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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

Published by the Ukrainian National Association Inc., a fraternal non-profit association

Vol. XCII

No. 27

THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

SUNDAY, JULY 7, 2024

\$2.00

Five killed in Russian attack on Dnipro; Zelenskyy renews call for air defense systems

RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy renewed his plea to the West for advanced air defense systems and long-range weapons after at least five people were killed in a Russian drone and missile attack on Dnipro on July 3.

"Only two things can stop this Russian terror – modern air-defense systems and the long-range capabilities of our weapons," Mr. Zelenskyy wrote in English on X.

"The world can protect lives, and it requires the determination of leaders. Determination that can and must make protection from terror the norm again," Mr. Zelenskyy said.

The Ukrainian leader has long called for better air defense systems and weapons, with the last request coming on June 30, after a Russian rocket attack killed seven people and wounded 35 others in the city of Vilnyansk, in the southern Zaporizhia region.

The July 3 attack also wounded at least 34 people, according to Mr. Zelenskyy. Fourteen houses were destroyed in the

strikes, Serhiy Lysak, governor of the Dnipropetrovsk region, said in a message on Telegram. He added that the attack caused multiple fires in the city.

Separately, Ukraine's Air Force said it had shot down five missiles, including an Iskander-K cruise missile, and six unmanned aerial vehicles, five of which were Shahed-type kamikaze drones. It said the attack mainly targeted Dnipro.

This is the third time that Dnipro has been targeted in the last five days. A high-rise building was destroyed in an attack on June 28, while at least 12 people were wounded in a drone strike on July 1.

Russia also shelled Ukraine's southern Zaporizhia region early on July 3, destroying 14 houses and wounding a man.

On the same day, the Russian Defense Ministry said it had downed a total of 10 Ukrainian drones in three regions, including five in Belgorod, four in Bryansk and one in Moscow. The ministry added that two unmanned boats heading toward

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Pioneering scientist and Plast leader Lubomyr Romankiw dies at 93

by Roman Tymotsko

LVIV – Lubomyr Romankiw, a distinguished scientist known for his groundbreaking contributions to computer technology and the former Chief Scout of Plast Ukrainian Scouting organization who played a significant role in the development of Ukrainian scouting, passed away in New Jersey on June 27 after a long illness. He was 93.

"I would like to inform all Plast members that on Thursday, June 27, 2024, in New Jersey, after a long and difficult illness, the former Chief Scout Lubomyr Romankiw passed away. Please pray for his soul," Mr. Romankiw's niece, Natalia Kravchuk, wrote on Facebook.

Yuriy Yuzych, head of Ukraine's National Plast Council, as well as the World Plast Executive also confirmed the news.

"The third Ukrainian chief scout raised and invested at least \$500,000 in the development of Plast in the 1990s. He professionalized the central office of Plast in Ukraine. It was his efforts that largely made Ukrainian scouting the most massive youth movement in Ukraine," Mr. Yuzych, who is also a historian, wrote in a post on Facebook.

Mr. Romankiw leaves behind a legacy



Lubomyr Romankiw, the former Chief Scout of Plast Ukrainian Scouting organization, is seen during the organization's worldwide jamboree in Lviv, Ukraine, in 2012.

of dedication to youth education and scientific innovation.

"Lubomyr Romankiw is the author and co-author of more than 65 patents.

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U.S. to provide \$2.3 billion in new security aid for Ukraine

As NATO allies pledge \$43 billion in military aid for Kyiv in 2025



North Atlantic Treaty Organization Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg (right) and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy are seen together in an undated file photo.

RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service and RFE/RL

The United States will soon announce more than \$2.3 billion in new security assistance for Ukraine, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said on July 2 during a meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart at the Pentagon.

Ukrainian officials have been urging their allies for months to supply more air defense systems to defend against frequent

missile and drone attacks from Russian forces following Moscow's 2022 invasion.

Mr. Austin said that the latest weapons package for Ukraine would include arms like anti-tank weapons and air-defense interceptors and will allow accelerated procurement of NASAMS and Patriot air defense interceptors.

Russian strikes killed at least four peo-

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Hungary's Orban presents Zelenskyy with cease-fire proposal on first visit to Kyiv

RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service

KYIV – Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said he presented Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy with a cease-fire proposal aimed at pausing fighting with Russia more than two years into Moscow's all-out invasion.

Speaking to reporters after meeting with Mr. Zelenskyy in Kyiv, Mr. Orban gave no details about the contents of the proposal but said that he asked Mr. Zelenskyy "whether it was possible to take a break, to stop the firing, and then continue the negotiations," adding that a cease-fire "could ensure speeding up the pace of these negotiations."

"I am very grateful to the president for his frank opinion on this issue," he added.

The talks, which came one day after Hungary took over the rotating presidency of the European Union, were notable because of Mr. Orban's vocal, persistent criticism of Western military aid for Kyiv.

Mr. Orban is also one of the few Western leaders to have met Russian President Vladimir Putin since the invasion.

Mr. Zelenskyy did not express his opinion on the proposal during the briefing with reporters, but a spokesman for Mr. Zelenskyy said later on July 2 that Mr. Zelenskyy gave Mr. Orban an opportunity to air his thoughts. Ihor Zhovkva, Mr. Zelenskyy's deputy chief of staff, also said that Hungary is not the first country to come forth with a potential peace plan.

Ms. Zhovkva said that Mr. Zelenskyy listened to Mr. Orban's proposal but stated Ukraine's "quite clear, understandable and known" position in response.

Ukraine says its "territorial integrity" must be the foundation of any peace agreement – a notion underscored by 80 countries that participated in the Ukrainian-initiated Global Peace Summit in Switzer-

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Fragging, desertions and other problems mounting for Russian invaders

by Paul Goble
Eurasia Daily Monitor

According to Russian President Vladimir Putin and his entourage, the Russians fighting in Ukraine are an army of heroes who enjoy almost unanimous domestic support. Neither of those claims is true (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, April 1). The Russian forces in Ukraine are now riddled with fragging, desertions and corruption – all signs of the kind of degradation that threatens unit cohesion as well as command and control. Russians at home, despite government polls claiming overwhelming popular support for the invasion forces, are in fact increasingly skeptical of the Kremlin's compulsion to scrape the bottom of the barrel to fill the depleted army ranks and pay increasingly larger bonuses to convince Russian military-age men to sign up (For background, see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 13, 2023).

In another sign of trouble, the Putin regime has been forced to ask Russians to turn in their privately owned guns to help the invasion forces. Furthermore, and perhaps even more significant as far as the future is concerned, Russians are increasingly alarmed by serious crimes committed by veterans of the war on Ukraine, many of whom were recruited out of prison (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, October 25, 2023, January 19). More Russians are demanding that the government take action against them despite Putin's insistence that these veterans will form the future Russian elite (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, March 13).

The most dramatic of these problems is the rise of "fragging" among the Russian occupation forces. The term, which refers to attacks on officers by soldiers under their command, became notorious first

among U.S. military units in Vietnam and then within Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Novaya Gazeta Europa, a Russian media outlet based in Latvia, has now collected data that indicates fragging is taking place in Russian military units in Ukraine (Novaya Gazeta Europa, June 14). The outlet examined military court records in the occupied territories from February to October 2023 and identified more than 135 cases in which Russian soldiers were charged with killing either civilians or other Russian military personnel. These figures are necessarily incomplete due to the limited time and territory they covered. Additionally, not all crimes of this kind are brought to the courts or correctly categorized, and the data is not disaggregated between the murder of civilians and the murder of Russians in uniform. Even so, such crimes must be of concern to Moscow because they point to breakdowns in command and control as well as unit cohesion, which threaten the Russian military's ability to carry out its mission. Most immediately, increased fragging is likely prompting officers to avoid giving orders that might lead to their own deaths at the hands of their own soldiers.

Desertion from the ranks is also an increasing problem. Earlier this year, Novaya Gazeta Europa and other independent Russian media outlets reported that the number of such crimes has grown ten-fold since 2023 and continues to rise every month (Novaya Gazeta Europa, February 29; Zona.media, April 12). Many of these cases are being tried in regions where most assume patriotism is high and where men had earlier joined up to receive large

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Russia seeks to maintain battlefield initiative on eve of NATO summit

by Pavel K. Baev
Eurasia Daily Monitor

The ever-changing battlefield dynamics of Moscow's war against Ukraine have made it impossible for predictions to be accurately tied to the political calendar. This unpredictability is particularly acute in the lead-up to one of the most critical events of 2024 – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit in Washington on July 9-11. Recently, Russia's war-making has included renewed efforts to increase pressure on Ukraine and thus foster discord between the transatlantic allies (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, May 28, June 3, 10). Those efforts have been centered on the offensive operation in the Kharkiv direction, which gained some ground in the first couple of weeks but has now been exhausted and started to roll back. Combat operations have reached an unstable equilibrium, giving NATO and its partners an opportunity to recalibrate their strategy for defeating Russia's aggression calmly and carefully (Nezavisimaya Gazeta, June 26).

Russian President Vladimir Putin insists that Russian forces maintain the initiative on the battlefield and will receive new weapon systems, including intermediate-range missiles, which Moscow will reportedly begin producing soon (Izvestiya, June 28). Putin's assertion reveals that the tacti-

cal fiasco in the Kharkiv region amounts to a strategic failure on Moscow's part, as several key Ukraine supporters, including the United States, have granted Kyiv consent for using long-distance weapon systems to strike military targets inside Russia's territory (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, June 3; The Insider, June 24). The accuracy of these strikes depends on the supply of real-time intelligence, and Kyiv's Western partners can assist with determining proper target coordinates. Meanwhile, the Russian High Command still demands authorization to attack the U.S.-made RQ-4 Global Hawk and MQ-9 Reaper drones over international waters in the Black Sea, which would signify a high-risk escalation (Izvestiya, June 29).

On the one hand, the near-intercept of an unarmed U.S. drone by a Russian Su-35 fighter last week in Syria and a possible direct hit in the Black Sea theater could cast a shadow over the NATO summit (The Moscow Times, June 28; RIA Novosti, June 29). On the other hand, such an action could prompt Ukraine's partners to focus more on coordinating joint increases in the supply of arms and munitions to Ukraine for the coming months. The question of charting a path for Ukraine's accession to the alliance, which dominated the previous NATO summit in Vilnius, has begun to be

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NEWSBRIEFS

Report: China developing drones for Russia

Chinese and Russian companies are reportedly working on a kamikaze drone modeled after the Iranian-made Shahed-class unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), according to European officials who spoke to the U.S.-based outlet Bloomberg. The unnamed officials said the companies first held talks in 2023 and started developing and testing a model this year. A Chinese company last year unveiled the Sunflower 200, which bears a striking resemblance to the Iranian-made Shahed-136 drone used by Russia in its war against Ukraine. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Belarus strengthens air defenses

Belarus has deployed additional air defense forces to its border with Ukraine, claiming its southern neighbor poses threats to its "critical infrastructure facilities." Meanwhile, Ukraine dismissed Belarus's concerns over its movement of troops and equipment, saying it was forced to do so because Minsk continues to support Russia's invasion. Belarus on July 29 accused Ukraine of moving forces, weapons and military equipment toward their joint border and also claimed Kyiv was stepping up drone activity in the area. Belarus, an ally of Russia in its war with Ukraine, said earlier this week that it had shot down a quadcopter, which had illegally crossed the border from Ukraine "to collect information about the Belarusian border infrastructure." Ukraine and Belarus share a nearly 684-mile-long border. "We are ready to decisively use all available forces and means to protect our territory and the population of the Republic of Belarus from possible provocations in the airspace," Andrey Severinchik, commander of the Belarusian Air Defense Forces, said on June 29 in a statement published on the Defense Ministry's Telegram channel. Andriy Demchenko, spokesman for Ukraine's State Border Guard Service, dismissed Minsk's fears of an alleged buildup near the border, noting that it was Minsk that allowed Russia to use its territory as a launching pad for its invasion of Ukraine. Thousands of Russian troops stationed in Belarus poured over the border into Ukraine on February 24, 2022, seeking to move southwest toward Kyiv, the capital. They were

stopped and later driven back. "It is pleasant, of course, that they haven't forgotten about our state, but they shouldn't worry – Ukraine does not pose a threat. On the contrary, we are forced to defend ourselves, including in the Belarusian direction, because Belarus continues to support terrorists, and at one time opened its border to Russian invaders," Mr. Demchenko told Ukrayinska Pravda. Following a successful Ukrainian counteroffensive in September 2022 that recaptured large swaths of territory in the northeast, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the mobilization of up to 300,000 men, many of whom were sent to Belarus to train. (RFE/RL, with reporting by Reuters and Ukrayinska Pravda)

Murder charge after Kazakh activist's death

The Ukrainian Prosecutor-General's Office said on July 2 that it plans to change the charge against two Kazakh men from attempted murder to murder after an outspoken critic of the Kazakh government, journalist Aidos Sadyqov, died in hospital hours earlier after being shot in Kyiv on June 18. "Currently, law enforcement agencies are working on changing the previous charge of attempted murder into a charge of premeditated murder and group conspiracy to commit murder," the office said in a statement. Earlier in the day, Mr. Sadyqov's wife Natalya Sadyqova wrote on Facebook that her husband, who had been hospitalized in intensive care since the shooting two weeks ago, died following complications. Mr. Sadyqov, who had gained a wide following on social media among disaffected Kazakhs, moved to Kyiv in 2014 along with his family after Kazakh authorities launched a slander investigation into Ms. Sadyqova, a journalist for the independent Respublika newspaper. He was shot on June 18 as he sat in his car, outside his apartment building. Ms. Sadyqova, who was in the car at the time, was unharmed. "For 13 days Aidos fought for his life in the intensive care unit, but a miracle did not happen," she wrote. "His death is on the conscience of Toqaev," she said, referring to the current Kazakh president, Qasym-Zhomart Toqaev. A day after the shooting, Ukrainian police identified two

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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

FOUNDED 1933

An English-language newspaper published by the Ukrainian National Association Inc., a non-profit association, at 2200 Route 10, P.O. Box 280, Parsippany, NJ 07054.

Yearly subscription rate: \$90; for UNA members – \$80.

Periodicals postage paid at Caldwell, NJ 07006 and additional mailing offices.
(ISSN – 0273-9348)

The Weekly:

Tel: (973) 292-9800; Fax: (973) 644-9510

Postmaster, send address changes to:

The Ukrainian Weekly
2200 Route 10
P.O. Box 280
Parsippany, NJ 07054

The Ukrainian Weekly Archive: www.ukrweekly.com

The Ukrainian Weekly, July 7, 2024, No. 27, Vol. XCII

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and advertising manager

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Zelenskyy says more air defenses needed against 'Russian terror' as Vilnyansk casualty toll tops 40

RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service

Ukraine's State Emergency Service on June 30 raised the number of injured to more than 35 in an apparent Russian rocket attack the previous night that killed seven people in the city of Vilnyansk, in the southern Zaporizhia region of Ukraine.

It reported that building and car fires had been put out at the scene, where Gov. Ivan Fedorov said three children were believed to be among the dead and nine more children among the dozens of injured.

Initial reports had put the number of injured at around 10.

"How can we be expected to live?" a resident of Vilnyansk said in comments to RFE/RL.

"There is a burned corpse there," she said, pointing to rescue workers wrapping the body of a blast victim.

"This is a very popular area. There is an ATB [supermarket]. There are benches. People are walking. Children are walking. Some people were driving by from work. They just disappeared [in the blast] and we cannot find them," she said.

The attack in Vilnyansk came with Russian forces putting heavy pressure on Ukrainian defenders along the 621-mile front line and with increased air strikes in the 28-month-old full-scale invasion.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in his June 30 video address, urged Ukraine's Western allies to allow the coun-



Volodymyr Zelenskyy's official Telegram channel

The aftermath of a Russian ballistic missile strike on Vilnyansk in the southern Zaporizhia region on June 29.

try's forces more freedom to conduct attacks inside Russia.

