison colony in the Lipetsk region of western Russia. She was serving time for drug offenses. She agreed to speak to RFE/RL only after much persuasion, as she said she had no desire to relive her experiences.

"I don't have any special education. I just worked as a saleswoman for several years," the woman said. "They didn't ask for anything [during recruitment]. They only checked my age and health and then signed me up as a sniper. What a joke! I had never held a gun in my hands."

Yelena never ended up on the front lines.

"I wound up working as a nurse for a unit in the Donetsk region. Now I think that I was lucky because I heard that many [from the same prison colony] are now dead," says Yelena. "And I was lucky that they did, in fact, release me. I still had five more years of my sentence to serve."

"They didn't train us for anything. They dumped us into the medical unit, and that's it. They didn't even ask me anything. I still don't know whether they fulfilled their promises to anyone about training women to be snipers and pilots. I myself was not at the front with the unit. I mostly just cooked and fought off the advances of the soldiers."

It is believed that around 1,000 female convicts signed up to serve in Ukraine before the program was apparently scrapped by the Kremlin.



The Ulyanovka prison, from where around 50 women signed a contract to go to Ukraine, is pictured in an undated photo.

The friend of another recruit told RFE/RL that the vast majority of women prisoners sent to war were addicted to drugs or alcohol.

"Do you realize what kind of people these are? These are hardened addicts; these are thieves," the woman said. "Maybe I'm overstating it when I say they are all like that, but probably this is 90 percent of the women in prison. The military recruited from this population."

"I told my friend, 'Do you understand what you are signing up for? You'll be cannon fodder there. Even healthy men are dying like flies in Ukraine. Why would you go?'"

"The bulk of prisoners who signed up to go to Ukraine are brainless junkies whose only dream is to go out and buy themselves some new boots. Their main motivation was money. The Defense Ministry, of course, promised them mountains of gold, and parole. They even claimed there would be 'praise and glory,' that the women would be carried aloft by people when they return. Well, this was all bulls**t, as we

have seen."

Today, there are around 400,000 prisoners in Russian penal colonies, with 8 percent (around 32,000) of them women.

Yelena, who had her sentence commuted after serving in Ukraine, says the female prisoners were paid less than they were offered during recruitment.

"They promised half a million rubles [\$5,600] to sign, and then 200,000 rubles [\$2,240] every month. In fact, only around 100,000 rubles was paid monthly, and the signing bonus was also around half of what was promised."

But being cheated out of her salary was the least of her concerns.

"I wasn't angry; I was scared. I was just hoping I could get out alive. That's what I was focused on," she says.

"It was terrifying, all these drunken faces and antics. But when the next batch of [wounded] was brought in, I could see that the people in that situation were really in hell," Yelena says.

Yelena says that when she signed on she was able to read the contract while in pris-

on. Later, she says, convicts served in the war, then were forced to return to prison.

"They earned money, then were sent 'home to their bunks,'" she says. "But they didn't know this! This was not told to them during recruitment."

She says the military contracts were often presented to the convicts after they had been taken out of prison grounds.

"So they rounded them all up, stuffed them into paddy wagons, and took them somewhere where they signed this contract. They don't know the conditions [in the contract] because they don't have time to read them. By the time they realize they won't get parole, it's too late. They've already left the prison."

Yelena says by now it is widely known among the prison population that parole will not follow service in the war, but many convicts are still willing to sign up.

According to human rights activists who work with prisoners, although the Defense Ministry recruited women who agreed to fight, they were never sent to the front.

"Their experiment – to send women to the front – was a failure, to put it mildly," Marina, a human rights activist, says of the Kremlin initiative.

"The appearance of women didn't add any discipline," she says, "and they already had enough problems at the front with the male prisoners drinking and taking drugs."

Another human rights activist said that the last recruitment of female prisoners was in September 2023 from a facility in Russia's Leningrad region.

"They were housed separately for three months and promised training, but it's not known whether that ever happened. In the end, they were never taken anywhere to serve," she said.

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Zelenskyy's peace...

(Continued from page 1)

security, food security and humanitarian direction, which, by the way, includes not only the exchange but also the return of children stolen by Russia and forcibly taken to Russia," Mr. Zelenskyy said.

The summit invited more than 160 delegations at the level of heads of state. The United States will be represented by Vice President Kamala Harris and national security adviser Jake Sullivan, according to the White House. U.S. President Joe Biden participation in the summit, however, remains uncertain.

"The U.S. has confirmed its participation in the high-level peace summit. However, there has been no specific confirmation of President Biden's participation. But in any case, I think we have a chance that President Biden will be there," Mr. Zelenskyy said.

Mr. Zelenskyy also called on other global leaders, including those from the United States and China, to personally attend the summit.

"I call on the global leaders who are still away from the international efforts of the summit – the leader of the United States, President Biden, and the leader of China, Xi Jinping. Please show leadership in promoting peace – real peace, not the kind that will become a pause between blows. Support the peace summit with your personal lead-

ership and participation," Mr. Zelenskyy said.

Despite Mr. Zelenskyy's hope, various U.S. media reports suggest that Mr. Biden will skip the summit due to a campaign fundraiser in California.

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the summit does not meet all the criteria Beijing requires for such platforms, making China's attendance unlikely. Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning outlined China's stance during a briefing on May 31, emphasizing the need for participation by both Russia and Ukraine.

"Otherwise, the peace conference is unlikely to play a significant role in restoring peace," said Ms. Mao, adding that, based on public information, it does not appear that the criteria for China's participation will be fulfilled.

Mr. Zelenskyy accused China of using its influence to pressure other countries not to participate in the summit.

"Russia, using Chinese influence in the region, using Chinese diplomats, is doing everything to disrupt the peace summit," Mr. Zelenskyy said at a press conference at the Shangri-La Defense Forum in Singapore. "It's unfortunate that such a large, independent, powerful country like China is a tool in Putin's hands," he added.

China, which has been allied with the Kremlin, has refrained from criticizing Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion

of Ukraine and has been accused by Western governments of providing Russia with assistance.

Beijing has offered its assistance to negotiate a peace agreement and emphasized its importance in international relations with Ukraine, calling itself Ukraine's largest trading partner.

"We believe we can get the understanding and support of all parties," Ms. Mao said.

The Global Peace Summit in Switzerland aims to open the door for future negotiations with Russia. According to Bloomberg, Ukraine initially planned to enlist support for Mr. Zelenskyy's entire peace formula but later narrowed the agenda to three key points to garner broader international support.

A Ukrainian government source confirmed to BBC Ukraine that the list of issues was reduced to ensure maximum support for Ukraine's conditions in future direct talks with Russia, potentially in 2025 or later. The summit's final document is expected to underline three main principles: the safety of nuclear facilities, guaranteed food security, and the return of all prisoners, including abducted children.

Mr. Zelenskyy's Peace Formula, however, consists of 10 points, each crucial for achieving what Ukraine sees as a just peace, the president has said. These points include the implementation of an energy security policy, the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity, and the withdrawal of Russian

troops from all Ukrainian land.

Some Western observers have called the peace formula unrealistic. But public opinion polls conducted in Ukraine show that a large majority of Ukrainians are unwilling to support a peace deal that cedes their land.

Moreover, Kyiv insists that Moscow must compensate Ukraine for war damages and that those responsible for war crimes must be punished.

The peace talks will not include Russia, according to Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, who said that negotiations without Russia are meaningless. Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also criticized Mr. Zelenskyy's peace formula, saying that it ignores proposals from other nations and dismissing it as detached from reality.

Ms. Zakharova added that Switzerland "cannot be trusted" due to its support for Ukraine and support of anti-Russian sanctions.

"The Zelenskyy formula does not provide for compromises or alternatives and completely ignores the proposals of China, Brazil, African and Arab states," Ms. Zakharova said.

As the Global Peace Summit approaches, Ukraine remains focused on consolidating international support for its Peace Formula. The outcome of the summit is expected to influence the framework of future negotiations and peace efforts.

Ukraine gets U.S. ok to hit targets inside Russia. Now what?

by Mike Eckel
RFE/RL

Around the end of May, a Russian early warning radar installation was hit by unidentified projectiles; Ukraine's military intelligence agency said the projectiles used were drones.

It was unclear if there was any significant damage, but of more significance was where the facility was located: around 1,118 miles from the Ukrainian border.

Throughout the 27 months since Russia launched its all-out invasion, Ukraine has been attacking sites inside Russia: first quietly and sporadically, then boldly and loudly, including cross-border raids by loosely affiliated paramilitary groups and spectacular drone strikes in the heart of Moscow.

But Ukraine has chafed at the restrictions that have kept it from utilizing its Western-supplied arsenal to make more substantive attacks further inside Russia: on troop staging grounds, or railways, or weapons depots, for example. A 3-week-old offensive near Kharkiv in the northeast that has stretched Ukraine's forces thin has added to the impatience.

As of May 30, that's changed, as the United States joined more than a dozen North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and signaled for the first time that it would permit Ukraine to strike some targets inside Russia itself.

The shift is limited in scope, allowing Ukrainian forces to use short-range missiles from HIMARS launchers, or artillery, to hit command-and-control posts, arms depots and other military targets used as



part of the Kharkiv offensive. Ukraine will still be barred from using longer-range surface-to-surface missiles known as ATACMS against targets inside Russia.

U.S. President Joe Biden "recently directed his team to ensure that Ukraine is able to use U.S.-supplied weapons for counter-

fire purposes in the Kharkiv region so Ukraine can hit back against Russian forces that are attacking them or preparing to attack them," a U.S. official told RFE/RL. "Our policy with respect to prohibiting the use of ATACMS or long-range strikes inside of Russia has not changed," the official said.

The change in U.S. policy was first reported by Politico.

"Ukraine has the right to strike targets in Russia," Jack Watling, senior researcher at the Royal United Services Institute in London, said during a Financial Times podcast prior to the announcement. "It is at war with Russia, and Russia is striking targets in Ukraine every day," Mr. Watling said.

But he said the question is what kinds of weapons Ukraine would be allowed to use to make a substantial difference. Howitzers fired across the border are one thing; longer-range Storm Shadow or Scalp cruise missiles or ATACMS missiles are another.

"I think if we just draw a hard line and say, 'Strikes in Russia? No.' That's very unhelpful," he said. "But we do also need to appreciate that there are different kinds of strikes using different kinds of systems that hold quite different risks."

Red lines

In the past, Russia has warned that Washington supplying longer-range weaponry to Ukraine "would cross a red line." But even as Western weapon supplies have grown in frequency and number, Russia has refrained from targeting shipments or depots where they could be located.

Asked about the reported change in U.S. policy, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov claimed that Moscow knew nothing about it and suggested that the Russian government did not see it as a significant change in the status quo.

