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NATO strongly backs Ukraine's 'irreversible path' to membership, outlines plans to make alliance stronger

by **Todd Prince**
RFE/RL

WASHINGTON – North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) leaders attending a landmark summit have backed Ukraine's "irreversible path" to membership, saying that Kyiv has a right to choose its own security arrangements and that its "future is in NATO."

The position, laid out in a joint statement following the first day of discussions at the summit on July 10, provided a clear sign of NATO's continued support for Ukraine's efforts to defend itself against invading Russian forces.

"We reaffirm that we will be in a position to extend an invitation to Ukraine to join the alliance when allies agree and conditions are met," the statement said.

Speaking at a news conference at the conclusion of the day's meetings, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg discussed a number of steps that were agreed upon to help Ukraine more than two years after Russia's full-scale invasion began in 2022.

Mr. Stoltenberg outlined the launching of a new project under which the alliance will coordinate military support and training for the first time, with a command center in Germany.

He also lauded improved defense funding by alliance members, with 23 of the alliance's 32 members meeting the target of spending 2 percent of gross domestic product this year, and their approval of a pledge to boost defense production.

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Russian missiles hit two Kyiv hospitals killing dozens ahead of NATO's 75th anniversary summit

As Ukraine faces \$20 billion default on sovereign debt, endangering economic recovery



Serhii Nuzhnenko, RFE/RL

Volunteers, doctors and rescue workers search for survivors at the Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital in Kyiv following a deadly Russian missile attack on July 8. Ukrainian authorities said that at least 24 people were killed and dozens injured in a "massive" Russian daytime missile attack on the capital and other cities.

by **Mark Raczkiewicz**

CHICAGO – Scores of Ukrainian civilians were killed on July 8 during an aerial barrage of the country, with two Kyiv hospitals struck by cruise missiles on the eve of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit in Washington.

Most of the victims were in Kyiv at a children's and maternity hospital, though other residential sites were also hit, killing at least 33 civilians, five of whom were children, in the nation's capital, according to the Kyiv City Military Administration.

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Poland and Ukraine strengthen ties with comprehensive defense agreement



Office of the President of Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (left) and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk are pictured after signing a bilateral security agreement on July 8.

by **Roman Tymotsko**

LVIV – Ukraine and Poland took a significant step toward bolstering regional security by signing a groundbreaking bilateral security agreement, marking the 21st such accord for Ukraine.

The deal, signed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk on July 8, signals a new era of military cooperation and defense integration between the two nations. For the first time among the agreements already signed, the pact provides for

the possibility of Warsaw intercepting missiles and drones in Ukrainian airspace fired in the direction of Poland.

Mr. Zelenskyy arrived in Warsaw to sign the 21st security document between Ukraine and its partners before departing for a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) 75th anniversary summit in Washington, D.C.

At a joint press conference, Mr. Tusk emphasized that it was important for Poland that the document not be just declarative.

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Zelenskyy urges NATO nations to drop restrictions on how Ukraine can strike Russia

by **Margret Johnston**
RFE/RL

WASHINGTON – Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has pressed North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) leaders to lift all restrictions against Kyiv using their donated weaponry to launch long-range strikes on Russian territory if they want to see Ukraine defeat Russia's invading forces.

"If we want to win, if we want to prevail, if we want to save our country, and to defend it, we need to lift all the limitations," Mr. Zelenskyy said on July 11 at a press briefing alongside NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg.

Mr. Zelenskyy's comments came a day after NATO announced a major aid package to support Ukraine's defense against Russia's invasion launched in February

2022, including the delivery of long-awaited U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets and the provision of \$43 billion in military assistance within the next year.

The alliance also stressed Ukraine's right to defend itself against foreign aggression and to choose its own security arrangements, declaring that Ukraine's "future is in NATO" and that Kyiv would continue to receive support "on its irreversible path to full Euro-Atlantic integration."