"The sooner the world helps us to deal with the Russian warplanes dropping these bombs, the sooner we can attack the Russian military infrastructure, the Russian military airfields, the closer we are to peace," Mr. Zelenskyy said.

On June 30, local leaders in Kyiv and Kharkiv – Ukraine's two largest cities – reported attacks on residential and civilian areas.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said fragments of a Russian-launched missile

caused a fire in the Obolon district of the capital. There was no initial report of casualties, but authorities said emergency crews were at the site.

Separately, Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekho said Russia had fired guided bombs into a residential area of Ukraine's second-largest city, causing casualties.

"Unfortunately, we already have information that one person has been killed. Inspection of the site of arrival continues," he said.

Also on June 30, Ukraine's military released a video it said was filmed from a

drone that showed what appears to be bodies in a civilian area in Toretsk, claiming that Russia had used powerful "glide bombs" on the mining town in the Donetsk region.

Highly destructive Soviet-era glide bombs are launched from warplanes that are out of the range of air defense systems.

Johan Norberg, a senior analyst and expert on Russia's military at the Swedish Defense Research Agency FOI, said jet-dropped glide bombs have been used to a devastating effect and have been key to allowing Russia to make gains in recent months.

Late on June 29, Mr. Zelenskyy cited a huge Russian strike that gutted four floors of an apartment building in the central city of Dnipro on June 28 as further evidence that his country needs more air defense systems from its allies.

"There are ways to overcome the daily Russian terror from which Ukrainian cities and communities suffer," Mr. Zelenskyy said. "For this, it is necessary to destroy Russian terrorists and launchers where they are, as well as increase the number of modern air defense systems in Ukraine."

The previous night, Kyiv had reported thwarting 10 aerial drone attacks, and said Russian forces had dropped anti-tank missiles on the city of Derhachi, in the central Kharkiv region.

Russia has stepped up air strikes this

(Continued on page 14)

Xi, Putin kick off SCO summit in Kazakhstan with Belarus set to join

by Reid Standish
RFE/RL

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping are in Kazakhstan on July 3 as part of a two-day summit for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which is poised to admit Belarus as a member.

The expected expansion of the club of Eurasian countries is part of another push from Beijing and Moscow to use the regional security bloc as a counterweight to promote alternatives to the Western institutions that make up the U.S.-led world order.

The annual SCO leaders summit in Astana will also provide a valuable platform for Putin as Russia's war in Ukraine grinds well into its third year and the Russian leader is eager to showcase that he's not internationally isolated.

Beyond adding Belarus, the summit is set to focus on better coordination for counterterrorism in the region, which remains high on the agenda for members following Moscow's Crocus City Hall attack in April. The security situation in Afghanistan and a new mechanism for an investment fund proposed by Kazakhstan will also be discussed by leaders.

"The mandate for the SCO can be quite vague and far-reaching," Eva Seiwert, an analyst at the Berlin-based MERICS think tank, told RFE/RL. "Officially speaking, this is a security organization that focuses on improving collaboration among its member states and building mutual trust throughout the region."

The bloc was founded in 2001 with China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as members with a focus on settling territorial disputes and has grown to tackle issues like regional security and economic development. The SCO added India and Pakistan in 2017, Iran in 2023 and is set to grow again with the addition of Belarus this year.



The SCO's evolution over its 23-year history has largely been shaped by China and Russia's evolving relationship.

At times, Moscow has looked to water down or block Chinese-led plans for the bloc, including proposals for a regional development bank and a free-trade zone. But as Mr. Xi and Putin have built stronger ties between their countries in recent years – especially since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine – the two leaders have more actively made the SCO a part of their broader cooperation together and a centerpiece of their shared anti-U.S. worldview.

"For a long time, China wanted to make sure that the SCO is not portrayed as an anti-Western organization, but this has changed, especially since Iran joined," Ms. Seiwert said. "It's becoming clear that the

SCO doesn't care so much about what the West thinks anymore."

At a meeting of senior Russian officials in June, Putin spoke about the creation of "a new system of bilateral and multilateral guarantees of collective security in Eurasia," with the help of existing organizations like the SCO, to work toward gradually "phasing out the military presence of external powers in the Eurasian region."

Temur Umarov, a fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center in Berlin, told RFE/RL that, while the SCO is increasing its international visibility and geopolitical weight, it still remains an organization that is heavy on symbolism but light on substance.

"It's still trying to figure out what it is now and what it can be," he said. "At the end

of the day, its main advantage is just the sheer size and its collective GDP, but there are still almost no substantial results."

In the absence of a clear mandate, the SCO is largely serving as a diplomatic forum for regional leaders to get sought-after face time with Mr. Xi and Putin.

The Chinese leader arrived in Astana on July 2 for a one-day state visit with his Kazakh counterpart, Qasym-Zhomart Toqaev, and will travel to Tajikistan following the SCO summit for a separate state visit.

Mr. Xi and Putin are also set to have their own one-on-one meeting on July 4 on the sidelines of the summit, marking their second meeting this year.

Leaders and representatives from non-member states like Azerbaijan, Qatar, Mongolia, the United Arab Emirates, Turkmenistan and Turkey are also expected to attend, as is United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Notably absent from this year's summit is Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with Foreign Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar attending in his place.

Niva Yau, a fellow at the Atlantic Council's Global China Hub, says that India appears to be losing interest in the SCO, in part due to New Delhi's tense rivalry with Pakistan, but also over ongoing tensions with China amid a multiyear border dispute.

She says that this growing reticence from India may hamstring the bloc's potential and Beijing's future plans for it.

"It reduces the SCO's global profile and limits some of China's bigger plans," she told RFE/RL.

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Ukrainian American veterans group quietly makes impact with aid for Lviv military rehabilitation center

by Mark Raczkiewycz

CHICAGO – A group of about 50 Ukrainian American military veterans are flying under the radar to make every dollar count to assist a military clinical rehabilitation hospital in Lviv by reducing costs and working on a demand basis to meet the facility's needs.

Ukrainian American Veterans Post 32, based in the third most populous U.S. city, has raised more than \$70,000 since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 and has managed to limit administrative costs to maximize the impact of their work.

"It's because we all work on a volunteer basis; ... our expenses go for printing advertising, food, water" and other costs at fundraisers, said group commander Peter Bencak, 73, a veteran of the Vietnam War era.

Since the Russo-Ukrainian war started in 2014, the group has built a trustworthy

relationship with the Lviv military clinic and has raised a total of some \$125,000 for various equipment that their Ukrainian counterparts requested.

"We source everything from Europe" to save on shipping costs, said Mr. Bencak on July 2. "We see some organizations raise funds with high administrative costs because they travel back and forth to Ukraine and that airfare costs money."

The group's counterparts instead suggest where equipment can be bought, and they then order what's needed following a mutual agreement. The invoice is then paid by the veterans group, the group commander said.

After taking part in a volunteer forum in 2018 when Mr. Bencak and another group member, John Steciw, met then-President Petro Poroshenko – Ukraine's first wartime president – they started directly working with the Defense Ministry's Military Medical Clinic Center of the Western Region.



Ukrainian American Veterans Post 32 commander Peter Bencak is pictured at a Chicago-area golf course for a fundraiser on June 17.



Courtesy of Peter Bencak

Ukrainian American Veterans Post 32 donated three bladder scanners, with a combined value of \$16,000, to a military rehabilitation clinic in Lviv, Ukraine.



Ukrainian American Veterans Post 32 donated two tongue-and-blown drive wheelchairs worth \$21,000 to Lviv's Military Medical Clinic Center of the Western Region. The units were purchased in Germany.



A new swimming pool filtration system worth \$3,500 was installed at Lviv's Military Medical Clinic Center of the Western Region.

"We chose them because they looked like they had mostly second-hand equipment, and so we started communicating with a neurologist who said 'we always need upgrades,'" the Chicagoan said.

Their first project was based in the Chicagoland area. They sent \$21,000 worth of wheelchairs to the clinic before the group started sourcing medical equipment in Europe.

Other procurements have included a new swimming pool filtration system that cost \$3,500.

"When we visited, the water was yellow; people were urinating in it," Mr. Bencak said.

Two tongue-and-blown drive wheelchairs worth \$21,000, three bladder scanners worth \$16,000 and other items on a demand basis were also procured.

"A recent purchase was a cardiac treadmill that was bought in Ukraine for \$12,000 for stress tests," Mr. Bencak said.

At their most recent event on June 17, the group held a second golf fundraiser that

raised \$22,000. The first event raised \$20,000. The group saves money by occasionally holding their fundraisers at a golf course owned by fourth-generation Ukrainian Americans whose great-grandparents emigrated to the U.S. in 1915, according to Mr. Bencak.

To assure donors that the money raised is going to where it's needed, he said doctors from the Lviv clinic "take pictures or videos for proof."

UAV Post 32's affiliation with the national Ukrainian American Veterans means it is registered as an non-profit 501-(c)3 organization.

Mr. Bencak's next trip to Lviv is planned for next spring and his most recent trip to Ukraine was in 2021 for Ukraine's commemoration of its 30th anniversary of independence since the Soviet Union fell apart.

More than 100 medical facilities have either been destroyed or damaged due to Russian aerial bombardments since 2022.

Donations to the veterans group can be made online at www.uavgolf.org.

From chasing rats to blood baths: How Putin's childhood shaped his leadership

by Vazha Tavberidze
RFE/RL

TBILISI – Julia Ioffe, a Russian-American journalist, has extensively covered Russia and contributed to publications such as The New Yorker, The New York Times and The Washington Post.

RFE/RL's Georgian Service interviewed Ms. Ioffe in Georgia's capital at the ZEG Tbilisi Storytelling Festival, of which RFE/RL is a media partner, where she presented a panel on Vladimir Putin's childhood.

Now the Washington correspondent for the U.S. news website Puck, Ms. Ioffe recently launched a podcast titled About A Boy: The Story Of Vladimir Putin, which explores how the Russian president's challenging early life shaped his transformation into the leader he is today.

Ms. Ioffe spoke about Putin's early life in the "dvor," a communal courtyard in Russia often associated with a tough, working-class life where people commonly have to survive on their street smarts.

RFE/RL: What do you think would be some of the most important lessons Putin took from his experience in the dvor and his youth years in Leningrad, when he was

a gang member?

Ms. Ioffe: So, this is a very key part of the podcast [concerning] what the lessons are, and the way they continue to inform Putin today, the way they continue to inform his decision making, including in Ukraine, including on the world stage. But the lessons are that physical weakness is weakness. You will be devoured. That physical strength is everything. That violence is the only way to change hierarchies, established social hierarchies, that compromise is for weak people and that everything is a zero-sum game.

[It means] that if I'm winning, that means you're losing, and if you're winning, that means I'm losing, so I better change that. There's no such thing as a win-win situation. So, all the people in the West who call for a compromise and a diplomatic solution and negotiations with Putin over Ukraine fail to take into account that he himself does not believe in negotiations. And he does not believe that there can be a world in which both he wins and Ukraine wins. The amount by which Ukraine wins is the exact amount to him by which he loses – and he cannot allow that.

RFE/RL: We don't hear much about

Putin talking about himself and his youth. Considering what he has spoken about, you know, chasing rats, being involved in gang fights, it leads me to a question: How much of this image is crafted? How much of this is what he wants the Russian people to believe, by selling an image of an underdog that always stood up for himself and paved his way with blood and sweat. How much of this is manufactured?

Ms. Ioffe: We know that some of it is true, because we've heard from other people in his life that his parents were quite poor and uneducated, that he did live in a terrible communal apartment, that his parents really were quite traumatized by the war and quite absent.

And we know that this generation in Leningrad, this immediate postwar generation, grew up with really traumatized parents. That's why we try to focus not so much on Putin individually and what actually happened when he was in sixth grade or fifth grade or whatever, but talked about the broader, generational, citywide, countrywide, generation-wide things that were happening that would inform him because, first of all, I don't think a boy from the intelligentsia would be able to fake this, and if

he was able to fake this, I don't think he'd be able to keep this up for 24 years. There's something about it that's quite genuine, quite obviously real.

Second, the fact that this is the image he goes with is telling, because he thinks, I think correctly, that a lot of the country grew up like this or knows someone who grew up like this. It resonates with them, because it's something they know, either because they grew up like this or their parents grew up like this, or their grandparents grew up like this, or all of the above. And that's the Russian everyman.

RFE/RL: Yeah. A dream come true for every Russian "gopnik" ("Gopnik" loosely translates as "thug").

Ms. Ioffe: Yes, gopnik, exactly ... But yes, this is his image of the Russian everyman. [Former U.S. President Donald] Trump has an image of the American everyman; this is Putin's image of the Russian one, and, so far, he's been right. And it's also kind of determinative – he's also created much more of this underclass in Russia through his policies. And now we're seeing that that's who goes and dies in Ukraine,

(Continued on page 9)

Ukrainian American author Karatnycky discusses his new book on modern-day Ukraine

by Mark Raczkiewycz

CHICAGO – New Yorker and Ukrainian American Adrian Karatnycky was not an uncommon sight in Ukraine over the past three decades. As a current senior fellow at the Washington-based Atlantic Council, director of the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter and former president of Freedom House, he has visited Ukraine – by his estimate – more than 200 times since 1989.

Mr. Karatnycky, 70, has over the years had unique access to each of Ukraine's six post-Soviet presidential administrations. Based on those contacts and various other sources, he recently published a comprehensive account of Ukraine's modern history leading up to the full-scale Russian invasion that began in February 2022.

In a linear chronology, he describes Ukraine's emergence as an independent country following the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991 and he delves into the presidential administrations of every president since then: Leonid Kravchuk, Leonid Kuchma, Viktor Yushchenko, Viktor Yanukovych, Petro Poroshenko and Volodymyr

Zelenskyy.

His main motivation in writing the book was to "explain the history of modern Ukraine that people don't know. ... I was motivated to do something that no one else has done," Mr. Karatnycky said before his book signing event at the Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art in Chicago on June 29.

He acknowledged that people outside Ukraine have taken "an intermittent interest in Ukraine" in spurts during pro-democratic upheavals, such as the Orange Revolution of 2004 and the Euro-Maidan of 2013-2014, "but they don't know" the whole picture.

The "knowledge gap" that he filled, according to Mr. Karatnycky, partially targets younger generations who don't know about Ukraine's growth as a nation following years of Moscow's subjugation and Kyiv's transformation into a political nation that is pluralistic and ethnically tolerant.

"I basically wanted to explain to a Western audience ... and certainly to a Ukrainian diaspora audience of how, at the time of the [Russia-Ukrainian] war, at the most perilous moment of Ukraine, the Ukrainian people came together, ... [that] society mobilized together and society has never been more unified in Ukrainian history," he said.

As an American, he compared this period in Ukraine's modern history to the "Founding Fathers" of the United States during the period from 1776 to 1812. The former "shaped the Ukrainian people and the architecture of the Ukrainian state."

The 299-page book describes how Ukraine preserved a relatively huge amount of freedom as compared to the other 14 former Soviet republics that were also under the Kremlin's rule.

Thus, the book is based on a combination of Mr. Karatnycky's personal insight and experiences and, as he says, "reliable secondary sources" from civil society actors, cultural figures, religious leaders, "oligarchs" and authoritative journalists.

What may separate the author's work from scholars who write about Ukraine is that they have "limited access" to sources, while Mr. Karatnycky relied on various eyewitness experiences he had in Ukraine when writing the book, he said.

Mr. Karatnycky said that, to understand

Ukrainian society, having access to the upper echelons of Ukraine's political leadership "helps," but his book "is not [exclusively] a story based on those who've worked" in the presidential office. I compared it to my personal judgment and facts as recorded by history and good journalists," he said.

Each chapter is divided into a presidential administration and ends with "The Future of Ukraine," while a separate chapter separates Mr. Zelenskyy's pre-invasion term and his current leadership amid Europe's largest ground war since World War II.

The chapter on Ukraine's only two-term president, Leonid Kuchma, who ushered in the nation's Constitution while overseeing the privatization of state assets into private hands in 1994-2005, describes how an exclusive club of "oligarchs" emerged to concentrate wealth in the nation.