"It's well known that on the whole American weapons have already been used

(Continued on page 7)

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STAND WITH UKRAINE

THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

Honoring those who save Europe

On June 6, 1944, Allied forces launched Operation Overlord, a daring and monumental effort that marked the beginning of the end for Nazi Germany. The D-Day landings on the beaches of Normandy, France, were not just a military operation; they were a testament to the collective resolve and bravery of soldiers from across the free world. Today, as we commemorate the 80th anniversary of this historic event, we are reminded that the fight for freedom and democracy is far from over. U.S. President Joe Biden, speaking at a commemorative ceremony in Normandy, poignantly drew a parallel between the heroic efforts of those who fought on D-Day and the courageous struggle of Ukrainian soldiers defending their homeland against Russian aggression.

President Biden's words were clear and resolute: the free world stands united with Ukraine, just as it did with the Allied forces in World War II. He emphasized that abandoning Ukraine in its time of need is simply unthinkable, as it would jeopardize the very freedom and security of Europe. "Make no mistake: We will not bow down; we cannot surrender to the bullies; it is simply unthinkable. If we do, freedom will be subjugated, all Europe will be threatened," Mr. Biden said. His message, delivered in Colleville-sur-Mer, France, resonated deeply with the gathered dignitaries, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, French President Emmanuel Macron, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Britain's King Charles III.

Mr. Biden's speech underscored the enduring importance of alliances and collective security. He hailed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as "the greatest military alliance in the world" and reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to peace and stability. Drawing on the lessons of World War II, Mr. Biden reminded us that "isolation was not the answer 80 years ago and it's not the answer today," a pointed message to those skeptical of U.S. support for Ukraine. The president's call to action was unequivocal: "We must remember that the fact that they were heroes here that day does not absolve us of what we have to do today. Democracy is never guaranteed. Every generation must preserve it, defend it and fight for it. That's the test of the ages." Mr. Biden rightly described Operation Overlord as a "powerful illustration of how alliances, real alliances, make us stronger," a lesson that remains profoundly relevant today.

Mr. Macron, speaking at Omaha Beach, also highlighted the parallels between the battles fought in 1944 and the current war in Ukraine. He expressed deep gratitude to the Ukrainian people for their bravery in the face of Russian aggression. "Faced with the return of war on our continent ... faced with those who purport to change borders by force to rewrite history, let us be worthy of those who landed here," Mr. Macron declared. His words served as a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made on D-Day and the ongoing struggle to uphold the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In a message posted on social media, President Zelenskyy echoed the sentiments of unity and shared purpose. "This event and today are a reminder of the courage and determination shown for the sake of freedom and democracy," he wrote. "Allies defended the freedom of Europe then, Ukrainians defend the freedom of Europe now. Unity won then, true unity is capable of winning even now."

As we honor the heroes of D-Day, we must also recognize and support the Ukrainian soldiers who are now at the forefront of defending Europe from tyranny. Their struggle is a continuation of the same fight for freedom and democracy that began on the beaches of Normandy 80 years ago. The resolve and courage of these soldiers serve as a powerful reminder that the defense of liberty is a never-ending battle, one that requires the steadfast commitment of all who cherish freedom.

June
10
2021

Turning the pages back...

Three years ago, on June 10, 2021, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), which is the official organizing body for soccer in Europe, announced that Ukraine would have to make last-minute changes to its proposed uniform design for the 2020 European Championship (Euro 2020 was held in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Two slogans (Glory to Ukraine!

Glory to the Heroes!) and a map of Ukraine were featured on the jerseys, which Ukraine unveiled officially on June 6.

Protests from Russia's Foreign Affairs Ministry described the design as "the illusion of the impossible" in reference to the map of Ukraine that showed the country's pre-war boundaries. It also characterized slogans on the shirt as fascist. UEFA ordered Ukraine to remove the slogans, which it called "political." One was located on the exterior rear of the collar, and the other was found on the inside back of the collar.

Both FIFA, the world soccer governing body, and UEFA have charters that ban political statements on national team outfits. Ukraine argued that its slogans were similar to France's "Vive la France" and the English "God save the Queen." UEFA said its decision was based on the two slogans being used together, which it "deemed to be clearly political in nature, having historic and militaristic significance." As a result, it said the second portion of the slogan "must be removed."

"Glory to Ukraine" is the official greeting of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which was approved by Ukraine's parliament in 2018. The United States and Great Britain expressed their support for Ukraine's choice of uniform design, and Ukraine's Foreign Affairs Ministry underscored why Russia filed its complaints.

"I can tell those who are fussing because they can't stand our internationally recognized borders or our official state greeting: We will not allow our national symbols to be insulted!" said Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Minister Dmytro Kuleba.

Source: "Governing body for soccer in Europe orders Ukraine to alter uniform day before Euro championship, Outline of Ukrainian map that angered Russia can stay," by Matthew Dubas and Mark Raczkiwycz, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, June 13, 2021.

'We will not...'

(Continued from page 1)

Adolf Hitler's ultimate defeat in 1945.

"Make no mistake, we will not bow down, we cannot surrender to the bullies; it is simply unthinkable. If we do, freedom will be subjugated, all Europe will be threatened," Mr. Biden said in Colleville-sur-Mer at a ceremony hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron in honor of the dwindling number of surviving World War II veterans and attended by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Britain's King Charles III and other heads of state and dignitaries.

Neither Russian President Vladimir Putin nor any other officials from Russia were invited to the commemoration.

"Ukraine has been invaded by a tyrant, they're fighting with extraordinary courage, suffering great losses but never backing down," Mr. Biden said describing Putin as a "tyrant bent on domination."

The U.S. president, meanwhile, hailed NATO as "the greatest military alliance in the world" and said it is "more determined than ever to keep peace."

Drawing again a parallel with World War II, Mr. Biden said America's "isolation was not the answer 80 years ago and it's not the answer today," a thinly veiled reference directed at some Republican politicians who are skeptical of U.S. support for Ukraine.

"We must remember that the fact that they were heroes here that day does not absolve us of what we have to do today. Democracy is never guaranteed. Every generation must preserve it, defend it and fight for it. That's the test of the ages."

The ceremony was held near Omaha Beach, the code name of one of the two U.S. forces' landing spots, where American troops suffered more than 2,500 deaths – more than half the total of 4,414 Allied troops killed on D-Day.

D-Day, the start of the landing in Normandy codenamed Operation Overlord, was the largest amphibious assault in history, with 156,115 troops from 12 countries taking part.

Mr. Biden called it a "powerful illustration of how alliances, real alliances, make us stronger," adding that it was "a lesson that I pray we Americans never forget."

In a message posted on social media, Mr. Zelenskyy said, "This event and today are a reminder of the courage and determination shown for the sake of freedom and democracy."

"Allies defended the freedom of Europe then, Ukrainians defend the freedom of Europe now. Unity won then, true unity is capable of winning even now," Mr. Zelenskyy added.

The Ukrainian president is due to hold talks with Messrs. Biden and Macron during his trip to France.

Meanwhile, the White House said Vice President Kamala Harris and national-security adviser Jake Sullivan will attend a Ukraine peace conference in Switzerland this month following public pleas by Kyiv for the United States – and President Joe Biden, in particular – to participate in the June 15-16 event.

The White House said in a June 3 statement that the vice president "will underscore the Biden-Harris administration's commitment to supporting Ukraine's effort to secure a just and lasting peace, based on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the principles of the U.N. [United Nations] Charter."

It added that Ms. Harris "will reaffirm support for the people of Ukraine as they defend themselves against ongoing Russian aggression."

The announcement comes following weeks of pleas by Mr. Zelenskyy for Mr. Biden to attend the summit, in which at least 107 countries have confirmed their participation.

The White House has said that Mr. Biden will bypass the summit because of a major fund-raising event – hosted by Hollywood stars George Clooney and Julia Roberts and including former President Barack Obama – as he prepares for a November election in which he is likely to face off against former President Donald Trump.

Meanwhile, on the battlefield, Russian strikes on Ukraine's Kharkiv and Donetsk regions killed three civilians, including a 12-year-old boy, on June 3, regional officials reported, as Mr. Zelenskyy continued an Asian tour with an unannounced visit to the Philippines.

Russian forces early on June 3 shelled the village of Mykhailivka in the Pokrovskiy district of the eastern Donetsk region, Gov. Vadym Filashkin said on Telegram.

Mr. Filashkin said two people were killed and another person was wounded.

"Among the dead is a 12-year-old boy," Mr. Filashkin said. "In the morning, the Russians dropped a guided aerial bomb on the village, and an hour and a half later they repeated the attack. At least five houses were damaged."

In the northeast, one Ukrainian civilian was killed and two others were wounded in at least five rocket attacks launched by Russia on the town of Slobzhanske, south of the city of Kharkiv, on June 3, regional Gov. Oleh Synyehubov said on Telegram.

"A recreational complex was hit, one civilian was killed. Two civilians, a man and a woman, were wounded," Mr. Synyehubov said.

Russian forces over the past several weeks have intensified attacks on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city located some 34 kilometers from the border.

In a missile attack on May 31, on the city's Novobavarskyi district, nine people were killed and several others were wounded.

Mr. Zelenskyy arrived in the Philippines on June 3 from Singapore, where he attended the annual Shangri-La Dialogue security summit, and met with Filipino President Ferdinand Marcos.

"We discussed the inaugural Global Peace Summit and the importance of Southeast Asian countries being represented there. I am pleased that the Philippines will participate in the summit," Mr. Zelenskyy wrote on X.

In Singapore, Mr. Zelenskyy met with foreign leaders on the final day of the annual Shangri-La Dialogue security summit on June 2, where he sought to rally international support ahead of the Swiss peace conference.

Mr. Zelenskyy and Ukraine's Defense Minister Rustem Umerov met in Singapore for more than an hour with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin following this week's U.S. easing of restrictions on the use of its weapons by Kyiv to publicly permit Ukraine to hit targets inside Russia.

Serhiy Nykyforov, Mr. Zelenskyy's press secretary, said on June 3 that a total of 107 countries and international organizations have confirmed their participation in the summit so far.

Mr. Nykyforov told Ukrainian television that in Singapore Mr. Zelenskyy met with several foreign leaders who confirmed their participation in the summit.

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Religious life on the rise in Ukraine, with enormous consequences for Kyiv and Moscow

by Paul Goble
Eurasia Daily Monitor

Few atheists can be found in foxholes, and the populations of countries at war typically become more interested in religion. Ukraine today is a classic example. Since February 2022, the number of religious organizations in Ukraine has jumped by more than 3,000 to 36,195. This is according to data released at the end of May by Kyiv's State Service on Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience (Data.gov.ua, accessed June 6). Over the same period, the Ukrainian agency's figures indicate that approximately 1,000 of the parishes that had belonged to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate have shifted their allegiance to the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU). An autocephalous church is a hierarchical Christian church whose head bishop does not report to any higher-ranking bishop. The autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which was officially recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in 2018, is headed by Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv and All Ukraine. Despite the trend, however, the Moscow church still has more religious organizations than the Kyiv church – 29 percent compared to 22 percent.

These statistics, however, focus on structures rather than identification and church attendance and, therefore, are misleading. They overstate the size of the Russian church while minimizing that of its Ukrainian Orthodox competitor. These figures also understate the rise of other non-Orthodox Christian denominations in Ukraine. A survey taken at the end of 2023 found that only 5.6 percent of Ukrainians identify with the Moscow Patriarchate, while 42.2 percent said they are part of the OCU. Another 11 percent said they were followers of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, and nearly 40 percent identified with other Christian denominations or

none at all (Razumkov Center, December 26, 2023).