On July 11, the United States announced it would be sending \$225 million worth of military equipment to Ukraine, part of a \$61 billion aid package approved in April. The tranche includes a Patriot missile battery, anti-aircraft systems and munitions, as well as artillery ammunition and rockets.

Mr. Stoltenberg said that, while Russia

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Population flight leaving Russia's Far East increasingly less Russian

by Paul Goble
Eurasia Daily Monitor

The population of Russia's Far Eastern Federal District, an enormous resource-rich territory twice the size of India but with fewer than seven million people, is not only declining in size but becoming less ethnically Russian as well. The total population of the region has fallen by 20 percent since 1991 and is now declining at an accelerating rate. The Russian share of that population, while still a majority, is declining as well, with ever more regions within the federal district no longer being more than 50 percent ethnic Russian (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, November 4, 2015; Sibreal.org, September 29, 2020).

In large measure, these longstanding trends, both of which have intensified since the start of Russian President Vladimir Putin's expanded war against Ukraine, are the result of Russian flight. Ethnic Russians find it easier to leave the region than do members of other groups. This reality has been accompanied by three other developments that are changing the face of the Russian Far East but have received less attention. First, Chinese, North Korean and Central Asian migrant workers are filling the gaps left behind by departing Russians (Demreview.hse.ru, accessed July 9). Second, the non-Russians in the region are increasing in self-confidence and assertiveness even as they are also declining in number – but at a rate less than that of ethnic Russians (T.me/freyakutiafoundation, July 7). Third, the incompletely Russified ethnic Ukrainian community that once dominated the southern portion of what is now the Far Eastern Federal District is recovering its values, if not yet identity. Many in Moscow

see this renewed spirit of independence behind the anti-Kremlin protests in Khabarovsk (Sibreal.org, September 29, 2020; Kavkazgeoclub.ru, June 20).

Moscow has been trying, without much success, to limit or reverse these trends (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, January 25, 2018; Region.expert, May 16). Putin's own policies, which allow China access to Siberia and the Russian Far East to cement Beijing's alliance with Moscow against the West, however, are increasingly undercutting the Kremlin's demographic goals so far as the Russian Far East is concerned (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, April 28, 2016, February 6, 2023, January 23; RBC, April 5). This failure and its spreading consequences are causing more Russian officials and analysts to warn that the demographic developments and efforts by China, on the one hand, and Ukraine and the West, on the other, are threatening Moscow's control of the region and even Russia's territorial integrity (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, January 18, June 8, 2023; Beregrus.ru, June 17; Kavkazgeoclub.ru, June 20). The results of a new survey just released at a conference in the Far East will only add fuel to this fire and place more strain on Moscow's relations with China and the West.

The poll was conducted among more than 1,200 residents of the Far Eastern Federal District this spring to determine the attitudes of Russian speakers in the region about leaving for other parts of Russia. The results were released at the end of June at a Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk media conference (Baikal-daily.ru, July 6; Alsakh.ru, July 8). While officials across the Far East sought to put a positive face on things,

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Ukraine strengthens national defense industry

by Yuri Lapaiev
Eurasia Daily Monitor

As elections are happening throughout the West, the issue of aid to Ukraine remains a central topic of debate. Some candidates have expressed their reluctance to continue supporting Kyiv. For example, two days prior to the second-round runoffs in the French legislative election on July 7, Marine Le Pen, leader of the far-right French National Rally party, said that she would oppose Ukraine's usage of French long-range weapons (likely a reference to SCALP-EG cruise missiles and air-to-surface AASM Hammer missiles). Additionally, she promised not to send any French soldiers to Ukraine, as was proposed by President Emmanuel Macron earlier (CNN, July 5; Ukrainska Pravda; Lefigaro.fr, July 6).