As a result, the phenomenon of the oligarchs is partially why Ukraine "moved so slowly" in reforming into a democracy. As their "own power center," they acted as a balancing lever along with "civil society being another power center," which is one of the "reasons dictatorship never consolidated in Ukraine," he said.

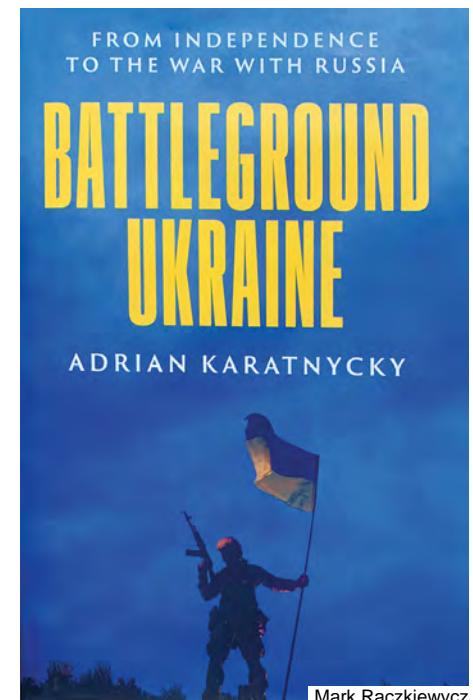
Still, there is scholarly consensus that Mr. Kuchma is largely responsible for creating an oligarchic structure that uses international financial institutions, to create what others have previously called Ukraine's "captured economy." They have also blamed the concentration of wealth for poverty in the country.

Perhaps the biggest drag on Ukraine's slow growth and economic development was the lack of Western aid to Ukraine "in its early years" after gaining independence, which was not the case in Russia and other countries, including Poland.

Mr. Karatnycky also noted that Russia took advantage of Ukraine's corruption to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty, and he delves into the different operational phases of the current war.

He bases this section, which comes toward the end of the book, on conversations with Ukraine's Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security and Defense Council, as well as the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU).

In discussing the diaspora, Mr. Karat-



Mark Raczkiewycz

The book "Battleground Ukraine," written by Atlantic Council Senior Fellow Adrian Karatnycky, chronicles the years of Ukraine's post-Soviet independence up to the Russo-Ukrainian war under the nation's second war-time president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

nycky observed that attitudes toward people from Ukraine have also trended upward.

At first, they were looked upon "as interlopers" by people with a Soviet background, Mr. Karatnycky said. They "didn't want to be in the West; ... only a few in the diaspora made inroads. ... Some investments failed by people who were cheated by the corrupt system or unethical business partners."

But now, "communication cooperation has deepened" with "progressive people who are part of a new generation, who didn't come out of that [communist system]," he said of the younger generations of Ukrainians.

"Battleground for Ukraine" is available through Yale University Press. It is being sold online by Amazon, Walmart, Barnes & Noble and in Britain through Waterfront's. Yale University is organizing an autumn book tour for Mr. Karatnycky to further the promotion of the book in North America and Europe.



Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art
Ukrainian American author Adrian Karatnycky of New York delivers a presentation on his book about modern-day Ukraine, titled "Battleground Ukraine," at the Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art in Chicago on June 29.

Russia seeks...

(Continued from page 2)

resolved by a series of bilateral agreements on security commitments, including the most recent one with the European Union and the soon-to-be-signed agreement with Poland (Forbes.ru, June 27; Lenta.ru, June 29). These agreements represent a stepping stone to Ukraine's eventual NATO membership, not a replacement as such (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, May 16, 20).

The arrival of several squadrons of F-16 fighter jets combined with the increased supply of artillery shells and the gradual strengthening of air defense systems could turn the tide of the war in the coming weeks. The Czech initiative to jointly purchase artillery shells from various (often undisclosed) sources has helped weaken Russian superiority in firepower, which Moscow has tried to sustain by importing North Korean munitions (Nezavisimaya Gazeta, June 25). The deal to supply several batteries of MIM-104 Patriot surface-to-air systems from Israel, which Moscow still hopes to derail, has significantly boosted Ukraine's capacity for intercepting Russian

missiles (TASS, June 28). The Russia side seeks to preserve its air superiority by launching missile strikes on bases that are preparing for F-16 deployments and threatening to hit facilities in Poland and Romania. The plan, carefully prepared by the allied "F-16 coalition," remains firmly on track (RBC, June 20).

The steadily increasing Ukrainian edge in the quality of weapon systems is beginning to neutralize Russia's main advantage in trench warfare – enormous manpower reserves (Re: Russia, June 27). The available data on Russian casualties is far from precise, but cross-examination of demographic statistics with evidence collected from social media and anecdotal sources provides a reasonably accurate picture of the heavy toll the war has taken on young and middle-aged Russian men (Meduza, June 27; Republic.ru, June 29). In the late spring and early summer of this year, casualties have been higher than the number of new soldiers from conscription and recruitment (Novaya Gazeta Europe, June 27). The Russian prison population cannot supply "volunteers" in sufficient numbers. On June 27, Russian Investigation Committee head Alexander Bastrykin reported a new cam-

paign to pressure labor migrants from Central Asia into the ranks of Russia's shrinking battalions (Svoboda, June 27).

The high demand for manpower has degraded the Russian economy (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, June 26, 27). The economy is struggling to follow the incompatible guidelines on expanding military production and maintaining the pre-war standards of public consumption despite growing inflation accelerated by high budget expenditures (The Insider, June 25). Ukraine is also suffering economic desolation as Russia continues its missile strikes on energy and civilian infrastructure, seeking to maximize the disruptive effects of blackouts (Finance.ua, June 18). Ukraine's ability to withstand attrition depends increasingly on external funding, including the new credit tranche of \$2.2 billion provided by the International Monetary Fund (RBC, June 29).

The European Union is sustaining the flow of economic aid and has taken a significant step forward in opening talks on Ukraine's accession (Svoboda, June 25). Ursula von der Leyen, who secured a second term as European Commission president, plans to keep a firm hand on Europe-

ean Union policymaking, and Ukraine remains a top priority (Kommersant, June 28). Moscow views the appointment of Kaja Kallas, current prime minister of Estonia, to the position of E.U. High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy as proof of the aggravated "Russia-phobia" in E.U. strategy (Mk.ru, June 29).

The rising trend in Western solidarity is certain to gain new momentum at the NATO summit, where the strategic goal of ensuring Russian defeat looks set to be reinforced. Moscow has no reason to expect that Mark Rutte, NATO's new secretary-general, will show any more "understanding" of its ultimatums and deference to its "red lines" than the unwavering Jens Stoltenberg has done. Putin is loath to see Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy receive a new boost for his leadership in charting the course to bring the ugly war to a just peace. Even the Kremlin leader's nuclear brinksmanship is unlikely to spoil this outcome.

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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

Orban's cease-fire benefits only Putin

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's recent cease-fire proposal to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has stirred significant controversy. Mr. Orban suggested pausing the fighting to facilitate negotiations, presenting this idea during a meeting in Kyiv. While the details of the proposal remain undisclosed, its implications are profoundly troubling for Ukraine and the broader international community committed to preserving Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. Orban's call for a cease-fire comes at a critical juncture, more than two years into Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Since the outset, Ukraine has consistently emphasized that any peace agreement must be predicated on the country's territorial integrity. This stance was reiterated by Mr. Zelenskyy and supported by the 80 countries that participated in the Ukrainian-initiated Global Peace Summit in Switzerland. Ukraine's position is clear: peace cannot come at the cost of compromising its sovereignty or rewarding aggression.

The primary concern with Mr. Orban's cease-fire proposal is that it implicitly favors Russia. Freezing the front lines now would leave Russia in control of approximately 20 percent of Ukrainian territory, including Crimea and parts of four other regions. This de facto acceptance of territorial gains through aggression sets a dangerous precedent and undermines the principles of international law. It rewards Russia for its invasion and occupation, thereby legitimizing its illegal actions.

Moreover, a cease-fire at this stage would allow Russia to consolidate its positions, rearm and prepare for future offensives. This is not mere speculation; it is a tactic that Russia has used before. A pause in fighting would give the Kremlin the opportunity to reinforce its military capabilities, making future Ukrainian efforts to reclaim its territory even more challenging and costly. Analysts warn that such a pause could be detrimental to Ukraine's long-term strategic interests, as it would enable Russia to regroup and launch renewed assaults with greater strength.

Mr. Orban's proposal also reflects his broader stance on the conflict, which has often been at odds with the collective European and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) positions. Since the full-scale invasion began in February 2022, Mr. Orban has been vocal in his criticism of Western military aid to Ukraine and has demonstrated reluctance to support substantial aid packages. His meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, one of the few Western leaders to do so since the invasion, further underscores his divergent approach.

Last December, Mr. Orban's decision to leave a room during a European Union leaders' meeting to avoid voting on opening E.U. accession talks with Ukraine illustrated his hesitance to fully support Ukraine's integration into European structures. Despite this, the E.U. has moved forward, taking steps toward formalizing Ukraine's path to membership – a move critical for Ukraine's future security and development.

The cease-fire proposal must be viewed in the context of Mr. Orban's political maneuvers. His visit to Kyiv, which came after extensive negotiations over the rights of Ukraine's Hungarian-speaking minority, appears more a strategic gesture than a genuine effort to facilitate peace. The announcement of plans to establish a Ukrainian school in Hungary for refugees and the intent to sign a new bilateral agreement on relations, while positive, cannot obscure the potentially harmful implications of the cease-fire suggestion.

The international community must recognize the inherent dangers in Mr. Orban's proposal. Any cease-fire that freezes the current front lines effectively acknowledges Russia's territorial gains and undermines Ukraine's sovereignty. It is crucial for global leaders to support Ukraine's position that peace can only be achieved through the restoration of its territorial integrity. This stance is not only about supporting Ukraine but also about upholding international norms and deterring future acts of aggression.

Mr. Orban's cease-fire proposal, while seemingly a call for peace, poses significant risks for Ukraine and international stability. It would enable Russia to solidify its gains and prepare for future offensives, undermining Ukraine's sovereignty and rewarding aggression. The international community must continue to stand with Ukraine, insisting that any peace agreement is based on the principles of territorial integrity and justice.

July
11-12
2023

Turning the pages back...

Last year, on July 11-12, 2023, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) hosted a two-day summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed the support that Ukraine received from NATO members of the Group of Seven countries (Japan, which is not a NATO member, was a participant at the summit) during the summit as a security foundation on the way to Ukraine's eventual NATO membership.

On the final day of the summit, the alliance launched a new forum to strengthen ties with Ukraine. Known as the NATO-Ukraine Council, the forum is a permanent body where the alliance's 31 members and Ukraine can hold consultations and call meetings during emergencies.

"Not only are all members of the alliance in agreement with [Ukraine's eventual membership in NATO], but also a significant majority in the alliance is energetically approaching it," Mr. Zelenskyy said. "Never before have the words 'you are equal among equals' for Ukraine from other NATO members sounded truly meaningful."

However, the vaguely worded statement issued by the 31-member NATO summit participants said that an invitation would be extended to Ukraine to join the alliance "when allies agree and conditions are met." They did not release details on the specific

(Continued on page 9)



Courtesy of IBM

Lubomyr Romankiw revolutionized the computer industry by inventing thin-film magnetic recording heads that enabled the emergence of hard drives and personal computers. He joined IBM in 1962 and worked there for over 50 years, receiving 25 awards from IBM for his inventions.

Pioneering...

(Continued from page 1)

In particular, while working as a leading engineer at IBM, he invented how to write and read information from hard disks. Every time you turn on your computer, at least seven of Mr. Romankiw's inventions come into play. His name is in the U.S. [National Inventors] Hall of Fame," Mr. Yuzych adds.

Mr. Romankiw revolutionized the computer industry by inventing thin-film magnetic recording heads that enabled the emergence of hard drives and personal computers. In 2012, Mr. Romankiw was inducted into the U.S. National Inventors Hall of Fame as the second Ukrainian after Ihor Sikorsky. He joined IBM in 1962 and worked there for over 50 years, receiving 25 awards from IBM for his inventions.

In an interview with Ukrainian media outlet DOU in June 2022, Mr. Romankiw shared his life story, as well as the story of how he created thin-film magnetic heads and his first visit to Ukraine during Soviet occupation, which sounds like the plot of a spy movie.

"I had a lot of ideas. But I remember very clearly this moment when I developed the first portable element, put it in my pocket, came to the director with it, and told him: 'I have here an element that can memorize everything we say.' And we started discussing how it works. By today's standards, it was quite primitive, but it was already working," he said, sharing the story of his scientific innovation.

"When I was returning from the director's office to my lab, it occurred to me: what if we could find a way to communicate with the brain? This meant that you had to have a short-wave element in your pocket on the one hand and, on the other hand, somewhere behind your ear, on your skin, without breaking through your skull. Then, what you think will be automatically recorded on this computer and put in your pocket immediately. If I hadn't been given other tasks then, I might have started working on this. And today Elon Musk [and his company Neurolink] has started working on this element," he said during the interview.

Mr. Romankiw was born in 1931 in Zhovkva, Lviv Oblast. At the age of 12, he became a member of the then-secret Plast, which operated under the legal name of the Educational Communities of Ukrainian Youth (VSMU) under Nazi occupation. In 1944, his family fled to Germany to avoid the Soviet army.

After World War II, he continued scouting, joining Plast in 1946 in the Bavarian city of Berchtesgaden. In Germany, he completed all the possible training for Plast

educators. When he moved to Canada, along with building his professional career, he became a co-organizer of Plast in Edmonton. He organized a branch for boys and a cub scout group. He devoted more than 10 years in total to educational work in Plast, working directly with children. After moving to the United States in 1958-1961, he was a youth educator in Boston.

He initiated the purchase of a Plast building in Edmonton and helped with fundraising to pay for the purchase. He organized many Plast training camps, eventually becoming one of the key leaders of Plast in the diaspora. In the 1990s, as chairman of the World Plast Council, he was directly involved in the first four Plast congresses in Ukraine after independence.

He raised funds and personally organized Ukraine's delegation to world jamborees in the Netherlands and Chile, where the Ukrainian contingent was officially granted the status of full participants rather than guests. The trip to the Netherlands alone needed \$45,000, which he secured, according to Mr. Yuzych.

Mr. Romankiw initiated and participated in the first All-Ukrainian Scouting Jamboree held in the Zakarpattia region of Ukraine in 1996. It included the participation of delegations from many scouting organizations in Ukraine and Europe, and it was Mr. Romankiw who first not only theorized the task of deploying Plast throughout Ukraine but also organized systematic funding for the project. Bohdan Hawrylyshyn later took up this initiative.

"Plast self-organized me and gave me a certain way of thinking, Ukrainian patriotism. Although I live in America and have Canadian citizenship, I consider myself a Ukrainian. It may sound strange to some Americans, but I do consider myself Ukrainian," Mr. Romankiw once said.

According to a decree of the president of Ukraine, Mr. Romankiw was awarded the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise for his significant personal contribution to the development of the Ukrainian scouting movement. On September 27, 2013, Mr. Romankiw became an honorary citizen of his native Zhovkva, Ukraine.

"I would not change anything in my life. I am happy with everything. I use the best of what life gives me," Mr. Romankiw told Radio Svoboda several years ago. "I don't have any thoughts about what I would change. Well, maybe now I would like to sit somewhere on a Caribbean Island and relax and not think about what I will do in the next 10 years," he jokingly added.

A service will be held on July 7 at 5 p.m. in New York at the Peter Jarema Funeral Home. The funeral and memorial service will be held at St. George's Church in New York City on July 8 at 10:30 a.m.