On the one hand, these figures mean the Moscow church is increasingly becoming a shell of its former self, with the hierarchy keeping open and counting parishes few Ukrainians attend. On the other hand, they suggest that the real rise in religious life in Ukraine since Moscow's war began has not been so much in the autocephalous church, though attendance has risen. Nor has it been the case among the Uniates, who are Christian Orthodox in practice but are subordinate to the pope in Rome. Their share of the Ukrainian population has remained largely unchanged. Instead, more Ukrainians are now orienting themselves toward or even becoming members of Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations.

Many observers have failed to take note of this change and have focused instead on the contest of the two Orthodox churches both within Ukraine and between Ukraine and Russia in the Orthodox world as a whole. This has been the case ever since the Ukrainian church gained autocephaly and thus independence from the Moscow church in 2018 – at the time, an important indicator of Kyiv's shift away from Moscow (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, September 23, 2018, April 10). That approach has unfortunately become more widespread as the Moscow Patriarchate has grown more belligerent in its support for President Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine.

The Ukrainian government, in response, has put the power of the state behind the Ukrainian church while actively attacking the Moscow church (Dess.gov.ua, January 27, 2023; see Eurasia Daily Monitor, March 7, 2023, February 13; Novaya Gazeta, May 29). The Kremlin has good reason for that. Measured by the number of parishes and other religious institutions that have chosen to subordinate themselves to Kyiv rather than Moscow, the Russian campaign has only partially succeeded. Measured by the

number of Ukrainians who identify with one side rather than the other, however, it has been remarkably successful and has impacted Orthodox believers throughout the post-Soviet space (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, December 8, 2022).

Moscow continues to be alarmed by and regularly attacks the autocephalous Kyiv church, seeing the independence of Orthodoxy in Ukraine as a direct threat to Putin's aspirations. The Kremlin, if anything, is perhaps even more alarmed by the spread of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism among Ukrainian believers, which is concentrated in Ukraine's western regions but not restricted to those areas. The Kremlin has long viewed these denominations as even more hostile to its interests than even autocephalous Orthodox churches in the post-Soviet space. Such fears lie behind Moscow's continuing celebration of Prince Alexander Nevsky's alliance with the Mongol Horde in the 13th century against the Roman Catholic crusade in the Baltic region and its continuing attacks on Roman Catholicism in Poland, Lithuania and Belarus. The Kremlin regularly expresses fear about the spread of Roman Catholicism across the post-Soviet space and in Russia itself. These attacks are understandable, given the opposition of such groups to Putin's authoritarianism (Window on Eurasia, November 29, 2019, April 9, May 27, 2023).

Lying behind those growing fears is an even greater one for Moscow – a fear discussed most usefully by Russian commentator Vladislav Inozemtsev in an important but largely neglected article last year. Writing in *Neprikosnovenny Zapas*, Mr. Inozemtsev argued that Putin's efforts to correct what the Kremlin leader views as "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century" (i.e., the disintegration of the Soviet Union) are unintentionally triggering something that may be even more profound – namely, "the greatest ethno-social

crisis of the 21st century." Specifically, this refers to the collapse of the model of relations between state and religion that has dominated Russia for centuries. As part of that model, religion subordinates itself to state power and simultaneously transforms identification with and loyalty to the state into a religious principle (Magazines.gorky.media, February 2023).

Mr. Inozemtsev suggests that in the Christian West, over the past 500 years, "wars between individual Catholic countries were conducted dozens of times without destroying church unity." In Eastern Christendom, however, "Orthodoxy always split into parts as soon as attempts were made to establish an empire out of relatively separate peoples or those attempting to form independent states." Sometimes, such efforts have driven whole nations to shift from Orthodoxy to Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, ultimately undermining the countries that have engaged in such imperial projects. Unfortunately, he continues, "the Kremlin and the Russian Orthodox Church have not learned from such earlier cases and are now engaged in actions that will lead not only to the demise of a Russian church extending beyond the borders of a Russian state but likely to something even more profound – the undermining or even destruction of the basis of state loyalty within Russia."

Should that be the case, the latest data from Ukraine on changing religious identities points to an even more fundamental shift in Kyiv's orientation than many now think. That trend may lend itself to the transformation of Russia itself – something that helps explain why Putin views what he is doing as existential for Russia and why what he is doing makes that even more likely.

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Ukraine gets...

(Continued from page 5)

to try and target Russian territory," he said on May 31. "That is enough for us to know and is very eloquent evidence of the level of involvement of the United States in this conflict."

Ukraine for months has enthusiastically gone after targets in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that Russia seized in 2014. Russia has a substantial deployment of troops, aircraft and equipment there, not to mention its Black Sea Fleet naval ships, which until recently have been based in the port of Sevastopol.

In late April, Ukraine used ATACMS, or Army Tactical Missile Systems, to hit an airfield in Dzhankoy in Crimea. Though Ukraine had received shorter-range versions of the ATACMS in the past, the Dzhankoy attack was the first time Ukraine had used the longer-range model – something that the United States had secretly supplied months prior.

Ukraine has also used the British-French-designed Storm Shadow missiles to target Russian naval facilities in Crimea.

Since the United States, like most of the international community, does not recognize Russia's claim to Crimea, there were few, if any, restrictions on Ukraine targeting sites there.

Ukrainian forces have been struggling on the battlefield for months now, a situation caused in part by the pause in U.S. weapons supplies that resulted from political infighting in Washington.

ing in Washington.

On May 10, their struggles deepened further when tens of thousands of Russian troops crossed the border north of the city of Kharkiv, opening up a new offensive and forcing Ukrainian commanders to rush more experienced units to the region from other hot spots.

The policy change "will allow for Ukraine to target Russian troops, especially high-value targets, such as command-and-control elements, artillery, logistics and air-defense units that are located on Russian territory near Kharkiv and concentrating or rehearsing future operations against Ukraine," Mick Ryan, a retired Australian Army major general, said in an e-mail newsletter. "This is the kind of operational strike – the ability to destroy Russian military forces before they are committed to combat operations – that is essential while Ukraine reconstitutes its forces in 2024."

One of the reasons Russia is making gains at present is its dominance of the air. Russia has been able to use jet-dropped glide bombs to devastating effect, said Johan Norberg, a senior analyst and expert on Russia's military at the Swedish Defense Research Agency FOI.

Ukraine has been unable to push back due to a lack of robust air defenses such as U.S.-made Patriot systems.

With Western weaponry and the ability to strike Russian airfields, Ukraine should be able to curtail Russia's ability to attack effectively with planes, Mr. Norberg said.

"They have to move farther away, also making things more difficult in terms of the

frequency of sorties you can make over Ukraine," he told RFE/RL. "And then the military rationale is clear. There could be other arguments I could find, like striking on command posts ... deeper inside Russia or various logistics hubs. ... But I think right now, air power seems to be some of Ukraine's biggest problems at the moment."

'Boiling a frog slowly'

It's unclear exactly what prompted the Biden administration to change its policy. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who traveled to Kyiv last month, reportedly received a sober assessment of the ability of Ukraine's forces to hold out. In Congress, lawmakers from both parties had criticized the White House for holding Ukraine back.

Speaking to Mr. Blinken at a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on May 22, the committee's Republican chairman, Michael McCaul, accused the Biden administration, and White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan more specifically, of creating a "sanctuary" for Russian forces across the border.

Germany, which has been one of the most hesitant NATO members where Western weaponry is concerned, on May 31 signaled it was in agreement with the new U.S. policy. Ukraine has repeatedly asked Berlin for its Taurus KEPD-350 cruise missile.

Over the past two weeks, a growing chorus of NATO members have come out in support of using various Western weaponry more aggressively, to hit targets inside Russia itself.

"However, with regard to weapons that

can operate over a long distance, of hundreds of kilometers, there is still a reluctance on our part," German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius told reporters during a visit to Moldova.

"Looking at where we are today, where we ... supply missiles, armored vehicles, what have you – they would have been out of the question two years ago. But everything is done very gradually," Mr. Norberg said. "Whether this was deliberate to, sort of, slowly boil the frog, and not pass any Russian red lines, or just because of decision-making taking a long time at the West, I don't know."

Complicating the discussion is Ukraine's willingness to go after Russian targets – civilian or military – on its own, with its own technology, in all likelihood without U.S. and NATO approval. The attack on the Voronezh-M radar installation near the city of Orsk on May 27 was the latest example.

That drew criticism from some arms control experts who say it's potentially dangerous for Ukraine to target military objects used for nuclear deterrence – not something directly related to Russia's war on Ukraine.

(RFE/RL correspondent Todd Prince contributed to this report from Washington, D.C.)

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Susan Hwang performs as Yevheniya Ivanchenko, the police captain who never thought of leaving Mariupol, Ukraine, in “Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life.”



Yara's “Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life” and cast members (from left to right) Susan Hwang, Oksana Horban, Hanna Datsko and Daria Kolomiec.

Mariupol through testimony and theater: Yara Arts Group presents “Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life”

by Larissa Babij

NEW YORK – “Every American should see this show,” I thought at the end of “Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life,” performed by the Yara Arts Group in New York City earlier this spring.

Today, the entire country of Ukraine, where I’ve lived for nearly 20 years, is a war zone. You can imagine my shock upon arriving in the U.S. and discovering that here the war in Ukraine is primarily a budget issue.

Yara’s performance features first-person accounts of the initial weeks of Russia’s 2022 siege of Mariupol, together with music, poetry, movement and imagery. This exquisite composition moves the audience to connect with Ukrainians who were surprised to find themselves under Russian attack and who managed to get out alive.

The walls of the East Village gallery Howl! Happening, now serving as a performance space, are lined with Evgeniy Maloletka’s and Mstyslav Chernov’s award-winning photos from the first 20 days of Russia’s devastating attack on Mariupol. They show people cowering in the hallway, bleeding on stretchers, rescuing the victims of Russian missile attacks. A haunting melody, played by bandura virtuoso Julian Kytasty, gathers the audience’s attention.

Director Virlana Tkacz is a kind, sure guide, like Virgil leading Dante through the Inferno. She uses familiar Ukrainian art and poetry – including the verse of Serhiy Zhadan and Victoria Amelina – to ease the New York audience into (and out of) witnessing hell on earth. Artist and dissident Alla Horska (played by Daria Kolomiec) paces before a historic photo of “The Tree of Life.” This vibrant mosaic she and fellow artists made in Mariupol was destroyed by Russian shelling in 2022.

The stories told on stage are no work of fiction. They come from four Ukrainians who survived Russia’s siege of Mariupol. Featured in Ms. Kolomiec’s “Diary of War” podcast, their words were edited and translated into English by Ms. Tkacz. Yara’s actors bring these stories to life. There is something so American in their delivery that one can’t help but think: this could be you.