While National Rally failed to triumph in the second round of voting, similar discourse has been heard from candidates running in the upcoming U.S. and other European elections (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 2; Le Monde, July 6). The issue itself is a common theme among pro-Kremlin entities across the West (RBC-Ukraine, July 8). Previously, Keith Kellogg and Fred Fleitz, former national security advisors to Donald Trump, revealed their peace plan for Ukraine. The draft, allegedly approved by Mr. Trump, includes halting U.S. military aid to Ukraine to force Kyiv to negotiate (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 2). Such

news creates a strategic problem for the Ukrainian leadership about whether Kyiv will be able to ensure the same flow of military aid after elections in some partner states. One solution to this problem is investing more time and resources into further strengthening Ukraine's national defense industry.

Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine has embarked on intensive development projects within the defense industry. These efforts have focused on not only increasing production rates more generally but also developing, testing and launching mass production of completely new weapons systems, such as unmanned naval drones or the 155-millimeter self-propelled 2S22 "Bohdana" howitzer (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, August 18, November 15, 2023, March 26; Kyiv Post, May 1; U24.gov.ua/navaldrones, accessed July 8). According to Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal, production capacity tripled in 2023, and the goal for 2024 is to increase it sixfold. He also said that more than 265 billion hryvnia (around \$6.5 billion) will be spent on purchasing, producing and repairing weapons, which "means more drones, more shells, more ammunition and armored vehicles for [the Ukrainian] military" (Government of Ukraine, January 3).

Ukraine's defense industry faces certain

(Continued on page 9)

NEWSBRIEFS

NATO leaders to meet with Zelenskyy

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) leaders were scheduled to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on July 11, a day after announcing major additional aid for his war-torn country, including the delivery of long-awaited U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets, and the alliance's intention to provide Ukraine with tens of billions of dollars in military assistance within the next year. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the meeting with Mr. Zelenskyy would take place within the NATO Ukraine Council. The Ukrainian leader was also scheduled to meet U.S. President Joe Biden during the day. The meetings will come a day after Mr. Zelenskyy met with leaders of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives and members of committees involved in defense, spending, diplomacy and national security. Mr. Zelenskyy was expected to ask NATO to move more forcefully to aid his country against Russia's invasion and to speed up pledges of aid. He told a Washington think tank audience early this week that it's "time to step out of the shadows, to make strong decisions." Mr. Zelenskyy's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, was also scheduled to kick off a public forum on the sidelines of the summit on July 11. Mr. Yermak is scheduled to speak on the NATO-Ukraine partnership. Among the topics he is expected to address are the summit declaration, which says the allies intend to provide Ukraine with at least \$43 billion in military aid within the next year, but stops short of the multiyear commitment Mr. Stoltenberg had sought. The document also strengthens NATO's language on China, calling it a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war effort in Ukraine and saying Beijing continues to pose systemic challenges to transatlantic security. Mr. Stoltenberg told reporters it was the first time that the 32 allies had jointly labeled China in those terms and called it an important message. China's support for Russia's war in Ukraine has heightened NATO's interest in forming bonds with four Indo-Pacific countries – Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea – whose leaders will meet with NATO leaders on July 11 to discuss security challenges and cooperation. Mr. Stoltenberg highlighted the

meeting in his news conference on July 10, telling reporters that the NATO leaders agreed to continue to strengthen their partnerships, especially in the Indo-Pacific amid rising concerns that Beijing might attack Taiwan and worries about Russia's stepped-up security ties with China and nuclear-armed North Korea. "In this dangerous world, friends and partners are more important than ever, so today we agreed to continue to strengthen our partnerships, especially in the Indo-Pacific. Security is global; it's not regional. [Russian President Vladimir] Putin's war is fueled by those who do not share our values," he said. Iran and North Korea are providing direct military support, while China is propping up Russia's war economy, he added. "This is not just a temporary coalition of convenience. It is a major strategic shift, and we must remain clear-eyed as to the threat," Mr. Stoltenberg said. This is the third successive NATO summit that the four Indo-Pacific countries have attended. Their meeting with NATO leaders will also be attended by European Union leaders. The Washington summit declaration stresses the importance of the Indo-Pacific to NATO, saying developments there directly affect Euro-Atlantic security, and it welcomes enhanced cooperation with Asia-Pacific partners to support Ukraine. U.S. national-security adviser Jake Sullivan, who was scheduled to address the forum running parallel to the summit on July 11, said NATO allies and Indo-Pacific partners would launch four new joint projects at the summit covering Ukraine, artificial intelligence, disinformation and cybersecurity. (RFE/RL's Margret Johnston)