Russia's war on Ukraine driving evolution of cyber warfare

by Luke Rodeheffer
Eurasia Daily Monitor

The war in Ukraine is being fought not only in trenches but increasingly in cyberspace. State-sponsored hackers and hacktivist groups are actively fighting on both sides of the conflict. The lines between the two groups can often blur. Some members of state security agencies are taking advantage of this opportunity to moonlight as members of loosely knit hacktivist networks, and cyber actors are coordinating their activities over the internet. One example of this phenomenon is Ukraine's Information Technology (IT) Army. Within three days of Russia's invasion, Ukrainian Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov called for the creation of a volunteer IT army that would coordinate activities over Telegram against Russian targets (2Plus2, February 29). The IT Army allows any volunteer to join and distributes free tools for conducting cyberattacks over the internet. The group has had some success performing distributed-denial-of-service attacks against Russian companies and infrastructure. Members have been using tens of thousands of network devices to overwhelm target internet infrastructure with connection requests, most recently leading to interruptions in service for Mir, Russia's national payment system (Habr, June 20). The increased use of cyber warfare and collaboration between state entities and hacktivist networks demonstrates a changing landscape in the future of war that will soon be difficult for international security networks to control.

In parallel with the growing ties between state and non-state hackers, cyberattacks are becoming more frequent and more destructive. Russia demonstrated a willingness to engage in destructive cyber-

attacks as relations between the two countries soured in the 2010s, most infamously targeting the Ukrainian power grid in the winter of 2015 (Epravda.com.ua, January 6, 2016).

The war has also increased the use of malware capable of destroying data, often deployed against civilian infrastructure. In December 2023, Kyivstar, Ukraine's largest telecommunications company, was targeted with such malware in an attack likely performed by Russian state-sponsored hackers. The attack led to mass interruptions in both telephone and internet services that took weeks to remediate (Kommersant, December 14, 2023). Vast quantities of data were destroyed in the attack, which Kyivstar described as "catastrophic."

The Ukrainian side responded in kind. In April, a group called "Ukrainian Blackjack," which the Ukrainian press has linked to the country's security services, responded to the Kyivstar attacks. The group targeted servers in a Russian data center used by several leading Russian companies and defense conglomerates, destroying 300 terabytes of data (Nv.ua, April 8). Ukrainian hackers have also aggressively targeted any public figures in Russia linked to the war effort, succeeding in breaching the emails of leading Russian politicians and high-ranking military officers. These have included high-ranking Duma member and Putin confidant Alexander Babakov and Semyon Bagdasarov, a policymaker focusing on Russia's relations with Central Asia and the Middle East. Mr. Bagdasarov's leaked emails detailed plans to work with Iran on sanctions avoidance (Telegraf, April 5, 2023). Another hacking group, KibOrg, has received notice for stealing vast amounts of client data from Russian companies, including auto insurers and Alfa Bank, often leaking the data to the general

public (Vazhnyie Istorii, June 4).

The increasing use of cyberattacks has been mirrored by an increase in cybercrime emanating from Ukraine and targeting Russian citizens. Large-scale call centers now operate in Ukraine, conducting continuous fraud calls against Russian subscribers to trick them into transferring money or personal information (RIA Novosti, August 8, 2023). In one particularly attention-grabbing attack in the summer of 2022, Ukrainian fraudsters reportedly convinced a Russian pensioner into setting a car belonging to the deputy chief of the Russian General Staff on fire. Other older Russians have been convinced to throw Molotov cocktails at Russian military recruitment centers (Media.zona, April 27, 2023).

Sberbank, Russia's state-owned bank, investigated one call center that was seized when Russian forces entered the Ukrainian city of Berdyansk in April 2022. The call center was located directly across from an office belonging to the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), employed 300 people, and had the personal information of over 20 million Russian citizens in its databases (Sberbank, accessed July 2). Even if only a few fraudulent calls are successful, the scale and profits earned have been impressive. Sberbank estimates that up to 3,000 such centers exist in Ukraine, generating between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion in annual revenue.

The lax policies of Russian law enforcement toward the country's cybercriminal underground created a thriving environment for Ukrainian fraudsters. These fraudsters have been able to sell access to Russian government databases containing personal information and perform cryptocurrency transactions to move the money out of Russia. The activity led to a crack-

down on Russian law enforcement suspected of selling such information to illicit actors. The Russian Minister of Internal Affairs announced a comprehensive investigation to identify members of the security services who had sold data underground (TASS, April 19, 2023).

The scale of Ukrainian cybercrime has provided Moscow with additional justification to bolster its internal communications surveillance systems, under the auspices of detecting fraudulent phone calls. Russia's communications authority, Roskomnadzor, received 1.54 billion rubles (\$17.6 million) to create a national monitoring system (Cnews, August 31, 2022). The phenomenon is also being used as an excuse to rush the integration of the occupied regions of Ukraine into Russia's telecommunications systems and SORM, the communications surveillance system (Radio Svoboda, August 10, 2023).

These trends pose long-term challenges for international security. Ukraine's wartime tolerance of cybercrime targeting Russia may be difficult to dismantle in a postwar scenario, especially given the value of such expertise in the region's cybercriminal underground. These attacks highlight the increasingly blurred lines between state cybersecurity structures and hackers, particularly in wartime situations where the need for expertise outweighs the risks of collaborating with non-state entities. The war is likely a precursor to the future of 21st-century warfare, as interstate conflict opens up new avenues for cyberattacks that can target both military and civilian infrastructure.

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Hungary's Orbán...

(Continued from page 1)

land last month.

Ms. Zhovkva described the summit as a "tool" to achieve Kyiv's goals and said that Ukraine is preparing for a second summit. He said that Mr. Zelenskyy spoke with Mr. Orbán about preparations during their meeting.

Since Russia launched its all-out invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Mr. Orbán has stood out among leaders from the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for his reluctance to sign onto the massive Western weapons and aid packages for Ukraine.

Last December, he left a room during a

meeting of European Union leaders in order to avoid voting against opening E.U. accession talks with Ukraine.

The E.U. has since taken a step toward formalizing those talks to put Ukraine on the path to membership.

Russia and Ukraine have not held formal peace talks since the first months after Moscow's all-out invasion in February 2022. In recent weeks, Western news outlets have reported on the details of a potential deal that would have met many of Russia's demands while also putting off several major issues for a later date.

Last month, Putin said Russia would end its war – which has killed and wounded at least 500,000 soldiers on both sides – only if Kyiv met certain conditions. Those included renouncing its NATO ambitions



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán (left) meets in Kyiv with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on July 2.



and ceding four partially occupied regions that Russia claims in their entirety, in addition to Crimea. Ukraine dismissed the conditions as absurd and said they amounted to capitulation.

Freezing the front lines for a cease-fire now would leave Russia in control of some 20 percent of Ukrainian territory, and analysts warn that a pause could potentially allow Russia a chance to rearm and redeploy troops for a new offensive.

The Guardian, which reported on Mr. Orbán's visit to Kyiv earlier along with the Financial Times, said the trip came together after lengthy negotiations on the issue of rights for Ukraine's Hungarian-speaking minority, who live mainly in western Ukraine close to the border between the two countries.

During their July 2 appearance before

reporters, the two leaders said they had agreed on the establishment of a Ukrainian school in Hungary for refugees from Ukraine, and they said they planned to sign a new agreement on bilateral relations at some point in the future.

"The contents of our dialogue on all of today's issues can become the basis for a future bilateral document between our nations," Mr. Zelenskyy said. The agreement "will allow our people to enjoy all the benefits of unity in Europe."

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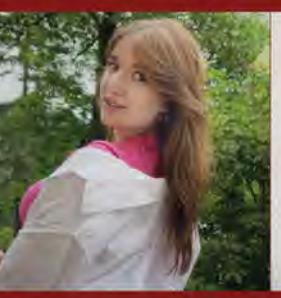
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Fragging...

(Continued from page 2)

bonuses and escape poverty. In Buryatia, for example, which famously sent large numbers of men to fight in Ukraine, charges of desertion in court have now tripled (Baikal-journal.ru, May 6). This phenomenon, of course, is being actively encouraged by opponents of the war and, at the same time, is being increasingly fought by the Russian military police and the Federal Security Service (FSB) (Zona.media; Nemoskva.net, February 29).

Independent investigations have found that corruption within the Russian ranks is even more widespread. Some of the increase between 2021 and now reflects the growing number of men in uniform. It may even be the case that the rate of such crimes per 100,000 soldiers has not gone up. Instead, independent news outlet Vyorstka reports that corruption has taken new forms, with soldiers paying off commanders to use their cell phones, take drugs or even get away with murder. More seriously as far as command and control are concerned, the outlet reports that soldiers are paying enormous bribes to be certified wounded and sent home, go AWOL or avoid being sent to the front (Verstka.media, January 30).

Meanwhile, the Russian home front displays three additional signs of trouble for the units fighting in Ukraine. First, Russian officials are being forced to draft men they would earlier have excused from service and are having to pay higher bonuses to convince others to sign up. This shift in recruiting practices is placing additional burdens on the regions that are being forced to cover most of the additional costs (For a detailed survey of this problem, see Nemoskva.net, June 20).

Second, some regional officials are now

calling on Russians to turn in their privately owned guns to help the army in Ukraine and to defend against drone attacks. These actions signal to the country that the military is far more desperate than the Kremlin admits. These officials say that they very much hope other regions will copy their initiatives (Nemoskva.net, June 21).

Third, the Russian people are increasingly alarmed by the crimes of returning veterans and by the fact that Russian courts are often letting some off with mere slaps on the wrist (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, April 14, 2022, January 19). That prompted one Communist Party deputy in the State Duma, Nina Ostanina, to declare that such veterans "represent a danger for society." She also called for draconian new laws to prevent this "cancer" on Russian life from metastasizing (Gazeta.ru; Meduza, June 19). The Kremlin is unlikely to allow such legal measures to be considered. However, it will be unable to ignore what calls for such a measure indicate about the true attitudes of the Russian people.

These problems, both individually and collectively, are not yet so serious that they can prevent Russian forces from continuing to fight and even advance in Ukraine, given their current advantages in numbers and arms. They are, nevertheless, signs that the picture the Kremlin and its media paints of the Russian military in Ukraine and of Russians at home is increasingly at odds with reality and that Moscow faces far more problems in this war than it is prepared to acknowledge. At the same time, these problems deserve more attention from both Ukraine and its Western supporters to amplify Russia's weak points while crafting their own propaganda and policies.

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From chasing...

(Continued from page 4)

because their lives don't mean much. They're not worth much to them, to their government. Creating this underclass that is disposable and politically convenient for him ...

The third point I'd make is that it's not so much that he's positioning himself as an underdog, and not even as a schoolyard bully, but he's positioning himself as somebody who is from the streets, who knows what real life is. That he's a realist. He's not an idealist. He's not going to promise you things he can't deliver on. He knows what the real world is like. He knows that, as Russia's representative on the world stage and inside Russia, it's this Hobbesian dog-eat-dog world that he's presenting to people. He's like, I know what the world is really like, and I know how to live in that world, and I know how to win in that world. It's not that I'm an underdog, it's that I'm a winner in that world. I know how to use violence.

RFE/RL: As they say, [in Russian] "the kid done good."

Ms. Ioffe: Exactly, exactly, exactly. One other thing I'll say about [Putin] in the dvor. And it's something that was pointed out to me by my father and his friends, men of that generation before I really read the campaign autobiography, before I made this podcast, before I looked into any of this.

And I just remember they would all say, "He's so little," like it would have been very hard for him in the dvor and you can see how he is obsessed with his own shortness and how he wears lifts in his shoes, and how he gets photographers to photograph him a certain way.

He is someone who, because of his size, is clearly constantly aware of his own weaknesses and trying to get ahead of people perceiving his weaknesses, which is, I think, also something that comes from being physically small in a world where physical force and physical strength are the only things that determine your social standard.

RFE/RL: Well, that does nothing to alleviate the stereotypes about short people being ...

Ms. Ioffe: [laughs] I wasn't trying to.

RFE/RL: Let's move from Putin's childhood to the recent version of him. And in 2014 you wrote a piece called *The Loneliness Of Vladimir Putin*. And the question I would ask is, if he was lonely back then [as a child], how lonely is he now? Or has he found some playmates that he can finally play with?

Ms. Ioffe: I think now he's quite lonely. I think we saw that in the pandemic, the way he isolated himself and how scared he was for his own health. The fact that he just demoted [former Security Council head Nikolai] Patrushev, who was one of his closest advisers, that he demoted [former Russian Defense Minister Sergei] Shoigu, who is one of his closest friends, as far as he has friends. It seems like he is telegraphing to us that he doesn't need anybody, he doesn't need to listen to anyone, he doesn't need anyone's input, advice, second opinion, that he knows everything himself.

The longer he's in power – [Russian author Leo] Tolstoy wrote about this – the longer you're in power, the higher up you get, the lonelier you are. And to me, when you ask about the loneliness of Vladimir Putin, I just keep thinking what he said about a decade ago, when he said how lonely it is for him, because there's no one to talk to.

Gandhi's dead, Churchill's dead. And that's the level he imagines he's at, and that those are his equals. And so, of course, he feels lonely, but I think that's also kind of where the idea to invade Ukraine came out of: the deep isolation of the pandemic. Like, we all went a little crazy, but we showed it

by starting weird hobbies and ordering too much stuff online. And he did it by cooking up a plan to invade Ukraine.

RFE/RL: So he has ascended in his own eyes, like in a very, very twisted version of Coriolanus. He's no longer a man, but a dragon.

Ms. Ioffe: [laughs] Yeah

RFE/RL: I think he's the only one who sees himself that way. On to another of your articles, this time a very recent one in May, when you wrote a piece about Putin with the headline, *A Czar Is Born*. And to be perfectly honest, that kind of startled me because the question is: If the tsar is born now, at his fifth inauguration, what was he before then?

Ms. Ioffe: I think this really cemented it and, honestly, we picked that headline because it was a play on the movie title, *A Star Is Born*. So, it was more about the pun than that he had become a tsar now. But I think this was really, truly, just [about] whatever pretenses there had been before about him having advisers, procedures, law – it's just all gone.

And it's because of the war. It's the war and the need to win. Because losing in the courtyard is a social death. And he knows that losing in Ukraine would be his personal death. And he just said it recently, a couple days ago. He said that would be the end of our ... statehood. Everything is now subservient to this. And that he's now the kind of tsar, the generalissimo, the everything. He doesn't even need his closest friends and advisers, he's got this. He knows everything. He can do military tactics, he can do the economy. It's very Stalin.

RFE/RL: Very emperor-like. Speaking of tsars, there are precious few ways of ending your reign. First is you get assassinated. Second is you abdicate. Third is you die on the throne. Which one looks more likely to you?

Ms. Ioffe: I think that, if I've learned anything in writing about Russia for almost two decades, it's that predicting anything is hard. And Putin also loves to surprise us. He loves to be unpredictable. ... If I had to guess ... I would say that the more probable of the three scenarios is dying on the throne.

RFE/RL: He seems to be working toward that goal.

Ms. Ioffe: That's clearly his intent, I think.

RFE/RL: If that's the case, then he must be betting on living for quite a long time yet, because there seems to be no inclination of him naming any successors.

Ms. Ioffe: Well, here's the thing. If you name a successor, that's it. You're done. You've hobbled yourself. You're a lame duck, you're done. So, if he's thinking of a successor, he's not going to tell us about it for a long time. He's also experimented with a successor. His name was [former Russian President] Dmitry Medvedev. And he clearly didn't think that Medvedev did a good enough job, because he came back and punished Medvedev socially, politically, for a long time, and Medvedev had to work hard to kind of crawl back in and up.

[There's also] the obsession with health procedures and everything we hear about his weird shamanistic practices. ... I mean, [the thing that] will never cease to amuse me is that he takes literal blood baths; there was a report in [independent Russian website] Proyekt about how he and Shoigu take these baths from the blood from [the] immature horns of these Siberian elk from the Altai region. ... He's clearly obsessed with prolonging his life as long as possible.

RFE/RL: Still, on the subject of successors, him keeping mum on it kind of raises the question about the legacy, right? He's obviously concerned about his legacy.

Ms. Ioffe: Has been for a while, yeah.