Mariupol native Olena Nikulina, played by Silvana Gonzalez, is a civil servant with a 5-year-old son. Her husband Maksym (George Drance) is a fighter in the Azov battalion. “And I’m like, nothing’s going to happen. ... I know, there’s something on the news ... but nothing is happening!” she declares with an affected lightness that turns my stomach.

For we in the audience know all too well what is going to happen. This piques a gro-



During a performance of Yara Arts Group’s “Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life,” Daria Kolomiec, who plays artist and dissident Alla Horska, is seen in front of a historic photo of “The Tree of Life,” a vibrant mosaic Ms. Horska and fellow artists made in Mariupol that was destroyed by Russian shelling in 2022.

tesque curiosity in how these ordinary people are (or are not) preparing for Russia’s impending invasion. Yaroslav Semenenko (Petro Ninovskyi), a member of the national Para Olympic swim team, is at home with his wife Nastya (Diana Kuzminova) when the Russians enter the city. He is sure that, “They won’t shell people who just live here. This is the 21st century.”

At the outset of 2022, these Mariupol residents are just like us – blithe and certain in our own security, in our neighbors’ fundamental humanity, in our own capacity to take whatever comes our way. Together with the characters, we pass from disbelief to a slow realization of what is happening.

You almost don’t notice the swift transition from everyday confidence to hiding in the basement, shortages and then harrowing escapes from a city littered with corpses and ruined buildings. Through the words of the protagonists, we witness the atrocities of the Russian invaders, as well as the decisions our heroes make in the face of mortal danger.

Twenty-nine-year-old Valeria Mykhailovska (Hanna Datsko), working in Czechia when she learns of Russia’s invasion, is wracked by guilt. She can shower with hot water, but she can’t reach her mother in Mariupol. She decides to return to her native city and get her mother out. Is she a hero? What about Yevheniya Ivanchenko (Susan Hwang), the police captain who never thought of leaving her city and kept on working, supporting her fellow citizens

with food, hugs and prayers? Hearing them tell it through their own words brings the realization that they’re just people.

Through the deft interweaving of four eyewitness accounts from various perspectives, the story of a people – the Ukrainians of Mariupol – begins to emerge. I suddenly remember the dead, whose voices don’t sound from the stage. The number of people who perished in Mariupol is uncountable, as the Russian occupiers are already rebuilding the sites they bombed, erasing evidence of murder.

“I saw people getting killed, people dying because there was no water, no food. ... People were buried in our yard,” Yaroslav says near the show’s end. “I saw this with my own eyes.”

The set and production design, by Tom Lee with Waldemart Klyuzko, look deceptively simple. They provide for the journey that the performers, audience and everyone present undertake together. We witness the transformation of beautiful, historic Mariupol, home to nearly half a million, into a site of abominable war crimes, the stronghold of a fierce Ukrainian defense and ultimately into memory.

Earlier in the show, the cast recalls Russia’s undeclared 2014 invasion of Ukraine’s eastern city of Donetsk, setting the stage for what is to come. As if voicing the evil that Russia is about to unleash, they whisper in a sinister chorus: “Life is cruel and unfair; life is hopeless and short. ... He

(Continued on page 11)

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Biden...

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Biden's meeting with Mr. Zelenskyy will be the first face-to-face talks between the two leaders since the U.S. Congress on April 20 finally approved a desperately needed \$61 billion military aid package for Ukraine.

It comes shortly after Mr. Biden told Time magazine in an interview that he did not support NATO membership for Ukraine – a position in contradiction with that of NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg – which is likely to raise questions from Mr. Zelenskyy.

"While he's in Normandy, he'll have the opportunity to sit down with President Zelenskyy and have an engagement with him to talk about the state of play in Ukraine and how we can continue and deepen our support for Ukraine," Mr. Sullivan said.

"He will also have an opportunity several days later to see President Zelenskyy at the G-7 [Group of Seven summit] in Italy, and then as you saw, he has asked Vice President [Kamala] Harris to represent the United States at the peace summit in Switzerland, and I will accompany the vice president on that trip," he said.

In the wide-ranging June 4 interview with Time, Mr. Biden said that "peace looks like making sure Russia never, never, never, never occupies Ukraine. That's what peace

looks like."

But, he added, "It doesn't mean NATO, [that] they are part of NATO."

"It means we have a relationship with them like we do with other countries, where we supply weapons so they can defend themselves in the future. But ... I am not prepared to support the NATOization of Ukraine," Mr. Biden said.

In reaction to Mr. Biden's interview, a NATO source who spoke on condition of anonymity told RFE/RL that "my understanding is that the American line has been and still is that Ukraine should be offered 'a bridge to NATO membership.'"

Furthermore, the source said, NATO clearly stated in the final declaration of last year's summit in Vilnius that "Ukraine's future is in NATO" and there are indications that the upcoming summit of the alliance in Washington next month would reinforce the message of support for Kyiv's eventual membership.

"My understanding is that the Vilnius declaration still stands, we haven't started drafting the Washington declaration yet but the understanding going in to the talks is that the language not only will stay the same but that there will be a 'plus up' or a 'tweak up' so that the text might be even slightly more positive towards Kyiv," the source said.

Ukraine was one of the first former Eastern bloc countries to join NATO's Partnership for Peace plan in 1994, and

Kyiv applied for NATO membership in September 2022 after Russia proclaimed it had annexed part of Ukraine's southeast.

Oleksandr Krayev, program director of the analytical center Ukrainian Prism, told RFE/RL that Mr. Biden's statement "is not very positive" for Ukraine because it establishes the position that the United States is not ready to support Ukraine's membership in NATO.

But on the other hand, Mr. Biden's words are not unlike what the United States has said before: "Ukraine will not be in NATO, but Ukraine is perceived as an ally in NATO, and if someone wants to use weapons of mass destruction there or something similar, the Americans will react," Mr. Krayev said.

At a NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, NATO members welcomed Ukraine and Georgia's aspirations to join but declined to provide a clear timeline for their possible membership.

The 2008 summit was also attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin, who participated in bilateral NATO-Russia talks.

Mr. Zelenskyy's talks with Mr. Biden will come amid a difficult battlefield situation for outmanned and outgunned Ukrainian forces on the eastern front.

Russia has stepped up almost daily strikes on civilian targets in the northeastern region of Kharkiv, where Moscow has been attempting to reestablish a bridgehead, and in the eastern region of Donetsk, where intense fighting continues.

Mr. Zelenskyy will also meet French President Emmanuel Macron on June 7 in Paris, the Elysee Palace announced. Meanwhile, Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni said that Mr. Zelenskyy will take part in the G-7 summit of the most developed nations that will be held on June 13-15 in the southern Italian region of Puglia.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian military will continue using long-range drones to "degrade" Russian infrastructure, Mr. Zelenskyy said on June 4, praising Ukrainian forces for using both first-person view (FPV) drones and long-range drones in combat.

"In this war, it has been proven – and especially by our warriors – that drones can give the advantage and help regain the initiative," Mr. Zelenskyy said in his nightly address.

The use of the long-range drones had "proven Ukraine's ability to degrade the internal strength of a terrorist state," he said, adding that their use "must continue" and vowing to increase the production and procurement of drones.

A long-range Ukrainian drone targeted a Russian Voronezh-M early warning radar station, a Ukrainian military intelligence official told RFE/RL on May 27, in one of Kyiv's deepest attacks inside Russian territory since Moscow launched its full-scale

invasion.

The drone covered a distance of 1,120 miles to hit a radar station in the city of Orsk near the Russian-Kazakh border. Ukraine said that set a record for distance traveled by a drone in an attack inside Russia.

In early May, Ukraine said one of its drones traveled a distance of 932 miles and struck an oil refinery in Russia's Republic of Bashkortostan.

The use of FPV drones in late winter and early spring – while Ukraine waited for fresh supplies of artillery and other military equipment from its partners – "practically saved the front line," Mr. Zelenskyy said.

He also thanked Ukrainian soldiers for helping to stabilize the area around Kharkiv, which has had to fend off a Russian offensive that began in early May.

Mr. Zelenskyy also said that the majority of the battles and the heaviest attacks currently taking place are in the Donetsk region.

In a meeting earlier on June 4 with Ukraine's military leadership, the situation in Kharkiv as well as in the south and in the border areas of the Sumy and Chernihiv regions was addressed, he said.

The Ukrainian military is now "doing everything necessary to make Russia see that we have the means to respond to any attempt to expand the war and increase pressure on Ukraine," the Ukrainian president said without referring to a change in policy announced last week by the United States allowing weapons it has supplied to be used to strike targets inside Russia in defense of Kharkiv.

Mr. Zelenskyy also noted that it is only the beginning of June, "but these are already the weeks that will determine the whole summer and, in many ways, this year."

Earlier on June 4, Russia launched a missile attack on Ukraine's southeastern city of Dnipro, regional Gov. Serhiy Lysak said on Telegram, adding that several civilians were injured.

Ukraine's air defenses shot down two missiles, but falling debris ignited a fire, Mr. Lysak said.

"As a result, residents were injured, including children. A 1-month-old baby boy is in satisfactory condition. ... A 17-year-old boy is in hospital in moderate condition. A 68-year-old man and three women – 32, 36 and 56 years old – were also injured," Mr. Lysak added.

(With reporting by Rikard Jozwiak)

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NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 2)

weapons to strike military targets on the territory of Russia in the areas bordering the Kharkiv region," the president's office said. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on May 31 that President Joe Biden had given Ukraine the go-ahead to use U.S. weapons to strike inside Russia for the limited purpose of defending the eastern city of Kharkiv. Speaking in Prague on May 31 at an informal meeting of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) foreign affairs ministers, Mr. Blinken said Ukraine had asked Washington for authorization to use U.S. weapons to strike inside Russia as it tries to defeat Russian troops that began a full-scale invasion in February 2022. Mr. Zelenskyy spoke on June 2 at the Shangri-La Dialogue, a conference sponsored by the International Institute for Strategic Studies. He met with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd

Austin for further discussions on support for his embattled country. After arriving at the conference venue in a motorcade amid heavy security, Mr. Zelenskyy said in a statement on X that he had come to gather support from the Asia-Pacific region for a peace summit planned for June 15-16 in Switzerland. He said he planned to hold several meetings, including with Singaporean President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Timor-Leste President Jose Ramos Horta and Singaporean investors. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Situation at nuclear plant is 'precarious'

The situation at Ukraine's Zaporizhia nuclear power plant "remains precarious" and it would be unsafe to restart the facility, which has been occupied by Russian forces since shortly after the Kremlin's full-scale invasion began in February 2022, United Nations nuclear watchdog chief Rafael

(Continued on page 11)

Zelenskyy greeted...

(Continued from page 1)

Russia that threaten Ukraine's border areas. Germany this week did the same. "They're authorized to be used in proximity to the border when they're being used on the other side of the border to attack specific targets in Ukraine," Mr. Biden told ABC News anchor David Muir regarding Ukraine's use of U.S. weapons. "We're not authorizing strikes 200 miles into Russia and we're not authorizing strikes on Moscow, on the Kremlin." The meeting between the U.S. and Ukrainian presidents comes after Mr. Biden gave an exclusive interview to Time maga-



A Ukrainian military aircraft from the 831st Tactical Aviation Brigade pivots in the sky during a combat mission on June 6.

NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 10)

Grossi said on June 3. "All seven pillars of nuclear safety and security have been fully or partially compromised," the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said. Mr. Grossi said he met on May 28 in Kaliningrad with Aleksei Likhachev, head of the Russian state nuclear firm Rosatom, to discuss the possibility of restarting the facility. Both sides in the conflict have accused the other of launching drone and missile attacks on the site as fighting rages in the region. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Drone strikes damage Russian oil installations

Suspected Ukrainian drone strikes early on June 6 set Russian oil installations on fire in two regions bordering Ukraine as Russia continued to launch strikes on civilian targets in several Ukrainian regions. A drone attack on an oil refinery in Novoshakhtinsk in Russia's Rostov region early on June 6 caused a fire, prompting a temporary halt of operations, regional Gov. Vasily Golubev said. "Work was suspended due to a repeated attack, the personnel were evacuated to a safe distance," local Telegram channels quoted Mr. Golubev as saying. The fire covered an area of 100 square meters, Mr. Golubev said, adding that, according to preliminary data, there were no dead or injured. The SHOT telegram channel, citing eyewitnesses, reported that several loud explosions were heard in Novoshakhtinsk in the early hours of June 6, then fire and smoke became visible in the area of the oil refinery. The Astra channel published a video of a large fire at a plant at the Novoshakhtinsk installation. The strike was the third on the Novoshakhtinsk oil refinery, which is located some 10 kilometers from the border with Ukraine. Two previous attacks in March and April also temporarily stopped its activity, according to Russian media. Meanwhile, Belgorod regional Gov.

zine in which he said that Kyiv does not need membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to secure peace in the Russo-Ukrainian war.

It was their first meeting since Mr. Biden signed a law passed by Congress in late-April to provide more than \$60 billion in military assistance to Ukraine as Kyiv was facing a drought in weaponry and ongoing Russian advances along the 620-mile front line. As weaponry from Washington and Brussels trickles in, Russia has gained 78 square miles of additional territory as of May, having now occupied 17.57 percent of Ukrainian territory, according to reliable open-source intelligence analyst War Mapper.

While Ukraine is still starved of ample munitions, Russia's "meat grinder" tactics are keeping Kyiv's forces on their toes along four axes in the northeast, east, south and southeast.

"There are chances to change it [the situation] in our favor," Oleksandr Syrskiy, Ukraine's military commander-in-chief, wrote on social media.

"The main efforts of the Russians are concentrated in the Kurakhove, Pokrovsk, Kupiansk, Kharkiv axes. In addition, they conduct active assault operations in Vovchansk and on the approaches to Chasiv Yar [west of occupied Bakhmut] with the aim of capturing and taking control of these two population centers," Mr. Syrskiy wrote.

Russia's incremental gains in May came at great cost, especially along the Kharkiv region axis. Estimated daily Russian personnel losses soared above 1,000 troops during that month.

Ukraine's General Staff of the Armed Forces estimates that since February 2022 more than half a million of the enemy's mil-

Vyacheslav Gladkov reported that a drone attack on an oil depot in Stary Oskol, less than 100 kilometers from the Ukrainian border, started a fire. "The Ukrainian Armed Forces, using a kamikaze drone, attacked an oil depot on the territory of the Stary Oskol urban district. As a result of the explosion, one of the tanks caught fire. Four fire crews quickly extinguished the fire. The blast wave blew out the windows in the security building. There were no casualties," Mr. Gladkov wrote. Kyiv has not commented on the reports, which could not be independently verified. Ukraine has been subjected to incessant Russian drone and missile strikes on its civilian and energy infrastructure since the start of the war that have caused numerous casualties among civilians and huge material damage. Kyiv in turn has increasingly resorted to targeting Russian energy infrastructure, mainly oil installations, with its own drone strikes in order to degrade the Russian military's fuel reserves. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian air force said that its air defense systems shot down 17 out of 18 Russian drones over the Mykolayiv, Kherson, Zaporizhia and Khmelnytskyi regions early on June 6. Separately, Serhiy Lysak, the governor of the southern region of Dnipropetrovsk, said that a Russian drone hit a passenger minibus in the city of Nikopol, injuring four people and triggering a fire. Mr. Lysak posted photos of the burnt-out vehicle on his Telegram channel. (RFE/RL's Russian Service and Current Time)

Relatives of mobilized protest in Moscow

About 20 wives and mothers of mobilized Russian troops engaged in a rare protest in front of the Defense Ministry building in Moscow on June 3, demanding the return of their family members from the battlefield in Ukraine. They also called for time limits for the service of mobilized men and sought a meeting with Defense Minister Andrei Belousov. The Russian Justice Ministry on May 31 declared the Put

(Continued on page 15)



Soldiers from Ukraine's 108th Territorial Defense Brigade engage in a night battle on June 4 against Russian forces in the war zone.

itary personnel have been decimated, an approximate figure that both U.S. and British intelligence have corroborated.

Changing tactics

Since Ukraine this week got the green light to strike cross-border targets, a number of Russia's air-defense and artillery systems have been destroyed near the north-eastern bordering regions of Kharkiv and Sumy.

Kharkiv's regional military administration has for two straight days reported that no cross-border projectile attacks using converted S-300-400 missile systems have been recorded.

"Allegedly, the fighters of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with the help of Western weapons also hit a Russian command center east of Belgorod, a military warehouse in the border town of Shebekino and a military convoy 50 kilometers from the border in the Kursk region," said German expert Jurgen Nauditt.

Separate Ukrainian drone attacks have persisted as well and an oil refinery in the Rostov-on-Don region that neighbors the Donetsk region was struck by drones.

Overnight on June 6, a "double-tap" surface drone strike sunk the Russian Saturn harbor tug boat near the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula, Ukraine's Defense Intelligence (HUR) said.

Frustration

Kyiv reportedly cannot wait long enough to employ F-16 Fighting Falcon jets on which Ukraine's qualified aviators have been training in numerous countries.

Some expected them to be deployed when plans were announced to provide Ukraine with the multi-role fighter aircraft.

Eight former and current unnamed U.S., Ukrainian and European officials told Politico that capacity to train more pilots is limited and that 30 Ukrainian aviators are still waiting to be trained.

School seats at a base in Arizona can only accommodate "12 pilot trainees at a time,"

the June 5 article reported. "Two other facilities in Denmark and Romania have a similar issue with available training spots."

Blackouts

Power outages since mid-May continue in Ukraine as Russia has repeatedly targeted Kyiv's energy facilities.

Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko, while on a foreign trip to Vienna on June 6, warned citizens that they face a "difficult winter" of blackouts.

About 50 percent of Ukraine's power infrastructure has been damaged due to Russian aerial strikes, and rolling blackouts have been reintroduced for up to five to eight hours a day in Kyiv, according to individuals in the city with whom The Ukrainian Weekly speaks daily.

Mr. Halushchenko also told journalists that his country's "energy sector is much worse than in 2022-2023" when Russia first started targeting power and hydro-electric stations.

Prisoner swap

Seventy-five Ukrainian military personnel and civilians held in Russian captivity for up to two years were repatriated to their homeland on May 31.

They were swapped at the Sumy regional border with Russia.

It was the first exchange of prisoners in three months.

Several buses entered Ukrainian territory carrying the POWs, with many of the former captives looking emaciated and subject to malnutrition. They looked similar to how Holocaust survivors looked when they were first found in German concentration camps toward the end of World War II.

"According to U.N. reports, the majority of Ukrainian POWs are subject to routine medical neglect, severe and systematic mistreatment, and even torture while in detention. There have also been isolated reports of abuse of Russian soldiers, mostly during capture or transit to internment sites," the Associated Press reported.

Mariupol...

(Continued from page 8)

who has nothing to lose, loses nothing."

Survivors know what it is to lose – your home, your loved ones, a part of yourself. Ms. Tkacz and the Yara Arts Group have a long tradition of making theater that stirs emotion to reconnect with something lost. The recent refugees of Russia's brutal war in Ukraine, like the post-World War II refugees from Ukraine and their offspring, know how much survival is a chance alignment of unpredictable circumstances, a matter of luck and an uncomfortable gift. When the cast sings Mr. Kytasty's "The Tree of Life" and Oksana Horban's dance

reaches an ecstatic frenzy, I think about our privilege and our duty to speak of our loss and to celebrate being alive.

"Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life" will be performed again on June 17 at the Bohemian National Hall in New York, and on June 18 at the Jersey City Theater Center in Jersey City, N.J. More details and ticket information, see Yara's website at <https://www.yaraartsgroup.net/>.

Larissa Babij is a Ukrainian-American writer, translator and dancer who has been based in Kyiv since 2005. Her book, "A Kind of Refugee," is based on her wartime dispatches on Substack (<https://akindofrefugee2022.substack.com/>). It was published by ibidem Press in 2024.

Wesleyan University hosts poignant 'Unissued Diplomas' exhibit featuring students who perished in Ukraine

by Katja Kolcio

MIDDLETOWN, Conn. – Their images are as haunting and heartrending as they are beautiful. Few exhibits capture the horrible injustice and tragedy of the war in Ukraine like “Unissued Diplomas” – an array of photographs of Ukrainian college students whose lives were cut short by Russia’s full-scale war on Ukraine.

The exhibit, sponsored by the national advocacy group Razom for Ukraine, was brought to Wesleyan University through the efforts of freshman Oleksandra Volkova, a native of Kremenchuk in eastern Ukraine.

The exhibit was on display for weeks in the main atrium of Wesleyan’s impressive Olin Library. Hundreds of students preparing for final exams and working on term papers passed the exhibit each day.

“I think this exhibit helped our students to keep their sense of perspective,” said Ms. Volkova. “As much anxiety and stress as American students might experience at the end of each school year, these stresses pale in comparison to the daily bomb alerts and shootings that plague students in cities like Kharkiv or Kherson since the beginning of the new Russian offensive.”

Among the most poignant stories included in the “Unissued Diplomas” exhibit

it is that of Leah Krylova, a student at Mariupol State University who died at the age of 20. She was killed along with other members of her family after her father’s home in Mariupol was struck by a Russian artillery shell in the early months of the invasion.

Then there is the story of Oleksandra Borivska, an 18-year-old student at Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University who was forced to relocate to Vinnytsia, Ukraine. She had dreamed of a career in international diplomacy, traveling the world and hoping to visit the Grand Canyon someday. She was killed on her way to a driving lesson in Vinnytsia on July 14, 2022.

Ivanna Obodzinska was a young mother who tried to balance her work life, twin babies and studies at Polissia State University, where she studied Turkish and loved to fill her home with the fragrance of fresh-baked bread. She died together with her two toddlers when two Russian missiles struck her home.