RFE/RL: So does he think only about

what kind of Russia he will leave behind after him and his [role] in it? Or does he think also and care what Russia will look like tomorrow, or in 10 years' time, in 20 years' time?

Ms. Ioffe: I think both. I think, in his mind, he is doing the things today that will make Russia better off and stronger.

RFE/RL: Even in his absence?

Ms. Ioffe: Even in his absence, but again his ideas of what is good for Russia are not necessarily yours and mine. Like, you can have a great Russia that isn't conquering neighboring countries by force. But he has different visions. I heard a story that, back in 2011, he was at a dinner and somebody asked him then what his greatest accomplishment was as president. And he said – not the economy, not geopolitical stature – he said reuniting the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church abroad. There was a great *Financial Times* article about this about a year ago, where somebody from the Kremlin told them that Putin, in Putin's mind, has three advisers: Catherine the Great, Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible.

So, I think he sees himself as a leader of that stature. Stalin, Peter the Great, somebody who is going to shape Russia for decades to come even after he's gone.

RFE/RL: If you were to hazard a guess, where do you think he ranks himself among those leaders?

Ms. Ioffe: I don't know. Probably pretty high.

RFE/RL: If you think change is coming from Russia, where do you see this change coming from?

Ms. Ioffe: I don't think we're going to see a change coming for Russia for a very long time – [as] in any positive change, or a change that you and I would define as positive change. I think things in Russia are going to continue to get worse and worse and worse and more authoritarian, more totalitarian, more isolated, more aligned with China than with the West. I think what he's doing now is damage that will take decades to undo. And I don't think the opposition is capable of pretty much anything.

RFE/RL: Since we're in Tbilisi and the session was called *Putin's Childhood*, let's explore this semi-mythical Georgian connection with Putin and his childhood in Georgia. How much do you know about it, how much of it do you believe?

Ms. Ioffe: We didn't explore this in the podcast, we thought about making another episode just about this alternative history, which, as far as I understand, there was a Russian woman who said she had this child with a Russian man, I think, outside of wedlock, and then married a Georgian man, moved down [to Georgia] with young Volodya Putin and that the stepfather was horrible to him and didn't basically accept the child we now know as Vladimir Putin

as his own. And so, [according to this theory] the mother said that she gave him up to relatives, distant relatives in Leningrad ... because they were much older and there's no other way to explain why his parents are so much older. And that's who we think of as Putin's parents. And I know she spoke a lot to foreign journalists about this and people said she even looked like him. I don't know.

RFE/RL: The resemblance was uncanny.

Ms. Ioffe: Do you believe it?

RFE/RL: No, but I have written about it and it's ... Well, there is no way of 100 percent disproving it either, let's put it like that.

Ms. Ioffe: Well, there could have been if they took DNA tests, but that was never going to happen.

RFE/RL: Yeah, obviously. On to the more factual childhood of Putin then. And I know you're not a child psychiatrist, but still, let me ask: Him having no toys to play with, and him having to chase rats around to entertain himself, how much impact do you think it had on what kind of man he turned out to be?

Ms. Ioffe: I think it wasn't just that there were no toys or that [there were] rats. I think it was more that he was growing up in the dvor and there weren't really a lot of toys. And the way you spent time was by interacting with other kids, other boys. And that those interactions were all centered around physical strength and violence and a very strict social hierarchy. And that was your entertainment. And also learning how to read people.

This is something my father talks a lot about in the podcast, that [in the Soviet Union], [it was] like living under an X-ray machine in the dvor 24-7, that you couldn't hide anything, that everybody knew your record. Like, if you lied five years ago to someone. Or said you were going to do something three years ago and didn't do it, everybody would remember. You couldn't hide from your past or hide much of anything.

It's not so much about the toys and the rats as it is about the privations and the poverty of that era and the way it taught this generation that prosperity isn't guaranteed, things can always get worse, don't be spoiled. ... We also talk about this in the podcast, [but it's about] not knowing what to do with money when you have it. That's why his palace in Gelendzhik [in Russia's Krasnodar Krai region] is what it looks like. ... I think people who grew up with money tend to not decorate their houses in that way.

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Turning...

(Continued from page 6)

ics of those conditions.

The Kremlin criticized NATO's support for Ukraine's eventual membership in the alliance as "ill-judged and potentially very dangerous. ... By providing security guarantees to Ukraine, [NATO is] infringing on Russia's security," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

Following the conclusion of the summit, President Joe Biden underscored that U.S. support for Ukraine "will not falter." But prior to the summit he said that the war in Ukraine would need to end before Ukraine could be extended an invitation for NATO

membership.

British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace raised eyebrows after the NATO summit by echoing statements from U.S. lawmakers who complained that Ukraine treats military defense support as if Western allies were some sort of "Amazon." Max Blain, spokesperson for British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, downplayed Mr. Wallace's comments, reiterating Mr. Zelenskyy's repeated statements of gratitude "to the people of the United Kingdom for their support and their generosity."

Source: "NATO summit removed any doubts about Ukraine future membership in alliance, Zelenskyy says," (RFE/RL), The Ukrainian Weekly, July 16, 2023.

Researchers discover angels at Mazepa's palace in Kozak state capital Baturyn

by Zenon Kohut and
Volodymyr Mezentsev
Special to The Ukrainian Weekly

For 25 years, Ukrainian and Canadian archaeologists and historians carried out annual excavations in the town of Baturyn in Chernihiv Oblast in Ukraine. Unfortunately, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 suspended further field investigations. In the meantime, however, scholars at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) at the University of Alberta and the Hetman Capital National Historical and Cultural Preserve in Baturyn have continued off-site research on important artifacts discovered during extensive excavations there in 1995-2021.

The Canada-Ukraine Baturyn Archaeological Project is administered by The Peter Jacyk Centre for Ukrainian Historical Research at the CIUS Toronto Office (<https://tinyurl.com/ypx3tdx2>). Prof. Zenon Kohut, a former CIUS director and an eminent historian of the Kozak state, initiated this project in 2001. He currently acts as its academic adviser and the co-author of our publications. Archaeologist Dr. Volodymyr Mezentsev, research associate at CIUS in Toronto, is the project's executive director. Archaeologist Yurii Sytyi of the Hetman Capital National Preserve leads the Baturyn archaeological team.

So far, Baturyn has been spared from Russian occupation, bombardments and destruction. Its five museums of antiquities, as well as the reconstructed citadel, hetman palaces, court hall and churches of the 17th to 19th centuries have been safely preserved and continue to receive many visitors.

In 1669, Baturyn was selected to be the capital of the Kozak realm, or Hetmanate, in central Ukraine. The town reached its zenith during the illustrious rule of Hetman Ivan Mazepa (1687-1709). He was educated and brought up in the West and promoted European cultural influences in Ukraine.

In 1708, Mazepa, allied with Sweden, rebelled against the increasing curtailment of the political and administrative autonomy and self-governance of the Kozak polity by the autocratic Russian tsar Peter I. In retaliation, that same year, aided by local traitors, tsarist forces seized the Baturyn fortress, the stronghold of Mazepa's uprising. In order to suppress it with ruthless terror, to avenge the unsubmissive hetman and to punish the town for supporting him and the anti-Moscow revolt, the invaders executed in mass the captured Kozaks, slaughtered all of the civilians, up to 14,000 inhabitants of Baturyn, pillaged and burned it down, and took valuables to Russia.

Hetman Kyrylo Rozumovsky (1750-1764) rebuilt and resettled the devastated Baturyn. He designated it again as the main city of the Kozak state, albeit not long before its abolition by the Russian Empire in 1764. While Ukraine remained stateless, the former hetman capital steadily deteriorated, becoming an insignificant agricultural borough during the Soviet era.

In independent Ukraine, the government implemented a program for the urbanization and revitalization of



The 17th-century Baturyn citadel with the interior of the hetman residence, reconstructed in 2008 based on archaeological research.

Baturyn. The Hetman Capital National Historical and Cultural Preserve has successfully ensured the conservation, study and restoration of the 17-19th-century architectural monuments, the establishment and maintenance of five museums, impressive sculptural monuments and memorials glorifying the Kozak era, Mazepa, Rozumovsky and other hetmans, and the memorialization of the victims of the 1708 Muscovite onslaught on the town, notwithstanding the current challenging conditions of wartime.

In early modern Ukraine, stoves faced with glazed ceramic and terracotta (unglazed) tiles or "kakhli" were standard for both heating and adorning residence interiors. In Baturyn, the manufacturing of stove tiles flourished under Mazepa's reign. They are ornamented primarily with plant and geometric relief patterns, but also with representations of Kozaks, European soldiers, angels, animals, mythical creatures and coat of arms.

Prior to 1700, Mazepa constructed and opulently embellished his ambitious principal residence in the Baturyn suburb of Honcharivka. His palace was plundered and burned by Russian troops when they ravaged the town in 1708. The excavations of the palace's remnants have yielded the best-decorated stove tiles of about 30 variations. These artifacts are recognized as valuable specimens of Ukrainian ceramic art from the late 17th century. They were crafted by the most skilled tile-makers ("kakhliari") of the Kozak state, whom Mazepa summoned from Kyiv.

Among the diverse stove tiles that archaeologists have unearthed from the debris of the Honcharivka palace are considerable numbers of fragments of rectangular tiles featuring masterly reliefs of stylized heads of angels with outstretched wings. The more expensive tiles are glazed

white, yellow, brown and turquoise on a dark blue background, while the cheaper are terracotta with no enamel cover. The stove fronts were often revetted (or faced) by glazed ceramic tiles, while plain terracotta tiles were used on the sides.

On these tiles, the boyish faces of angels have plump cheeks, massive noses, and on some fragments are elongated chins. Their long yellow hair is slightly wavy, culminating on the top and bottom with ball-like curls. There are no haloes/nimbi over the angel's heads. On the sides and bottom, their heads are enveloped by crescent-shaped stylized wings resembling a fan of white feathers. Some images of angels are more artistic, handsome, realistic, individual and similar to their iconographic depictions. The lower corners of these tiles are ornamented with stylized lilies in relief.

Using photo collage and computer graphic techniques, researchers have reconstructed two hypothetical complete glazed ceramic polychromatic and terracotta tiles with the above-described composition. This method has also been employed for the conjectural recreation of the front elevation of the upper part of the most costly and ornate glazed ceramic multicolor tiled stove of Mazepa's destroyed palace in Honcharivka. It was an important adornment of its interior, located possibly in the gala hall for official receptions, meetings and banquets.

We believe that after completing the richest stoves in Mazepa's manor by the Kyivan masters they, or the engaged local ceramists, produced copies of more modest terracotta tiles with the reliefs of angels and sold them to the Kozaks or burghers for facing stoves in their homes in the Baturyn fortress and its vicinities. Following the authoritative example of the hetman palace, this motif was widespread in the tiled stoves' revetments throughout Mazepa's capital in the early 18th century until its fall in 1708.

The 17th-18th-century stove tiles with angels discovered by the archaeologists in Kyiv are the closest analogies to those from Honcharivka. The excavations in Kyiv have also unearthed the shards of glazed ceramic polychrome table plates and dishes with the drawings and engravings of this image from that time.

The largest number of delineations of angels' heads with two open wings is found in the book engravings printed in Kyiv and Chernihiv in the second half of the 17th and early 18th centuries, particularly during Mazepa's tenure. They surmount four designs of his family coat of arms on the 1691, 1696, 1697 and 1708 etchings. In the Hetmanate, decorators of stove tiles often borrowed compositions, motifs and ornaments from Ukrainian and Western engravings, mainly from book illustrations.

Reliefs of the heads of double-winged angels are cast in the corners of the silver gilt cover of the 1701 Gospel and on the precious facing plate ("shata") of the icon of the Mother of God of Dihtiarivka from the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. Both of them were commissioned by Mazepa.

On display at the Hetman Capital National Preserve in Baturyn is the rare wooden icon of the Theotokos with the baby Jesus. It likely dates to Mazepa's era and could have



A bronze statue of Ivan Mazepa on the monument "Hetman's Prayer for Ukraine" in Baturyn by sculptors Mykola and Bohdan Mazur in 2009.



ЯНГОЛИ У ДЕКОРИ ПАЛАЦУ
ІВАНА МАЗЕПИ В БАТУРИНІ

Торонто, 2023

Courtesy of Volodymyr Mezentsev

The richly illustrated booklet by these authors titled in translation "Angels in the Decoration of Ivan Mazepa's Palace in Baturyn: A Study Based on Archaeological Findings."

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Researchers...

(Continued from page 10)

belonged to him. In the icon's corners, the high reliefs of four angel heads devoid of haloes with stylized extended wings are carved and painted in the Baroque style with folk coloring. Their child-like faces are quite realistic and each one is unique. The round rosy cheeks are somewhat enlarged more than these features of angels on the Honcharivka tiles.

The numerous dated Ukrainian engravings, the silver gilded covers of the Gospel and the icon, as well as the tiles bearing the heads of angels with outspread wings from the revetment of stoves of Mazepa's villa and ordinary dwellings in the fortress and environs of Baturyn testify to the popularity of this motif in both the secular and ecclesiastical arts of the Kozak state during his cadence. Perhaps the hetman favored it and ordered to incorporate these particular images into the designs of his heraldic emblem in several illustrations of Kyivan and Chernihivian publications on precious repoussé works that he funded and on the stove tiles of his headquarters.

In the mid-17th century, young Mazepa studied, served and travelled in Poland, Germany, Holland, France and Italy, and he was fascinated with European arts, literature and culture. He could widely use the motif of angels/cherubs of the Renaissance tradition as a tribute to the art fashion then prevalent in the West and Kyiv, and as an indication of his European cultural orientation.

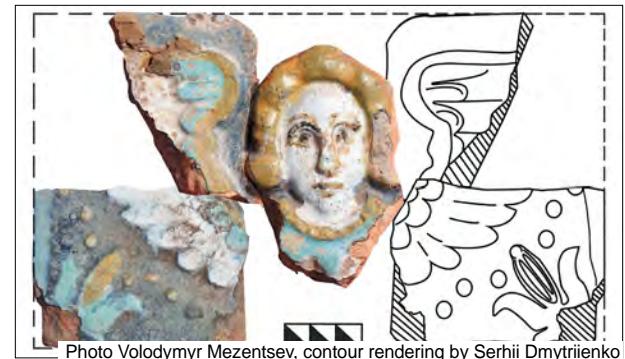
In the second or third quarters of the 18th century, the façades of the Assumption Cathedral at the Kyivan Cave Monastery were embellished with massive rectangular glazed ceramic slabs featuring bas-reliefs of angels' heads with outstretched wings. After the explosion of this cathedral by the Bolsheviks in 1941, several of these details and their fragments were taken from the ruins for safekeeping to the repository of the National Preserve "Sophia of Kyiv."

Generally, the designs of the angels on these slabs of the Assumption Cathedral and on the much smaller stove tiles from the Honcharivka palace are comparable. However, the palette and the combination of enamel colors on the cathedral's façade applications are quite different. They are also distinguished by the haloes behind the angel's heads that are inherent to the depictions of saints in Orthodox iconography but are lacking on the Honcharivka stove tiles. On these slabs from the cathedral, the bas-reliefs of the stylized faces and locks of hair are more massive, pronounced, thoroughly executed and detailed. Some images of angels are comely and distinctive. But their cheeks protrude unnaturally, more so than those on the Baturyn stove tiles with this motif.

The façade's slabs of the main church of the Cave Monastery in Kyiv described above contain the most artistic, expressive and colorful representations of angels in the decorative sculpture and the majolica technique of Kozak Ukraine. These 18th-century Kyivan ceramic pieces vividly reflect the influences of European Humanism, Renaissance and Baroque arts. However, they were created in the post-Mazepa period, and, therefore, could not serve as the



Half of the glazed ceramic multicolored tile with the angel's image from the facing of the stove at Mazepa's principal residence in Honcharivka.



Fragments of the glazed ceramic tile featuring an angel from the stove revetment of the Honcharivka palace.



Photo collage of the entire glazed ceramic polychromatic stove tile with an angel.



A complete stove tile bearing an angel and covered with multicolored enamel.



Half of the terracotta tile with the relief of an angel from the stove facing at the Honcharivka villa.



Complete terracotta stove tile with an angel in relief.

sources of inspiration for Kyiv's and Baturyn's tile masters before the sack of the hetman capital in 1708.

The examined motif of a bodiless angel with only a head and two extended wings was not characteristic of the Orthodox iconography of Byzantium and Kyivan Rus'. It appeared in the 15th-century sacral art of Renaissance Italy. From there, the angels/cherubs ("putti" in Italian) as a religious symbol, and later increasingly as an ornamental element, were disseminated in both ecclesiastical and secular sculpture and painting throughout Christendom during the 16th-18th centuries. At that time, the motif was also transferred to Ukraine primarily via Poland. It became a favorite in the sculptural and pictorial decorations of Catholic and Orthodox churches, monasteries, castles, palaces, crypts, tombs, as well as in the secular and icon paintings, book graphics, artistic metal and earthen wares of Western and Central Ukraine.

In the 16th and early 17th centuries, invited Italian

sculptors and painters introduced this motif to the arts of Galicia, Volhynia and Kyiv, then under Polish rule. Since that time, the Kyivan tile-makers could model the reliefs and frescos of putti in the late Renaissance style that adorned the interiors of the Assumption and St. Sophia cathedrals, as well as their delineations on Western and Ukrainian Baroque engravings, book illustrations, Catholic icons, European secular painting, toreutics and other artistic imports.

We surmise that Kyiv's tile masters were also familiar with the stove tiles produced in Poland and, moreover, with those from Right-Bank Ukraine within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The similar features of the representations of putti on the 16th to 18th-century Ukrainian and Polish stove tiles support this view. Noteworthy are the Polish stove tiles of this time that usually bear reliefs of the stylized angels with chubby cheeks and no haloes. Their faces and wings are commonly glazed white against a cobalt background, similar to the coloration of stove tiles in the image from the Honcharivka palace.

Analogous designs and ornamentations of putti's heads, hairstyles and wings are observed in the early modern sculptural embellishments of many ecclesiastical and funerary structures in Poland, Western Ukraine and Italy. These sculptures have influenced the interpretation of this motif on ceramic stove tiles in Poland and Ukraine. In the 16th-18th century, the tile makers could use as models or prototypes the numerous chiseled stone, stucco and wooden painted high reliefs of putti, predominantly in a realistic manner, as displayed in the Catholic and Orthodox churches, cloisters, elite tombstones and sarcophagi. Some examples of these early modern sculptures are found in Rome and Florence.

The stove tiles with angels discussed in this article are some of the best and representative pieces of the decorative-utilitarian ceramics of Baturyn during its golden age under Mazepa. The glazed multicolored tiles have derived from the most lavish and exquisite stoves of his ruined principal residence in the Kozak capital and attest to its wealth and fine art adornments. They are rare relics of the hitherto inadequately studied palatial designs of the 17th-century Kozak rulers.

These artifacts provide valuable insight into the culture, way of life and artistic interests of Mazepa, the Kozaks or burghers of Baturyn, and their reception of the stimulating artistic fashions from Kyiv and the West. Thus, our



Front elevation of the upper part of the most ornate glazed ceramic polychrome tiled stove decorated with the tiles featuring angels from Mazepa's palace in Honcharivka, ca. 1700.



The 17th-century icon of the Mother of God with the Baby Jesus and the high reliefs of four angels, which is located in the Hetman Capital National Preserve in Baturyn.

(Continued on page 12)



An 18th-century ceramic majolica multicolored slab with the angel in bas-relief from the façade adornsments of the Assumption Cathedral at the Cave Monastery in Kyiv, which is now part of the National Preserve "Sophia of Kyiv."

Volodymyr Mezentsev



A stylized wooden painted bas-relief of putto, carved on the frame of the painting by Luca Signorelli "Coronation of the Holy Virgin Mary" (1500), which is located in the Castle of St. Angel in Rome.

Volodymyr Mezentsev

Researchers...

(Continued from page 11)

research of the images on the stove tiles excavated by the archaeologists in Baturyn shed new light on the vibrant culture of the Kozak Ukraine capital and its link to European Christian civilization.

The annihilation in 1708 by Russian forces of Mazepa's stronghold, including its defenders and civilian population, tragically halted life in this town for 42 years. Along with all major crafts and artistic endeavors, the local manufacturing of relief stove tiles came to an end. During the rebuilding of Baturyn by Hetman Rozumovsky in the second part of the 18th century, two-color glazed ceramic stove tiles were imported. They feature secular scenes in the then-popular Dutch style and are devoid of any Ukrainian and religious motifs.

These authors have examined the depictions of angels on the stove tiles discovered in the hetman capital in more detail in a richly illustrated booklet titled "Янголи у декорі палацу Івана Мазепи в Батурині: за матеріалами розкопок" (Angels in the Decoration of Ivan Mazepa's Palace in Baturyn: A Study Based on Archaeological Findings), published in Toronto by Homin Ukraine in 2023 (40 pages in Ukrainian

with 49 color illustrations).

This 12th issue and earlier brochures in the Baturyn project series are available for purchase for \$10 from the National Executive of the League of Ukrainian Canadians (LUC) in Toronto (phone: 416-516-8223; email: luc@lucorg.com) and through CIUS Press in Edmonton (phone: 780-492-2973; email: cius@ualberta.ca). The booklets can also be purchased online on the CIUS Press website (<https://www.ciuspress.com>; <https://www.ciuspress.com/product-category/archaeology/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>). Their publications were funded by BCU Foundation (Roman Medyk, chair) and Ucrainica Research Institute (Orest Steciw, M.A., president and executive director of LUC) in Toronto.

In 2023, the popular and authoritative Archaeology magazine of the Archaeological Institute of America in New York published an important article about Baturyn as a bastion of Kozak independence and culture, its utter destruction by the Russian army and some interesting archaeological finds online at <https://www.archaeology.org/issues/522-2309/features/11638-ukraine-baturyn-cossack-capital>.

Since 2001, CIUS and Ucrainica Research Institute have sponsored the Canada-Ukraine Baturyn Project. The Ukrainian Studies Fund in New York also supports this project with annual subsi-

dies. In 2023-2024, the research on the history and culture of the hetman capital and the preparation of associated publications were supported with donations from Ucrainica Research Institute, LUC National Executive (Borys Mykhaylets, president), LUC - Toronto Chapter (Mykola Lytvyn, president), the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women National Executive (LUCW, Halyna Vynnyk, president), LUCW - Toronto Chapter (Nataliya Popovych, president), BCU Financial (Oksana Prociuk-Ciz, CEO), Ukrainian Credit Union (Taras Pidzamecky, CEO), the Prometheus Stefan Onyszczuk and Stefania Szwed Foundation (Mika Shepherd, president), and Benevolence Foundation in Toronto. The most generous individual benefactors of the Baturyn study are Olenka Negrych, Dr. George J. Iwanchyshyn (Toronto) and Dr. Maria R. Hrycelak (Park Ridge, Ill.).

In July, we plan to resume excavations in Baturyn if wartime conditions in Chernihiv Oblast permit. In any event, both Ukrainian and Canadian scholars will continue their off-site research, publications and public presentations on the history and culture of the hetman capital.

With the start of the full-scale Russian war against Ukraine, the Chernihiv Oblast State Administration suspended its funding of the Baturyn archaeological project. Therefore, continued benevolent support

from Ukrainian organizations, foundations, companies and private donors in North America is vital to sustain further historical, archaeological and artistic investigations of Mazepa's capital and the publication of the findings. American citizens are kindly invited to mail donations by check to the Ukrainian Studies Fund, P.O. Box 24621, Philadelphia, Pa., 19111, U.S.A. Please make checks payable to Ukrainian Studies Fund (memo: Baturyn Project).

Canadian residents can send donations to Ucrainica Research Institute, 9 Plastics Ave., Toronto, ON, Canada, M8Z 4B6. Checks can be made out to Ucrainica Research Institute (memo: Baturyn Project). These Ukrainian institutions will issue official tax receipts to all donors in the United States and Canada. They will be gratefully acknowledged in related publications and public lectures.

For additional information about the Baturyn project, please contact Dr. Mezentsev in Toronto (phone: 416-766-1408; email: v.mezentsev@utoronto.ca). Project participants express gratitude to Ukrainians in North America for their generous and continuous support of the research on the capital of Kozak Ukraine and for helping to preserve its national cultural legacy and historical memory, which are falsified and destroyed by the Russian Federation.

U.S. to provide...

(Continued from page 1)

ple and wounded more than two dozen others around Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, while more than a dozen people were killed in Russian attacks in the southern city of Kherson, officials said.

Russia's Defense Ministry, meanwhile, claimed it destroyed up to five Ukrainian fighter jets in a ballistic missile strike on an air base in central Ukraine. A former Ukrainian military official confirmed the attack on the Myrhorod air base, but said the Russian claim was exaggerated.

In a post on Telegram, Vadym Filashkin, the head of the Ukrainian military administration for Donetsk, said that four people were killed in three separate villages on July 1. Another 27 people were wounded in the strikes, he said.

In Kherson, a southern city recaptured by Ukrainian forces in late 2022, Russian shelling wounded at least five people, the head of the local military administration, Oleksandr Prokudin, said.

After withdrawing to the eastern, opposite bank of the Dnipro River in late 2022, Russian forces have continued to bombard

Kherson and outlying districts, terrorizing the populace and leaving the city in limbo.

After Ukraine's counteroffensive sputtered out earlier this year, Russia has been waging its own, more localized offensive effort in several locations across the 746-mile front line, including near the towns of Chasiv Yar and Pokrovsk.

In early May, Russian forces launched a new effort north of the city of Kharkiv. That has slowed in recent weeks, as Ukrainian troops redeployed and pushed back the advances, though Russian forces have been digging trenches and making more permanent defenses.

Still, Russia's air superiority has allowed its planes to use heavy munitions like glide bombs to devastate Ukrainian positions.

On July 2, the Russian Defense Ministry said it fired Iskander-M missiles at the Myrhorod air base, around 93 miles from the Russian border, a day earlier.

"As a result of the Russian military strike, five operational Su-27 multirole fighters were destroyed, and two that were under repair were damaged," the ministry said in a statement on Telegram.

The ministry also published a video of what it said was the strike and its aftermath. The video showed gray smoke bil-

lowing at the airfield, where some parked planes were visible.

The claim about the planes being damaged could not be immediately verified, though both Russian and Ukrainian war bloggers reported extensively on the strike.

Ukraine's military made no statement on the claim. Yuriy Ihnat, who served as a spokesman for the Air Force until March, confirmed that the air base was hit but downplayed the damage.

"There was an attack. There are some losses, but not the ones the enemy claims," Mr. Ihnat said in a post on Facebook.

Ukraine's top air force commander, meanwhile, claimed military jets had hit a Russian ammunition depot on the occupied Crimean Peninsula on July 1.

In a post to Telegram, Gen. Mykola Oleshchuk did not specify the exact location but posted a video from a local Telegram channel that purportedly showed the strike on Balaklava, a location near the major naval port of Sevastopol.

In recent months, Ukraine has stepped up aerial and maritime attacks on facilities and equipment in Crimea and its surrounding waters.

Maritime drones have damaged or sunk more than two dozen Black Sea Fleet war-

ships, and Ukraine has used Western-supplied cruise missiles and kamikaze drones to hit naval repair facilities and even the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet.

Meanwhile, media reports say that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies have agreed to provide 40 billion euros (\$43 billion) in military aid to Ukraine for 2025 but failed so far to commit to a multiyear military financial package for the war-wracked country.

Diplomats told Reuters and German news agency dpa that Mr. Stoltenberg had asked allies to make a multiyear \$43 billion commitment ahead of a summit of the alliance next week in Washington, but member states did not back his request. However, a diplomatic source said the agreement includes a provision to reevaluate allied contributions at future NATO summits.

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NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 2)

Kazakh men, Meiram Qarataev and Altai Zhaqanbaev, as the attackers, saying they entered Ukraine from Poland and fled to Moldova right after the incident. On June 22, Kazakh authorities said they arrested Mr. Zhaqanbaev after he turned himself in, and are working on establishing Mr. Qarataev's whereabouts. On June 25, Ukrainian prosecutors said they were seeking the extradition of the two men from Kazakhstan, and had filed a warrant with

the international police agency, Interpol. On June 27, the chairman of the Kazakh parliament's upper chamber, Maulen Ashimbaev, reiterated an earlier statement by Mr. Toqaev's spokesman Berik Uali, saying that Kazakhstan was ready to cooperate with Ukrainian authorities. However, Mr. Ashimbaev told reporters that his country will not extradite Mr. Zhaqanbaev to Ukraine, saying that, according to Kazakh law, citizens of that country cannot be extradited to other states. Kazakhstan has been criticized for putting pressure on independent media and government critics for years. On July 2, an independent Kazakh political

Zelenskyy says...

(Continued from page 3)

year in a bid to drain Ukraine's resources, often targeting energy facilities and other vital infrastructure, and deal psychological blows to the population.

Ukrainian officials have said that half of the nation's power system has been damaged by Russian strikes.

Russia said that Ukraine launched attacks on Sevastopol in Crimea as well as Kursk on June 29.

The Ukrainian General Staff said late on June 29 that the "hottest" combat situation continued to be in the area of Pokrovsk, in the eastern Donetsk region.

Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry meanwhile said four of its employees had been injured in what it said was Ukrainian shelling in Donetsk.

Russia said on June 29 that it had captured Shumy, a settlement located about 4 miles southeast of Toretsk.

RFE/RL cannot confirm claims by either side in areas of the heaviest fighting.

(With reporting by AP)

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analyst, Dimash Alzhanov, said he was threatened by two unknown men when he entered the corridor of his apartment block in Almaty the previous night. According to Mr. Alzhanov, one of the men asked him if he was Dimash and made threatening movements toward him before the two left the site. Mr. Alzhanov, who has been known for his analytical comments on the Kazakh government's performance, the situation in Central Asia, Russia, and Moscow's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, said he filed a complaint with the police. Rights watchdogs have criticized the authorities in the tightly controlled former Soviet republic for persecuting dissent. Kazakhstan was ruled by authoritarian President Nursultan Nazarbaev from its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 until current President Qasym-Zhomart Toqaev succeeded him in 2019. Over the past three decades, several opposition figures have been killed and many jailed or forced to flee the country. Mr. Toqaev, who broadened his powers after Mr. Nazarbaev and his family left the oil-rich country's political scene following the deadly, unprecedented anti-government protests in January 2022, has promised political reforms and more freedoms for citizens. However, many in Kazakhstan consider the reforms announced by Mr. Toqaev to be cosmetic, as a crackdown on

dissent has continued even after the president announced his "New Kazakhstan" program. (RFE/RL)

Court labels Nevzorov, wife 'extremist group'

A court in St. Petersburg on July 2 labeled one of Russia's best-known television journalists, Aleksandr Nevzorov, and his wife, Lidia, an "extremist group" and ordered their property in the northwestern Leningrad region to be confiscated. Mr. Nevzorov's lawyer, Aleksei Pryanishnikov, said the court ruling orders the confiscation of the self-exiled journalist's property, car and shares in a private business. Mr. Nevzorov, who openly condemned Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and fled the country for a European Union member state in 2022, wrote on Telegram that Russian authorities had bargained with him for two months, trying to "persuade" him to change his position regarding Russia's aggression against Ukraine in exchange for "a good decision by the court." "Liberty costs much. But none of its costs can be too high," Mr. Nevzorov wrote. In February last year, a court in Moscow sentenced Mr. Nevzorov in absentia to eight years in prison on the charge of discrediting Russian armed forces. The Investigative

(Continued on page 15)

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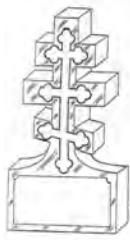
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Five killed...