Hlib Ivanov was a political science student at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy who suspended his studies on the second day of the invasion to join the Ukrainian Armed Forces along with his father. At the age of 21, he had already visited 14 countries, played the saxophone and



Courtesy of U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal’s office
U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal greets the organizers of the “Unissued Diplomas” exhibit at the Olin Library on the campus of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn. Pictured (from left to right) are Prof. Katja Kolcio, Mr. Blumenthal, exhibit organizer Oleksandra Volkova and Administrative Assistant of Wesleyan’s Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life Marie McKenna.

soccer, and enjoyed supporting his favorite international team, FC Barcelona. He died during the hellish battles surrounding the city of Bakhmut.

The photographs and short captions brought to vivid relief and eloquently shared the stories of so many lives that had been cut short. They included stories of young people who harbored smalltown ambitions and loftier goals – entrepreneurs who dreamed of opening their own pastry shops, or IT companies, country boys who loved to go fishing with friends, young women who were passionate about their studies and a life of public service, couples that had just been married or became engaged. All had dreams and lives that were cut short by Russia’s aggression against Ukraine.

Sam Oblomei studied at the National University of Environmental Studies and Forestry. He practiced the Japanese martial art of Bujinkan, dreamed of living in an eco-village, built his own library and planned a trip to Norway with his fiancée. He took part in the liberation of Irpin and Bucha, rising to the rank of commander. Just 12 days before his death he married his

beloved girlfriend.

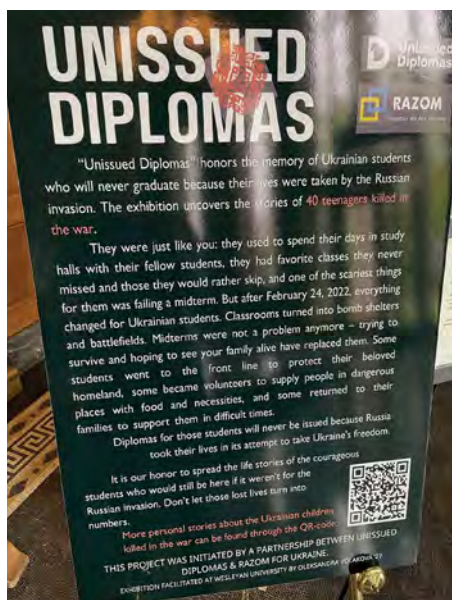
Before arriving at Wesleyan, Ms. Volkova herself narrowly avoided death or injury in a Russian missile attack on her hometown of Kremenchuk. She had left an ice cream parlor in a shopping mall just minutes before it was blown apart by a Russian projectile attack.

Since coming to Wesleyan, Ms. Volkova has become active in protests against the Russian invasion. She attended a rally at the Connecticut state capitol where she shared her story and met U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal.

The introductory display for the exhibit outlines its mission.

“Diplomas for these students will never be issued because Russia took their lives in its attempt to take Ukraine’s freedom. ... It is our honor to spread the life stories of the courageous students who would still be here if it weren’t for the Russian invasion. Don’t let those lost lives turn into numbers,” the display said.

To bring the “Unissued Diplomas” exhibit to a local college or university next fall, interested individuals are urged to contact Razom for Ukraine.



A promotional placard for the “Unissued Diplomas” exhibit stands at the entrance to the Olin Library.



A poster features war victims Ivanna Obodzinska (top) and Oleksandra Borivska (center).

Moscow’s...

(Continued from page 2)

Svalbard Treaty,” Washington University Global Studies Law Review 15-1, 2015).

After the demise of the Soviet Union, Moscow continued to expand its presence on the archipelago. By the early years of the 21st century, there were nearly 4,000 Russians there, most of whom were engaged in coal mining. The closure of these mines due to others elsewhere being more cost-effective and the fall of the demand for coal, however, led to a rapid decline in the number of Russians in Svalbard over the last 15 years. There are now fewer than 700. In the summer of 2022, they became the center of a controversy when Norway imposed sanctions on Russia because of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s war in Ukraine. Oslo said it would restrict Moscow’s ability to supply the Russian community in Svalbard. That sparked outrage in Moscow and even suggestions by Russian parliamentarians that their country should use military means to defend its rights under the 1920 treaty. Fortunately, this conflict was resolved without any direct use of force (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 7, 2022).

That clash also highlighted divisions in

Europe that may now be more critical. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said then and has repeated that any attack on Svalbard would be treated as an attack on the alliance as a whole and thus trigger an Article 5 response. However, he is Norwegian, and his words appear to reflect Oslo’s hopes more than the position of all NATO countries. Many in the alliance, including the United States, have not adopted an unequivocal position. Thus, in a crisis, Putin might be tempted to test the West in a place few have thought about (On these divisions and especially on the ambivalent U.S. position, see National Defense University Press, November 8, 2018).

Such a crisis now appears to be brewing, and it is the result of an extraordinary mix of developments coming together:

First, Moscow is increasingly angry about the West’s growing projection of power in the Arctic, one the Kremlin believes Russia has no choice but to oppose to defend the entrance to the Northern Sea Route and support its expansive claims to the Arctic seabed (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, June 7, 2022; Korabel.ru, May 20; Fond Strategicheskoi Kul’tury, May 24; Live24.ru; Segodnia.ru, May 27);

Second, ever more Russian officials, in comparison to two years ago, are suggesting that Norway has allowed the West to militarize Svalbard and thus has lost the

right to claim sovereignty over the archipelago (Svobodnaya Pressa, May 11; Segodnia.ru, May 27);

Third, the Russian Federation, for the first time, enjoys the support of China on this issue. Beijing has now called for the development of a seed vault in Russia to replace the one in Svalbard and has simultaneously dispatched a new research expedition to the Norwegian archipelago to show the flag (T.me/first_arctic, May 5; TASS, May 7; Yakutiya24, May 8; NewsX, May 18; Vybor Naroda, May 28);

Fourth, international demand for coal has been rising, and the rapid warming of Svalbard, currently running at twice the rate of the Arctic in general, is making mining there an increasingly attractive option for Moscow, which sees such sales as helping to maintain its economy and project power (RG.ru, May 7);

Fifth, in what may prove the black swan of this trend, a parcel of private land in Svalbard larger than Manhattan has been put up for sale, sparking fears that whoever purchases it will use it against the interests of one side or the other (Bloomberg, May 10; Svobodnaya Pressa; Fontanka.ru, May 11).

So far, Russia has largely limited its response to patriotic actions among Russians in Svalbard beyond propaganda campaigns in Russia about the Svalbard situation. However, it has increased its mili-

tary actions in the area around the archipelago (Izvestiya, May 10; Smotrim.ru, May 21; The Barents Observer, May 26, 29; Info24.ru, May 29). Some may assume that the current upsurge in tensions will ease and be resolved in much the same way that the crisis was two years ago, especially as some Russian businesses are very publicly talking about organizing Russian tourism to Svalbard, visits that, because of the 1920 treaty, would not require visas but could be used to test Norway’s position (Epigraph, April 5). Such an outcome is certainly to be desired, but it is far from certain, especially given the overheated atmosphere in the Kremlin and Putin’s search for new targets to threaten and undermine the West and its support for Ukraine.

To ensure that Svalbard, a place mostly known, if at all, in the past for having more polar bears than people, does not become a casus belli, NATO needs to adopt a common position regarding the defense of Svalbard against any Russian attack. A failure to do that will only increase the likelihood that Putin will target this isolated archipelago as the next step in his campaign to weaken the West.

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Ukrainian pro sports update

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Dovbyk is La Liga's leading goal scorer

In his first season playing in one of Europe's top five soccer leagues, 26-year-old Artem Dovbyk was the top scorer in Spain's top division with 24 goals. The Ukrainian striker captured the Pichichi Trophy, the prize given to the competition's top goal scorer at the end of each campaign. No Girona player or a Ukrainian has ever won the award, but Dovbyk finished one goal ahead of Alexander Sorloth (23 goals) and Jude Bellingham, his closest challengers. He was two goals behind Sorloth only to bag a hat-trick in the club's 7-0 final game drubbing of Granada.

Dovbyk followed the Polish star Robert Lewandowski, who won the Pichichi Trophy in his debut season in La Liga in 2022-2023. This was Dovbyk's first-ever campaign in one of Europe's top five leagues, having played primarily in Moldova, Denmark and his native Ukraine. He quickly convinced team leaders that he has the talent to succeed and can look forward to showcasing his skills in the UEFA Champions League with Girona on the

verge of their first qualification to the elite European club tournament.

Dovbyk has exceeded expectations in Catalonia this season, replacing the offensive production lost with the departure of striker Taty Castellanos. Brought in from SC Dnipro-1 as Girona's most expensive signing, he scored in his first match against Real Sociedad. Fellow Ukrainian Viktor Tsyhanov assisted on the goal, which was only fitting since he helped recruit his international teammate to the Spanish club and has greatly assisted Dovbyk in assimilating in his new home.

Head coach Michel Sanchez has been very impressed with his new striker's ability to put the ball in the back of the net. He recognizes Dovbyk's knack for scoring goals, senses he is happy with his new team and rates him as a player who can impact the outcome of a game.

The Girona coach also wanted the forward more involved in the team's overall play. He does not want a 10-player block with lone striker up top. It took Dovbyk

some time to grasp Girona's system, but the Ukrainian was willing and eager to learn, wanting to become a more integral part of the team's overall strategy. His eight assists along with his 24 goals also placed him atop the league in total points.

Having won the Pichichi Trophy, Dovbyk will play in Euro 2024 with Ukraine this summer. He was a key contributor in his national team's qualification, scoring a critical 88th-minute game-winning goal against Bosnia and Herzegovina in the playoff semifinal.

Girona finished the season in third place thus qualifying for next season's Champions League. Entering this elite competition with one of the continent's top strikers whose contract runs through 2028 will be a huge advantage for the club.

Ukraine fourth at ICF Canoe Sprint World Cup

Ukraine finished in fourth place out of 15 countries with 10 total medals at the

(Continued on page 14)



www.gironafc.cat

Artem Dovbyk, who previously played for SC Dnipro-1 of the Ukrainian Premier League, is the leading goal scorer in the Spanish La Liga after he signed a five-year contract with Girona FC.



Ukrainian pro sports update: tennis

by Ihor N. Stelmach



Wikipedia

Anhelina Kalinina, seen at Wimbledon in 2019, was a semifinalist at the Internationaux de Strasbourg in Strasbourg, France, on May 19-25.

The professional tennis season's second Grand Slam event at Roland Garros began on May 26. It featured eight Ukrainian women in the opening draw of 128 competitors. Three were among the tournament's top 32 seeds: No. 15 Elina Svitolina, No. 18 Marta Kostyuk and No. 30 Dayana Yastremska.

By the end of the first round of play, four Ukrainian players were eliminated, with two forced to retire due to injury. Lesia Tsurenko had to end her tournament run reportedly because she was dealing with a stomach virus while trailing in her opening set, and Anhelina Kalinina could not continue and had to retire when she was down 1-4 in her deciding set. Additionally, Yuliia Starodubtseva and Nadia Podoroska did not reach the round of 64.