(Continued from page 1)

Novorossiysk in the Black Sea were sunk.

Russia has been targeting Ukraine's electrical grid for months, forcing frequent power outages. In March, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said that 80 percent of the country's thermal-generation capacity had been destroyed. Around the same time, the Energy Ministry said thermal power plants controlled by Tsentroenergo and Ukrhydroenergo had been badly damaged.

Last month, Mr. Zelenskyy asked the European Union to step up electricity exports to Ukraine, as well as to supply the necessary equipment and other resources to make repairs.

Over the past several months, Ukraine has increasingly targeted fuel-production sites inside Russia, mainly oil-refining facilities that work for the Russian military.

Mr. Zelenskyy met with Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof on July 3 and said on Telegram that he is counting on the Netherlands to expand training missions for Ukrainian pilots.

The Dutch government previously supplied F-16s to a training facility in Romania, where Ukrainian pilots and ground staff are being taught to fly and maintain the planes in battle.

Mr. Schoof said on X that the Netherlands' support for Ukraine is "rock solid" and that Amsterdam "will continue to support Ukraine politically, militarily and financially against Russian aggression, whatever it takes and for as long as it takes."

Meanwhile, Ukrainian electricity provider Ukrenergo warned of blackouts and other restrictions on July 1 because of the effects of Russia's ongoing campaign of attacks targeting energy infrastructure combined with increased demand due to high summer temperatures.

The warning came as Ukraine's Air Force issued a missile and air-raid alert for most regions of Ukraine, including the capital, Kyiv.

In the Kyiv region, three people, including a child, were reportedly injured in a rocket strike that damaged three private houses and several vehicles, officials reported late on June 30.

Noting that temperatures in most of the country were forecast to be above 86 degrees Fahrenheit on July 1, the company urged Ukrainians to monitor consumption

and avoid using demanding appliances simultaneously.

The company added that Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary and Moldova were providing electricity supplies to Ukraine.

"But due to the scale of the damage [from the Russian attacks], these measures are not enough to maintain the balance in the energy system," Ukrenergo wrote on Telegram.

Mr. Zelenskyy addressed the Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure at a meeting of the European Council in Brussels on June 27.

"[Russian President Vladimir] Putin is waging a full-scale war against our energy sector," Mr. Zelenskyy said. "If Russia succeeds in this, it will become part of military doctrines around the world. Energy is one of the foundations of normal human life."

On June 23, Russia conducted its eighth large-scale strike targeting Ukraine's energy grid in the past three months. The strikes damaged power transmission systems in the southeastern Zaporizhia and western Lviv regions, Ukrenergo said at the time.

Meanwhile, the administration of Belgorod, a Russian city of some 340,000 people located 25 miles from the Ukrainian border, reported that electricity had been cut off in several areas of the city and the surrounding region as a result of Ukrainian drone attacks.

Telegram channel Ash said the reason for the power outage was an attack on a substation.

The Russian Defense Ministry said separately that Russian air-defense systems had downed 36 drones over the Bryansk, Kursk and Belgorod regions early on July 1.

The ministry claimed that its air-defense systems "destroyed and suppressed" 18 drones over the Bryansk region and nine drones each over the Kursk and Belgorod regions.

The claim could not be independently verified immediately.

(With additional reporting by RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service and RFE/RL's Russian Service)

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DR. LUBOMYR T. ROMANKIW

April 17, 1931, Zhovkva, Ukraine - June 27, 2024, Hackensack, NJ

The Ukrainian Chief Scout and world-renowned scientist, whose inventions changed the world. IBM Fellow, inductee to the National Inventors Hall of Fame, recipient of Vittorio de Nora Award of Electrochemical Society and the most prestigious award of the American Chemical Society – Perkin Gold Medal. Holder of 68 patents, over 130 published inventions and more than 150 scientific papers.

Dedicated Ukrainian patriot and a humble, gentle and kind man, who willingly helped anyone who came to him for advice and guidance. He dedicated his life to the Ukrainian Scout Organization Plast and greatly promoted its growth and the unity of Plast in Ukraine and abroad.



Dr. Lubomyr T. Romankiw
4/17/1931 – 6/27/2024

Dr. Lubomyr Romankiw passed away in the afternoon hours of June 27, 2024 at the Hackensack University Medical Center, comforted by his loving, caring daughter Halyna Kolessa and Dr. Alexander Kolessa.

The memorial service will take place on July 7, 2024, from 2 to 6 pm (with religious service 5-6 pm) at Peter Jarema Funeral Home, 129 East 7th Street, New York, NY 10009.

The funeral will be held on July 8, 2024 at 10:30 am at St. George Ukrainian Catholic Church, 30 East 7th Street, New York, NY 10003 with the future burial at the Lviv Lychakiv Cemetery Museum.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to "Plast USO" and mailed to: Plast Ukrainian Scouting Org, KPS USA 700 North Cedar Road, Jenkintown, PA 19046 or online at: <https://plastusa.org/provid/donate/>

NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 14)

Committee launched a probe into Mr. Nevzorov in March 2022 over statements he made on Instagram and YouTube that criticized Russia's armed forces for a deadly assault on a nursing home in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol and the alleged torture and killing of civilians in the town of Bucha. In June 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed a decree granting Ukrainian citizenship to Mr. Nevzorov and his wife "for transcendental services" to Ukraine. In the days after launching his invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022,

President Vladimir Putin signed into law legislation that calls for lengthy prison terms for distributing "deliberately false information" about Russian military operations as part of the Kremlin's effort to control the narrative about its war in Ukraine. The law envisages sentences of up to 10 years in prison for individuals convicted of an offense, while the penalty for the distribution of "deliberately false information" about the Russian military that leads to "serious consequences" is 15 years in prison. It also makes it illegal "to make calls against the use of Russian troops to protect the interests of Russia" or "for discrediting such use" with a possible penalty of up to three years in prison. The same provision

applies to calls for sanctions against Russia. Mr. Nevzorov continues to sharply criticize Putin and his government over the war in Ukraine on his YouTube and Telegram channels. (RFE/RL's North.Realities)

EU imposes new trade restrictions on Belarus

The European Union has imposed new restrictions on trade and other operations

with Belarus in order to curtail Russian sanctions evasion. Following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, the EU slapped multiple rounds of sanctions on Russia, including a ban on the import of dual-use technologies and other goods. Russia has used its neighbors, including ally Belarus, as an

(Continued on page 18)



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With deep sorrow we announce that



Prof. Taras Hunczak

of Chatham, New Jersey,
a husband, father, brother, grandfather, uncle,
friend, teacher, coach and mentor
passed away on July 1, 2024 at the age of 92.

He was born on March 13, 1932 to Maria and Hryhoriy Hunczak in Stare Misto, a suburb of Pidhaisci, in the Ternopilska Oblast, Ukraine.

A wake will take place on Thursday, July 11, from 4:00 – 7:00 at Stephen J. Priola Parsippany Funeral Service 60 N. Beverwyck Road, Lake Hiawatha, New Jersey 07034 973-335-4700

The funeral liturgy will take place on Friday, July 12, 2024, at: St. Volodymyr Church, Glen Spey, New York 12737

May his memory be eternal.

Ukrainian pro sports update

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Ukraine wins 36 medals in youth weightlifting

The 2024 European Youth Weightlifting Championships for U-15 and U-17 athletes was held on June 15-22 in Thessaloniki, Greece. Out of 360 total medals issued at the event, Ukrainian youngsters won 36.

Each event included a chance to win three medals: snatch, clean-and-jerk and total. Three Ukrainian athletes were triple-medalists in their events: Kateryna Malashchuk (women's U-17, 45 kg), including a new record in the snatch, Anhelina Selivanova (women's U-15, 64 kg) and Sofia Kozak (women's U-17, 81 kg). Serhii Kotelevskyi came close on the men's side (73 kg), winning gold in clean-and-jerk and total while placing second in the snatch event in men's U-17. The breakdown for Ukrainian weightlifters was 10 golds, 10 silver medals and 16 bronzes.

Ukraine second at Para Athletics Championships

Ukraine's team of 15 disabled Para athletes won a total of 26 medals (11 gold, 7 silver, 8 bronze) to place second overall out of 13 participating nations (165 athletes) at the 2024 Virtus Open European Para Athletics Championships in Uppsala, Sweden, on June 11-16. Eleven of Ukraine's 13 athletes winning medals were multi-medalists.

Ukrainian Maksym Koval broke the world record in the men's (II1 class) discus throw with a personal best of 49.87 meters. Koval also was voted the event's best male award.

Liudmyla Danylyna (five medals, three gold) and Koval (two gold) were multi gold medalists. Ruslana Muravskaya earned four medals including one gold.

Ukraine earns 13 medals in Para Dance Sport

Ten out of 12 competing Ukrainian para athletes with physical disabilities won medals, six of whom won multiple medals at the Para Dance Sport 26 Polish Open in Lominaki, Poland, on June 6-10. Multi-medalists included Olena Chynka, Ivan Sivak, Oleksandr Onishchenko, Volodymyr Kemychnyj, Snizhana Kemychna and Illona Sluhovyna. Medals were earned in single conventional and freestyle dancing as well as duo and combination freestyle, Latin and standard dance. Ukraine's para dancers won six golds, five silver medals and two bronzes.

Ukrainian swimmers win 9 medals in aquatics

Ukraine finished in 10th place out of 28 countries with nine total medals including three gold, three silver and three bronze medals at the 37th European Aquatics Championships held in Belgrade, Serbia, on June 10-23. Ukraine won five medals in swimming (seventh place) and four medals in diving (tied for fourth place).

Ukrainian gold medalists included Mykhailo Roamnchuk (800-meter freestyle), Oleksandr Zhetlyakov (200-meter backstroke and new national record of 1:55.39 seconds) and the duo of Ksenia Bailo/Sofia Lyskun in the 10-meter platform synchronized diving event. Romanchuk,

Zhetlyakov, Bailo and Lyskun were multi-medal winners.

Ukrainian fencers win two silver medals

Daria Myroniuk in women's foil and the quartet of Yuliya Bakastova, Olha Kharlan, Alina Komashchuk and Olena Kravatska in team saber earned silver medals for Ukraine at the 2024 European Fencing Championships in Basel, Switzerland, on June 18-23. Ukraine's two medals placed them sixth overall out of 12 countries winning medals at the tournament. Komashchuk placed fifth overall in the women's individual saber event.

Ukraine wins three Olympics licenses in breaking

Ukraine earned three Olympic licenses in breaking, also known as breakdancing. The sport was included in the Youth Olympic Games for the first time in 2018, and will be making its debut at the Paris Games. Ukraine won its three entries at the Olympic qualifying tournament in Budapest.

Ukrainian representatives in breaking will be Kateryna Pavlenko, Anna Ponomarenko and Oleg Kuznetsov. Five Ukrainian athletes participated in the selection process in Budapest, Hungary, but Ukraine only captured three licenses.

The Olympic breakaway tournament will include 32 athletes – 16 women and 16 men. Ukraine, China and the Netherlands are each sending three participants to the inaugural Olympic breakers competition.

Breakdancing combines elements of acrobatics, power movements and rhythmic dance steps performed to specific music.

Ukraine earns extra Olympic license in canoe sprint

Ukraine earned another Olympic license in canoe sprint on June 26 due to the redistribution of unused licenses in men's single sculls 1000 meters. The original distribution was decided based on results in the 2023 World Championships held in Duisberg, Germany. Ukrainian Pavlo Altukhov, who finished eighth in the C1, 1000-meter race at the ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships, was selected to additionally represent Ukraine at the Paris Games.

This was Ukraine's eighth Olympic license in canoeing.

Ukraine's Olympic House in Paris named Volia Space

Ukraine's official house in Paris, France, during the 2024 Summer Olympic Games has been named "Volia Space" as announced by Acting Minister of Youth and Sports Matviy Bidnyi on June 26. (The Ukrainian word "volia" in English translates as will.)

Posting on Facebook, Bidnyi wrote, "I am happy to announce that Ukraine will have an official representation during the Olympic Games in Paris! The Ukrainian house will be called Volia Space and will be the center of the Ukrainian will to win."

Bidnyi added that the space will be Ukraine's cultural and media center and a place where "everyone can feel the Ukrainian will to win and become a part of it."

Ukraine's Olympic outfits launched in Kyiv

Ukrainian athletes presented their country's official uniform on June 26 for the upcoming 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. The outfits are a pale yellow with blue stalks of wheat and Ukrainian tridents and were modeled during a fashion show in Kyiv.

"The new uniforms, the colors of our flag, during the war, I'm just moved to tears," said President Vadym Gutzeit of the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine.

Ukraine's Olympians will be wearing this edition of their outfits during the planned opening ceremony on the river Seine.

"When they come out at the opening ceremony, the whole of Ukraine will be cheering. This will send a message to the whole world and to all of us that we have survived," Gutzeit said.

Usyk vacates IBF title

On June 25 Oleksandr Usyk announced via Instagram that he was vacating the IBF heavyweight title. The title will be on the line when Anthony Joshua takes on Daniel Dubois on September 21 in London.

When Usyk meets up with Tyson Fury for their scheduled rematch on December 21 in Riyadh, the WBC, WBA and WBO titles will be up for grabs.



Pictured above are seven of 15 Para athletes who represented Ukraine at the 2024 Virtus Open European Para Athletics Championships in Uppsala, Sweden, on June 11-16. Maksym Koval (second from the right in the second row) set a world record and personal best in discus with a throw of 49.87 meters.

Usyk's mandatory IBF title defense was overdue, and it was decided going into his fight with Fury that the winner must face the mandatory challenger or be stripped of the title. Since Usyk had a two-fight deal with Fury, his decision to vacate the IBF title was expected.

Tkachuk trade set course for Stanley Cup triumph

Florida Panthers General Manager Bill Zito made some daring moves to remake his club and become a powerhouse in the National Hockey League's Eastern Conference. The team redeemed itself in 2023-2024 by knocking off the Edmonton Oilers in seven games and winning the organization's first Stanley Cup after falling short in the 2024 final series against the Golden Knights.

Among Zito's moves, he hung on to goalie Sergei Bobrovsky, picked up defenseman Gustav Forsling, signed forward Carter Verheghe and traded for Sam Bennett and Sam Reinhart. But the key transaction to building a championship roster in Florida was the trade for Ukrainian left wing Matthew Tkachuk. His arrival in the summer of 2022 transformed the team into a tougher and stronger two-way club that became physical and feisty yet skilled and speedy. Taking their lead from their new assistant captain, the Panthers could outscore and outhit their opponent in the same game.

It is not common to trade multiple all-stars in the NHL. Usually, one superstar is moved in exchange for a package of draft picks and prospects. Zito stunned the hockey world when he sent 100-point winger Jonathan Huberdeau and star defenseman MacKenzie Weegar in a package for Tkachuk. Huberdeau finished fifth in Most Valuable Player voting and Weegar enjoyed the best season of his career. Both players were up for contract extensions and Zito decided to flip them to the Flames for the right to sign Tkachuk, who wanted out of Calgary. He immediately signed Tkachuk to an eight-year extension.

After some early debate regarding who got the better of the deal, it is now clear that Florida came out on top. A league MVP finalist in 2022-2023, Tkachuk led the team in goals (41), assists (13) and points (24) during the 2023 playoffs. He followed that up with 22 points in the 2024 playoffs, finishing tied for first with Alexander Barkov.

Tkachuk is constructed for playoff hockey. He is the ideal blend of skill and physicality. He is a royal pain to cover along the boards and in front of the net, yet he has the offensive skills to set up a teammate or bury a goal, often on a deflection. He's only 26 years old, entering the prime of his career and he's not going anywhere.

Tkachuk's tears of joy

Keith Tkachuk, Matthew's father, was in the stands crying when son Matthew's Florida Panthers won the Stanley Cup over Edmonton on June 24 in a dramatic game seven 2-1 victory. Tkachuk dedicated the win to his family, refer-



Andrew Nynka

Florida Panthers defenseman Josh Mahura, 26, who is of Ukrainian descent, became a Stanley Cup champion after the team's 2-1 win against the Edmonton Oilers in Game 7 of the Stanley Cup finals on June 24. He is seen above (No. 28) during a game against the Boston Bruins on October 30, 2023.