California-born Katie Volynets and Marta Kostyuk were ousted in the second round while Yastremska could not get past No. 3 seed Coco Gauff of the U.S.A. in the third round, leaving Svitolina as the lone

Eight Ukrainians compete at 2024 French Open

remaining Ukrainian in the tournament. Svitolina defeated Karolina Pliskova (3-6, 6-4, 6-2) of the Czech Republic, Diane Parry (6-4, 7-6 (3)) of France and Ana Bogdan (7-5, 6-2) of Romania. In the round of 16, Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan survived a sluggish start to take the first set and, with Svitolina showing signs of fatigue, the Russia-born eased to a 6-4, 6-3 victory, eliminating the last Ukrainian woman in singles play.

Volynets gave reigning Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova a scare when the Ukrainian qualifier took the opening set (6-0) before two rain delays

over two days saw the Czech pull ahead and take the match.

Yastremska returning to form at Roland Garros

After the 2024 Australian Open, Yastremska began to get sick regularly. One week before the start of the French Open, while playing at the BNL d'Italia in Rome where she lost in the round of 32, she admitted that she was not in the best of shape, but she tried as best she could.

She made good on her promise to be prepared for Roland Garros, defeating Australian Ajla Tomljanovic, who was mak-

ing her own comeback from surgery. Rallying from one set down to win 3-6, 6-3, 6-3, Yastremska ramped up her practice routine ahead of Paris. While she's still not 100 percent, she's giving it her all and feeling better every day.

She said she felt great at the start of the 2024 season, flying through eight consecutive matches to reach the Australian Open semifinals as a qualifier. En route, she upset reigning Wimbledon champion Vondrousova and two-time Australian Open winner Victoria Azarenka of Belarus.

(Continued on page 15)

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Ukrainian pro...

(Continued from page 13)

2024 International Canoe Federation Canoe Sprint World Cup in Poznan, Poland, on May 24-26. Ukrainian athletes captured four gold, three silver and three bronze medals. Their four gold medals tied for third place with Germany and their 10 total medals was tied with China for second place.

Ukrainian gold medalists were Oleksandr Zaitsev (K1 men's 200 meters) – who edged Poland's Jakub Stepun by a mere 0.03 seconds – Liudmyla Luzan (C1 women's 200 meters) and Valeriia Tereta (C1 women's 5,000 meters and C1 1,000 meters).

Ukraine wins three medals in Para badminton

The Bahrain Para Badminton International 2024 was held in Manama, Bahrain, on May 21-26 where some 180 athletes from 24 countries competed to qualify for the upcoming 2024 Paralympics. Only the top 10 percent of internationally ranked athletes participated in this tournament. Three female Para athletes represented Ukraine in Bahrain with two of them earning medals. Olena Kozyna won a gold medal in standing SL3 (moderately affected movement on one side of the body) and a bronze medal in SL3 mixed doubles with Indian partner Deep Ranjan Bisoyee. Nina Kozlova added a bronze medal in SH6 (short stature).

Ukrainian athletes earn 10 medals at Balkan Games

Ukrainian athletes won 10 medals at the Balkan Athletes Championships held in Izmir, Turkey, on May 25-26. Ukrainians won six gold, one silver and three bronze medals. Ukrainian gold medalists included Vladyslav Lavskyy in the high jump (2.23 meters), Illya Kravchenko in pole vault (5.30 meters), the men's 4x400-meter relay team (Danylenko, Hutsol, Rodchenkov, Pohorilko, 3:07.16 seconds), Mariana Shostak in women's 400 meters (52.73 seconds), Olha Lyakhova in women's 800 meters (2:01.11 seconds) and the women's 4x400-meter relay team (Shostak, Klymiuk, Buryak, Melnyk, 3:31.36 seconds).

The Balkan Athletics Championships (established as the Balkan Games) is one of the oldest traditions in international athletics. It was first organized in 1930. Twenty-five countries are eligible to compete in Balkan Athletics.

Host nation Turkey led the medal table with 36 total medals.

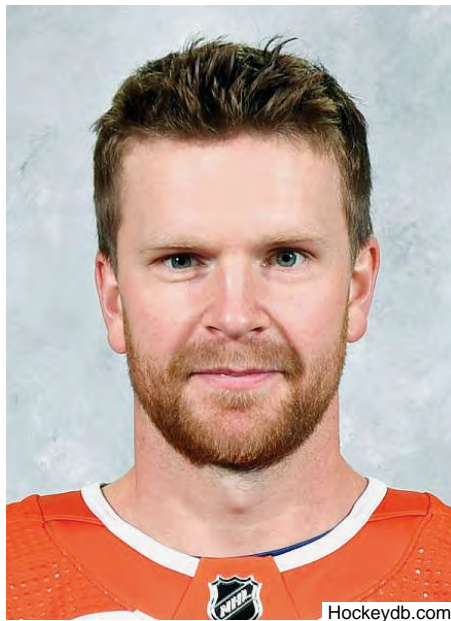
Usyk-Fury rematch set; champ may lose IBF belt

Undisputed world heavyweight champion Oleksandr Usyk's rematch with Tyson Fury is set for December 21 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The date was confirmed by Saudi Arabia's General Entertainment Authority chairman on May 29.

Usyk became the first undisputed heavyweight champion in 25 years when he defeated Fury in a split decision on May 19. The 37-year-old Ukrainian is the first heavyweight to own every major title belt since Lennox Lewis.

After losing his first-ever professional bout, Fury was contractually entitled to step back into the ring with Usyk. Fury is reportedly eager to get a second chance to fight the man who defeated him.

There remains the possibility that only the World Boxing Organization (WBO), World Boxing Association (WBA) and World Boxing Council (WBC) belts will be on the line in Riyadh should Usyk be stripped of his International Boxing Federation (IBF) belt. Because Croatian Filip Hrgovic is the mandatory challenger for the IBF title and was set to fight Daniel Dubois of Great Britain on June 1, Usyk may



Edmonton Oilers defenseman Brett Kulak, who is of Ukrainian descent, will face Florida Panthers assistant captain Matthew Tkachuk, who is also of Ukrainian descent in the 2024 Stanley Cup Finals.

be forced to cede that belt. Usyk has appealed to the IBF to keep the belt.

Hrgovic, the mandatory IBF challenger for almost two years, may have been fighting Dubois for the IBF title. Usyk's team has formally requested an exception to allow him to retain his undisputed status ahead of his rematch with Fury.

Ukraine wins silver medal at European Deaf Football Championships

The 10th European Deaf Football Championships were played on May 20 through June 1 in Antalya, Turkey, with teams from 13 countries competing in the event that was organized by the Turkish Deaf Sports Federation. Ukraine, in Group C, competed against Italy, Serbia and Denmark.

Team Ukraine breezed through group play defeating Denmark 8-0 and Serbia 9-0 before settling for a draw against Italy 1-1. Their 2-1-0 record qualified them for the quarterfinal, where they shut out Poland 3-0, and then took care of host Turkey in the semifinal 2-0. In the final, Ukraine faced a strong squad from France, with the back-and-forth affair seeing the French ultimately prevail by a final score of 3-2.

Mahuchikh clears 2-meter mark in Stockholm

In her first competition of 2024 at the Diamond League's June 2 meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, Ukrainian high jumper Yaroslava Mahuchikh went up against long-time rival Nicola Olyslagers of Australia. Mahuchikh passed on the early-season meetings to focus on her training, specifically on improving her run-up. Two meetings into the season and she found herself behind Serbian Angelina Topic, who won competitions in Doha and Marrakesh.

With the Paris Olympics around the corner, the Ukrainian needed a strong start to her season and she got it with a statement performance, clearing 2.00 meters in her second attempt, the 10th time she cleared the mark in her career. She later retired after two failed attempts to clear 2.03 meters, feeling some pain in her hamstring. She finished with the highest outdoor mark posted this year and a critical opening victory.

Teammate Iryna Gerashchenko placed third in the competition with a mark of 1.94 meters.

Two Ukrainian boxers qualify for 2024 Olympics

Featherweight Aider Abduraimov (57 kilograms) and super heavyweight Dmytro Lovchynskyi obtained Paris 2024 quotas during the 2024 Boxing Second Qualification Tournament held in Bangkok, Thailand, on May 24-June 2. Abduraimov



Andrew Nynka

Matthew Tkachuk (No. 19) of the Florida Panthers skates up ice during a game against the Boston Bruins on October 30, 2023, in Boston

and Lovchynskyi will join middleweight Oleksandr Khyzhniak to compete in the boxing competition at the Summer Games in Paris from July 27 to August 10.

Ukraine seventh in wheelchair fencing

Ukrainian Para fencers won nine medals to finish in seventh overall place among 34 competing countries at the 2024 Wheelchair Fencing World Cup in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on May 23-26. Ukraine's 12 Para athletes were among 127 wheelchair fencers at the event. Ukraine captured seven individual medals (all bronze) and two team medals, one a silver in the open team event. Olena Fedota-Isaieva won two individual bronze medals and was Ukraine's top performer.

Ukraine captures five medals in jiu-jitsu

The European Championship Masters 2024 was held in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, on May 20-June 1. The International Ju-Jitsu Federation's tournament drew 69 competitors from 14 countries including five athletes representing Ukraine.

Ukraine ended the competition in eighth place out of the 13 countries winning medals. All five Ukrainian martial artists won medals. Ukraine's lone gold medal was won by Igor Kryvonos (master 4 85-kilograms), while silver medals were won by Rostyslav Rybak (master 1 94-kilograms), Mykhailo Artsimovych (master 2 94-kilograms) and Andrii Kaliyuzhyi (master 4 over-94-kilograms). Artem Kychko (master 1 77-kilograms) won a bronze medal.

Shakhtar Donetsk earns place in UEFA Champions League

Ukrainian Premier League winner Shakhtar Donetsk's top ranking in European competition over the current five-year period earned it an automatic spot in next season's UEFA Champions League after Real Madrid defeated Borussia Dortmund 2-0 to win the Champions League title. Real Madrid had already secured its place by winning the La Liga title a month earlier, thus opening a slot for UEFA's club coefficient leader. Shakhtar's coefficient of 63,000 was well ahead of second-best Dinamo Zagreb's 50,000.

The result means Shakhtar receives the upgrade and a guaranteed share of Champions League prize money worth tens of millions of dollars.

Two Ukrainians facing off in Stanley Cup Finals

The 2024 Stanley Cup Finals matchup features the Edmonton Oilers facing off against the Florida Panthers. No matter which team prevails in the best of seven series, a Ukrainian player's name will be

engraved on Lord Stanley's Cup. It will be either Oilers defenseman Brett Kulak or Panthers left wing and assistant captain Matthew Tkachuk.

The 30-year-old Kulak was drafted 105th overall in 2012 by the Calgary Flames where he played one full season before being traded to the Montreal Canadiens in October 2018. A regular with the Habs, he was dealt to Edmonton at the trade deadline in March 2022. The 6-foot-2, 192-pound defenseman has now played seven full National Hockey League campaigns and signed a four-year, \$11 million contract extension with Edmonton at the end of the 2021-2022 season. In 2024, he played in all 82 games, scoring three goals and adding 13 assists for 16 points with 30 penalty minutes.