(Continued on page 19)

SPORTS COMMENTARY

Ukraine used real life as inspiration during Euro Championships

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Reminders about the devastation in Ukraine are near constant. In Germany during the 2024 European Championships, Ukraine's first major tournament since Russia launched its full-scale war on the country, that devastation was evident at the national team's initial training session. Each player was asked to present a soccer ball to a specially invited supporter for the occasion. Oleksandr Zinchenko's fan was a war veteran who had lost both legs below the knee. Their exchange was extremely emotional.

In these situations, individuals often have two choices. One can use football as an escape from the realities of life or use the realities of life as an inspiration for football. Ukraine's head coach, Serhiy Rebrov, made clear during an early press conference and later in an interview with CNN that his team selected the latter.

Rebrov reiterated that the war in Ukraine needs to be talked about even though some people are tired of hearing the news of the war. However, he added that, as Ukraine continues to fight, the country needs support. Later, the coach was more straightforward, explaining how relevant it was for Ukraine to be represented in the Euro Championships because the Ukrainian people want to be part of the European family and Ukraine is defending all of Europe.

Listening to Rebrov, it sounded as if there was no choice. Life in Ukraine has been

indescribably harsh for the last two-and-a-half years, and after an early outflowing of compassion, the war in Ukraine has slowly made its way out of news headlines.

It is abundantly clear that the national team's success on the pitch can at least temporarily change that narrative. This is why they express their patriotism so pointedly.

A case in point came during Ukraine's qualifying match against England in September 2023 in Wroclaw, Poland. This was a "home" match for Ukraine with lots of Ukrainian refugees at Tarczynski Arena, where the national team members met their fans for the first time since the full-scale war began. The players and fans cried during the playing of Ukraine's national anthem. Russian President Vladimir Putin was vilified in loud chants.

Zinchenko's goal and Ukraine's 1-1 draw against England were greeted with boundless pronouncements of euphoria that offered a short-term relief from the pain felt in Ukraine.

The same exhilarating resonance from Ukrainian fans in German stadiums came during Euro 2024. The players were calmer, having experienced stressful matches over the past several years amid the war. Yet, the pre-game national anthem did trigger that emotion once again.

The sentiment in the stands was noticeable and the players seemed to be less impacted by it, but the tears still flowed when Ukraine played. In Dusseldorf, Germany, when Ukraine defeated Slovakia



Ukrainian Association of Football

Coach Serhiy Rebrov speaks during a press conference on June 26 after Ukraine played to a 0-0 draw with Belgium during the group stage of the 2024 European Championships in Germany.

and made amends for their loss to Romania, Roman Yaremchuk cried as he embraced fans after the final whistle sounded and the game ended.

Ukraine's squad at the European Championships could be the best squad the country has ever assembled. The Ukrainian team was the fourth youngest in Germany.

At Euro 2016, Ukraine had only one player from a club in Europe's top five leagues – Yevhen Konoplyanka from Sevilla and Schalke. The rest of the national team was made up of key players from Dynamo Kyiv, Shakhtar Donetsk, with six additional Ukrainian Premier League (UPL) players and players from Eastern European leagues.

At Euro 2024, only one UPL player outside of Dynamo and Shakhtar made it the national team. They were replaced by four players from the English Premier League, four from La Liga (Spain) and one from Serie A (Italy).

Today's Ukraine team is no longer the classical sturdy and physically strong defensive squad. It has been replaced by fluid and graceful offensive-minded attackers. Mykhailo Mudryk is the speed demon winger, Heorhiy Sudakov is the technical attacking midfielder and Artem Dovbyk was La Liga's leading goal scorer in 2023-2024.

European football experts called the 2024 Ukrainian side better than the team that made the Euro 2020 quarterfinal

round. Many pundits have said Rebrov is in the middle of developing a new golden era for the national team.

Ukraine finished tied on points with Italy in qualifying for the Euros and then advanced to a playoff thanks to their capability of scoring late and coming from behind to win. They pulled off such rallies against Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland and Slovakia.

The Ukrainian players are fueled by their belief that hardship and adversity in their homeland and in sport are comparable. The belief is all-inclusive and gratifying and powers them forward on the pitch.

They entered their final group match against Belgium with their backs against the wall again. They were in desperate need of a victory to stay in the tournament.

Under these conditions, a coach normally demands total focus on the game at hand. However, in and for team Ukraine, nothing is normal. Two and a half years after Russia invaded, fighting for their homeland provides intense motivation.

"Before the war, when you're fighting on the pitch, you are thinking only about the result. I think all of us now are thinking about the result and about showing Europe the real character of our country," Rebrov said.

(Based on reporting by inews.co.uk)

Ihor Stelmach may be reached at ihorgenia@sbcglobal.net.



Ukrainian Association of Football

Ukraine's National Football Team is pictured before a match against Belgium on June 26 during the 2024 European Championships in Germany.



Ukrainian Sports Federation of U.S.A. and Canada («USCAK»)

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Contact: Taissa Bokalo

609-286-8699 • tbokalo@yahoo.com



Tennis Tournament

Start Time 8:00 AM

Contact: Steve Sosiak

732-896-6725 • hsosiak@gmail.com

NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 15)

intermediary to get around Western sanctions. The latest E.U. restrictions aim to close that loophole. "The close integration of the Russian and Belarusian economies has substantially facilitated the circumvention of existing sanctions against Russia. This new set of sanctions against Belarus mirrors several of the measures already imposed on Russia, making E.U. sanctions

against Russia more effective," the European Commission said in a June 29 statement. The E.U. has expanded its ban on the export of dual-use goods and advanced technology to Belarus to include items that enhance the country's industrial capacity. The bloc has also banned maritime navigation equipment, oil refining technology and certain luxury goods. The new measures also ban the transit of such goods through Belarus. The E.U. has also banned the import of goods that allow Belarus to diversify its source of revenue as

well as the import of gold and diamonds. The E.U. had previously banned the import of gold and diamonds from Russia, which is one of the world's biggest miners of both natural resources. The measures urge E.U. companies to prevent their foreign subsidiaries from engaging in activities that undermine sanctions. The European Council can now impose targeted measures against individuals or entities that circumvent the sanctions or that significantly undermine their purpose or effectiveness. (RFE/RL)

New patriarch of Bulgarian Orthodox Church

A council of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church has elected Metropolitan Daniil of Vidin as the church's new patriarch. The election by 69 of 138 delegates puts a man seen as a pro-Russian who is close to Moscow at the head of the autocephalous Eastern Orthodox jurisdiction, with some 6 million members in Bulgaria and 1-2 million more adherents outside the country. The 52-year-old Daniil takes over after the death in March of Patriarch Neophyte. Daniil has called Ukraine an aggressor alongside Russia in the current full-scale invasion by Russian troops of Ukraine. He has also suggested that Ukraine is a creation of Vladimir Lenin's. Daniil also criticized the closure of the Russian Church in Sofia last year and expressed outrage after the decision to expel its head, Archimandrite Vasian, and two other clerics on suspicion of espionage. Daniil's main challenger in the election had been Metropolitan Hryhoriy of Vratsa, who was seen as more neutral on the war question. (RFE/RL's Bulgarian Service)

Probe launched against Russian historian

The Moscow Prosecutor's Office said on June 28 that a probe was launched against self-exiled Russian historian Tamara Eidelman on a charge of "rehabilitating Nazism." According to the Prosecutor's Office, the charge stems from Ms. Eidelman's words in one of her online lectures on YouTube about Victory Day "offending the memory of the Fatherland's defenders." The 64-year-old left Russia after Moscow launched its ongoing invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. In September 2022, Russian authorities added her to the registry of "foreign agents" and have fined her in absentia several times since then for failing to carry out the requirements of a "foreign agent." (RFE/RL's Current Time)

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OUT & ABOUT

July 7, 13 New York	Film screening, "Veselka: The Rainbow on the Corner at the Center of the World," New Plaza Cinema, https://newplazacinema.org/showtimes	July 20, 21, 23, 24 St. Petersburg, FL	Film screening, "Veselka: The Rainbow on the Corner at the Center of the World," Green Light Cinema, https://greenlightstpete.com
July 10 Cambridge, MA	Presentation by Hanna Protasova, "Between Oblivion and Remembrance: How Ukrainian Literature Reflected on the Holocaust in the 1940s-1960s," Harvard University, https://huri.harvard.edu	July 24 Cambridge, MA	Presentation by Orysia Kulick, "How Ukraine Ruled Russia: Regionalism and Party Politics after Stalin," Harvard University, https://huri.harvard.edu
July 10 Chicago	Photo exhibit, "Not All of Them: Portraits of War Refugees," by Antanas Sutkus, Arturas Morozovas and Tadas Kazakevicius, Ukrainian National Museum, 312-421-8020	July 24 Rosendale, NY	Film screening, "Veselka: The Rainbow on the Corner at the Center of the World," Rosendale Theatre, https://rosendaletheatre.org
July 11 New York	Presentation, "Cultural Preservation During Wartime: Safeguarding Ukraine's Heritage Sites," World Monuments Fund, Ukrainian Institute of America, www.ukrainianinstitute.org	July 25 Elkins Park, PA	Presentation by Anatolii Babynskyi, "The Pope's Tightrope Walk: Walking a Narrow Line Between Diplomacy and Moral Clarity in the Context of Russian Aggression against Ukraine," St. Sophia Religious Association, 215-635-1555 or https://stsophia.us
July 12 Chicago	Art exhibit, "The Ground of Things," featuring works by Aleksander Najda and Vasyl Savchenko, Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, www.uima-chicago.org	July 26 North Wales, PA	Five-a-side soccer tournament, Ukrainian Orthodox League, Ukrainian American Sports Center - Tryzub, alevisnaumenko20@gmail.com or 215-290-7878
July 12 Kerhonkson, NY	Soyuzivka Gala Evening, Fundraiser and Banquet, featuring performances by Vadym Krasnooky (Mad Heads) and Bria Blessing, Ukrainian National Foundation, Soyuzivka Heritage Center, Katya@soyuzivka.com or 845-626-5641	July 26-28 Philadelphia	Convention, Ukrainian Orthodox League, St. Vladimir Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Crowne Plaza Hotel (King of Prussia, PA), 77thUOLConvention@gmail.com or www.uolofusa.org
July 12-14 Kerhonkson, NY	UkraineFest Soyuzivka Ukrainian Festival, Soyuzivka Heritage Center, www.soyuzivka.com	July 27 King of Prussia, PA	Convention banquet, featuring the Soloway Live Music Band, Ukrainian Orthodox League, Crowne Plaza Hotel Ballroom, 77thUOLConvention@gmail.com
July 13 Somerset, NJ	Vinok-making workshop, flower crowns, Ukrainian History and Education Center, www.ukrhec.org	July 27 Jewett, NY	Concert honoring retiring MACGC president Natalia Sonevystky, featuring violinists Vasyl Zatsikha and Nazar Pylatyuk, violist Richard Young, cellists Natalia Khoma and Marta Bagratuni, and pianist Volodymyr Vynnytsky, Grazhda Music and Art Center of Greene County, https://grazhdamusicandart.org
July 13 Alexandria, VA	Concert, featuring pianist Stanislav Khristenko, performing works by Ukrainian composers and Bach, The Washington T Group Cultural Fund, the Lyceum, www.twgcf.org	July 29-31 Jewett, NY	Gerdany (bead-stringing) workshop, with instruction by Oriana Makar, Grazhda Music and Art Center of Greene County, https://grazhdamusicandart.org
July 14 Somerset, NJ	Exhibit open house and gallery talk, "Woven Textiles of Carpathian Ukraine," Ukrainian History and Education Center, https://ukrhec.org	July 29-August 9 Jewett, NY	Children's singing course of Ukrainian folk songs, with instruction by Anna Bachynsky and Melanie Serbay, Grazhda Music and Art Center of Greene County, https://grazhdamusicandart.org
July 17 Cambridge, MA	Presentation by Oxana Shevel, "Russia and Ukraine: Entangled Histories, Diverging States," Harvard University, https://huri.harvard.edu	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 .	
July 20 Jewett, NY	Concert, Grazhda Chamber Music Society, violinists Vasyl Zatsikha and Nazar Pylatyuk, violist Richard Young, cellist Natalia Khoma and pianist Volodymyr Vynnytsky, Grazhda Music and Art Center of Greene County, https://grazhdamusicandart.org		

Ukrainian pro...

(Continued from page 16)

ring to dad, Keith, mother, Chantal (née Oster, a Ukrainian from Winnipeg), brother Brady and sister Taryn. He jokingly said the Tkachuk name will finally be on the Stanley Cup.

Keith Tkachuk played 1,201 regular and 89 playoff games with four NHL franchises without coming close to winning hockey's most treasured prize. Younger brother Brady, captain of the Ottawa Senators, hopes his team will be the next Canadian squad to win the Stanley Cup and break Canada's 31-year streak of not hoisting the cup.

Mahura a Stanley Cup champion

Twenty-six-year-old Ukrainian defenseman Josh Mahura is a Stanley Cup champion. He was a healthy scratch for the Florida Panthers' entire playoff run, last appearing in a game on April 16 against Toronto.

Mahura was on the ice with his teammates taking part in the celebration after the series-clinching win over Edmonton. He was dressed in full equipment and took his turn lifting the cup.

He dressed in 30 games for the Panthers in the 2023-2024 season, recording nine assists. He missed more than a month of action due to an injury he suffered in November. His 30 regular season games

played this past year may not be enough to have his name engraved on the Stanley Cup. The NHL requires that a player play at least half of a team's regular season contests (41) or play in at least one Stanley Cup final game, although the club can petition the league and argue that Mahura's injury was an extenuating circumstance.

Death toll and infrastructure destruction rising in Ukraine

Acting Minister of Youth and Sports Matviy Bidnyi said some 479 Ukrainian athletes and coaches have died since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. In a June 24 press conference in Kyiv, Bidnyi reminded everyone that more than 3,000 Ukrainian athletes have taken up arms to defend their country since the full-scale war began. Bidnyi said the loss of these athletes is a blow to Ukrainian sports and to national identity.

At the same press conference, Oleksandr Krykun, vice president of the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine (NOC), said that some 518 sports infrastructure facilities have been damaged or destroyed. Included among those are 15 Ukrainian Olympic bases. The breakdown by region includes six in Zhytomyr, seven in Kyiv, 10 in Chernihiv, 12 in Sumy, five in Odesa, 25 in Mykolaiv, 81 in Kherson, 19 in Dnipropetrovsk, seven in Zaporizhia, 172 in Kharkiv, 73 in Donetsk and 101 in Luhansk.

Austin FC sign Ukrainian Svatok

Major League Soccer's Austin FC announced that they have acquired Ukrainian centerback Oleksandr Svatok from Ukrainian Premier League club SC Dnipro-1 on June 24. The 29-year-old Ukrainian international defender is under contract through 2027 with an option for 2028. Svatok will be eligible to play on July 18 when the MLS secondary transfer window opens.

Sporting director Rodolfo Borrell referred to Svatok as "a defender who has consistently shown a great deal of leadership during many years with his previous clubs."

Svatok was slated to join Austin FC after competing for his national team at the UEFA European Championship and is expected to add a physical presence to the

club's defense.

Svatok scored five goals and added five assists in 233 professional matches and was Dnipro's captain before his move. His only prior stop outside Ukraine was with the Croatian side Hajduk Split.

"What most drew me to Austin FC was the club's ambition. There is a clear desire to compete and to build a team in which the city can take pride. That is something I want to be a part of," Svatok said, according to a team press release.

(Based on reporting by Komersant Ukrainskyi, Interfax Ukraine, Firstpost via AFP, ESPN, The Sporting News, NHL.com, CNN and MLS.)

Ihor Stelmach may be reached at ihorgenia@sbcglobal.net.



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