Kulak doesn't get big minutes (averaging about 15 minutes of ice time per game) or power-play time, but he is a steady blueliner who keeps things under control in his own zone. Some hockey analysts have called the March 2022 trade for Kulak one of the best deals made by Oilers General Manager Ken Holland.

One of Kulak's biggest pluses is his foot speed. As per NHL Edge metrics, Kulak's top speed lands in the 79th percentile among NHL regulars. He is a proven veteran, can read plays well and skates a safe game. He stands forwards up at the blue line, forcing dump-ins, and his speed shows up again when he beats or ties a rushing forward to the puck.

In his two seasons with Florida, 26-year-old full-blooded Ukrainian Matthew Tkachuk has done it all, transforming an underachieving team into a two-time Stanley Cup finalist. He scores goals (66) and sets up teammates (131 assists), totaling 197 points in 159 regular season contests with the Panthers. He stands up for his mates (211 penalty minutes in two seasons) and has assumed a significant leadership role both on and off the ice.

"Just a lot of motivation, dedication, commitment," Tkachuk said to the media after his squad defeated the New York Rangers to win the Eastern Conference title, their second in a row, in six games. "The right pieces were added. Some great pieces added. Just one mindset: to do whatever you can to get back to it [the Stanley Cup Finals]. And I thought the guys that were here last year have done an unbelievable job, coming back for the start of camp with this on their minds. So, we are not done yet."

(Based on reporting by Football Espana, ICF, Badminton World Federation, Athletes Podium and Yahoo sports via AP, Express, Score, UEFA.com, Wanda Diamond League and NHL.com.)

Ihor Stelmach may be reached at ihor-genia@sbcglobal.net.

OUT & ABOUT

June 10 Washington	Book launch, "National Tribune - Legacy of Liberated Nations: The Life and Ideas of Ivan Vovchuk," and panel discussion, "Countering Russian Propaganda," Vovk Foundation, (location of event is being kept private), 412-334-7555 or www.vovkfoundation.org	June 16 Horsham, PA	Father's Day Heritage Fest, featuring Ukrainian cultural program, Ukrainian American Sports Center - Tryzub, www.tryzub.org or 267-664-3857
June 13 Washington	U.S.-Ukraine Working Group Yearly Summit XII: Providing Ukraine with an Annual Report Card Amidst War - Year Three," National Press Club, waz102@columbia.edu or 917-476-1221	June 16 Horsham, PA	U.S. Amateur Soccer Association Region 1 Open and Amateur (men's, women's over-30, etc.) National Cup Championship Finals, and Northern Pennsylvania Soccer League match between the Philadelphia Ukrainian Nationals and the PA Classics, Ukrainian American Sports Center - Tryzub, www.tryzub.org
June 14 Chicago	Film screening, "Believe in Ukraine: A Full Circle Short Film Experience," with curator Anastasiia Kirii (via Zoom) and director Lukia Costello, Ukrainian National Museum, www.ukrainiannationalmuseum.org	June 17 New York	Performance, "Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life," Yara Arts Group, Bohemian National Hall, www.yaraartsgroup.net
June 14-16 Yonkers, NY	Yonkers Ukrainian Heritage Festival, St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church, www.yonkersukrainianfestival.org	June 17 West Chicago, IL	Golf fundraiser to support Ukrainian wounded warriors, Ukrainian American Veterans (Post 32), St. Andrew Golf and Country Club, www.uavgolf.org or 224-456-8944
June 15 New York	Book presentation, "Battleground Ukraine: From Independence to the War with Russia" by Adrian Karatnycky, with Jay Nordlinger, Ukrainian Institute of America, www.ukrainianinstitute.org	June 18 Jersey City, NJ	Performance, "Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life," Yara Arts Group, www.yaraartsgroup.net
June 15 Binghamton, NY	Ukrainian Festival, Sacred Heart Ukrainian Catholic Church, 607-797-6294 or www.sacredheartucc.org	June 19 Jenkintown, PA	Presentation by Rev. Ronald Popivchak, "Current Religious Reflections," followed by a picnic, Ukrainian American Senior Citizens Association, Passage Restaurant, jayaworsky@gmail.com
June 15 Kenmore, NY	Fundraiser for Ukraine, Ukrainian National Women's League of America (Branch 97), St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church hall, ckonowka@gmail.com	June 22 Chicago	Benefit Gala, Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, www.uima-chicago.org
June 15, 22 Somerset, NJ	Gerdan Traditional Beading Workshop, with instruction by Stephanie Milan, two courses each: Bracelet Loom Workshop and Beaded Necklace Workshop, Ukrainian History and Education Center, www.ukrhec.org	<i>Entries in "Out and About" are listed free of charge. Priority is given to events advertised in The Ukrainian Weekly. However, we also welcome submissions from all our readers. Items will be published at the discretion of the editors and as space allows. Please send e-mail to mdubas@ukrweekly.com.</i>	

Tennis...

(Continued from page 13)

However, a quick turnaround from her loss to Zheng Qiuwen of China to the next event in Linz, Austria, a week later possibly contributed to her immune system getting run down. Yastremska was forced to retire four games into her BNP Paribas Open match against Emma Raducanu of Great Britain and her health only worsened with the start of the clay court season.

She felt ill with throat pain at the Charleston Open in early April after losing to Magda Linette of Poland in the round of 32. She then returned to her practice home in Nice, France, and took a week off.

Late April had her at the Madrid Open where she suffered from a blocked nose and a severe cough. She again went home to Nice to recuperate and readjust her body. When she arrived in Rome, her nose was better but she re-developed a bad cough.

Yastremska's feistiness was not too affected by her ailments, allowing her to win a few challenging matches in Madrid and Rome. She looked more like her old self at the Foro Italico, but lost to No. 2 seed and eventual finalist Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus.

A streaky player in her professional career, Yastremska likes quicker surfaces than clay, having never won a match at the French Open before this year. Nonetheless, she says having to play on clay forces her to improve her game. She works on variations of shots and tries to be clever in her play. She cannot play the way she wants to on a clay court. She has to adapt to the surface in order to perform well and win.

Yastremska is still dealing with the emotional ramifications of Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. In an effort to raise awareness of those devastated by the ongoing war, she released a charity single, "Hearts," on the two-year anniversary of the conflict. Over the past five years, she has released several other pop songs.

"Hearts" serves as a reminder of the war and addresses the effects of tragedy on children. The song also discusses how strong children are, and how they can still live and play amid war.

Yastremska was eliminated in the third round at the 2024 French Open, but she performed well on clay before facing Gauff.

Kalinina a semifinalist at Strasbourg Open

Ukrainian Kalinina rebounded from a disappointing first several months of 2024 to make the semifinal round at the Internationaux de Strasbourg in Strasbourg, France, on May 19-25. Ranked No. 56 after peaking at No. 25 late in 2023, the 27-year-old defeated Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, the No. 8 seed, 6-3, 3-6, 6-0 and then upset top seed and No. 6 ranked Czech Marketa Vondrousova, 5-7, 6-3, 6-2 to move into the last four of the event.

Unfortunately for the Ukrainian, third-seeded Danielle Collins was a bit more rested and it showed in their semifinal match, the second of the day for Kalinina. Collins won 7-6 (3), 6-2 in one hour and 39 minutes after surviving a tough opening set, having lost four straight games after being up 3-0. Kalinina had to finish her quarterfinal against Vondrousova because it was postponed from the previous day. Fatigue set in after she valiantly persevered in a difficult first set with Collins.

After dropping 25 spots to No. 56, her showing in Strasbourg elevated her close to fellow countrywomen Lesia Tsurenko (No. 44) and Dayana Yastremska (No. 32). Heading into the French Open, Kalinina had moved up to No. 48.

She was a surprising loser in the first round at Roland Garros, going down to Camila Osorio, 6-3, 6 (2)-7, 1-4 of Colombia before retiring due to an injury.

(Based on reporting by Tennis.com and the Women's Tennis Association.)

Ihor Stelmach may be reached at ihorge-nia@sbcglobal.net.

NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 11)

Domoy (The Way Home) movement, which has organized such women-led protests in Moscow, a "foreign agent," an action often taken by the Kremlin to silence independent voices. President Vladimir Putin in September 2022 ordered what he called a "partial mobilization" of up to 300,000 reservists after setbacks in the Ukraine invasion. (RFE/RL's Current Time)

Men with dual citizenship cannot leave Ukraine

Ukrainian men of conscription age who hold dual citizenship or foreign permanent residence permits are not allowed to leave the country as of June 1, Andriy Demchenko of Ukraine's State Border Service said on Telegram. Under the current martial law, Ukrainian men from 18 to 60 years of age are not allowed to leave the country. Kyiv does not recognize dual nationality and regards citizens who hold dual citizenship as Ukrainian nationals. "Before we allowed dual citizens or Ukrainians with permanent residence abroad to leave the country, but not anymore," he said. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Bulgarian join probe into alleged war crimes

The Sofia city prosecutor's office is taking part in an investigation into whether citizens were murdered in 2022 in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions of Ukraine. A pretrial proceeding has been initiated on the matter, according to a Bulgarian state news agency report quoting the Sofia city prosecutor's office. Bulgaria's participation in the investigation comes after Sofia backed a clause in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's peace formula that provides for the restoration of justice and the prosecution of war crimes committed in Ukraine. The State Agency for National Security (DANS) said that an investigation had been opened based on data showing that war crimes had been committed in Ukraine by members of the Wagner merce-

nary group. (RFE/RL's Bulgarian Service)

Bulgaria to build network of gas pipelines

Bulgarian gas operator Bulgartransgaz on June 6 signed contracts to begin construction of the Vertical Corridor network of gas pipelines. The Vertical Corridor initiative provides an alternative route to ship gas to the European Union market from Greece to Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Moldova and Ukraine as well as in the opposite direction through E.U. natural gas and liquefied natural gas systems. It comes ahead of the expected suspension of Russian gas transit through Ukraine at the end of this year and aims to improve security and ensure diversity of gas transportation means and routes from southeastern Europe to the European Union. (RFE/RL's Bulgarian Service)

Russia expands U.K. sanctions list

Russia's Foreign Affairs Ministry said on June 3 that it had expanded Moscow's sanctions list of British nationals by adding an unspecified number of "representatives of the political establishment, the expert community, and the U.K. media." The ministry said those sanctioned have been responsible for "forming and implementing London's anti-Russian course." It did not give any details on which individuals were added to the sanctions list. (RFE/RL)

Warrant for former Belarusian Olympian

A Moscow court on June 4 issued an arrest warrant for well-known Belarusian athlete Paval Shurmey, who is currently a member of the Kastus Kalinouski Regiment made up of Belarusians fighting alongside Ukrainian troops against Russia. The arrest warrant is part of a case launched against Mr. Shurmey on a charge of participating in a military conflict abroad. In his native Belarus, Mr. Shurmey is wanted on charges of extremism and taking part in a military conflict in a foreign country. Mr. Shurmey competed at both the 2004 and 2008 Olympic Games with the Belarusian team in rowing events. (RFE/RL's Current Time)



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Tel: (845) 626-2938
Fax: (845) 626-8636



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