NATO members promised air defenses to Ukraine

The Netherlands will begin supplying Ukraine with promised components of Patriot air-defense systems "very soon," the country's defense minister told RFE/RL on the sidelines of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit in Washington. "As for the parts of the Patriot system that we are supplying, I can say that we will supply them very soon," Defense Minister Ruben Bekelkans said on July 10. "As for

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Zelenskyy calls on U.S. to be 'strong' in resolve against Putin's aggression

RFE/RL

WASHINGTON – Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said U.S. leaders must be “strong” and “uncompromising” in helping to defend his country’s democracy against Russian President Vladimir Putin’s aggression and urged American lawmakers not to delay decisions because of the upcoming presidential election.

“Everyone is waiting for November. Americans are waiting for November, in Europe, the Middle East, in the Pacific, the whole world is looking toward November and, truly speaking, Putin awaits November, too,” said Mr. Zelenskyy, who spoke in English at an event at the Reagan Institute as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) began its 75th anniversary summit in the U.S. capital.

“It is time to step out of the shadows, to make strong decisions ... to act and not to wait for November or any other month,” he said.

U.S. President Joe Biden, a Democrat, has expressed strong support for Ukraine throughout his presidency. But Republican rival Donald Trump has opposed expanded aid to Ukraine and, according to critics, has expressed pro-Russia sentiments.

In a question-and-answer session conducted by conservative Fox News host Brett Baier, Mr. Zelenskyy tried to avoid wading into U.S. politics when asked about the November 5 presidential election, but he did say that he did not know Mr. Trump well enough to know what he’d do if elected and hoped America’s support to Kyiv would not change regardless of the outcome of the vote.

“[Messrs.] Biden and Trump are very different,” Mr. Zelenskyy said, noting that he had “good meetings” when Mr. Trump was president, though that was before Russia launched a full-scale war on Ukraine.

“But [Messrs. Biden and Trump] are supportive of democracy, and that’s why I



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy listens to a question asked by Fox News host Brett Baier during a question-and-answer session held on July 10 at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute in Washington, D.C.

think Putin will hate them both,” Mr. Zelenskyy said.

Since Russia’s full-scale invasion of February 2022, Mr. Zelenskyy has aggressively pressed for additional military aid and has at times expressed frustration with the sluggish pace of action by Western partners.

The U.S. House of Representatives, under pressure to vote on a major aid package for Ukraine that had been held up by Republicans in Congress for months, in April finally passed a bill providing more than \$60 billion to Ukraine.

Mr. Zelenskyy lamented the long delay, saying it had allowed Russia to make substantial battlefield gains while costing Ukraine control of some villages near the Russian border.

Speaking ahead of Mr. Zelenskyy at the event, Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell, whose Republican colleagues in Congress were behind the delay in aid

as they pushed for deep changes in domestic security policy, agreed, saying, “Slow walking aid to Ukraine didn’t stave off further escalation, it only guaranteed that this terrible conflict would be longer and bloodier.”

The Ukrainian leader’s remarks came shortly after Mr. Biden said that Russia is seeking “nothing less” than to “wipe Ukraine off the map” and announced that Washington and its allies would be sending Kyiv additional weapons, including additional air-defense systems.

“Ukraine can and will stop Putin, especially with our full collective support. They have our full support,” Mr. Biden said as the summit kicked off.

Mr. Zelenskyy said such support needs to go beyond just putting more weapons on the ground in Ukraine.

“How much longer can Putin last? The answer to this question is right here in Washington: your leadership, your actions,

your choice, the choice to act now. ... Strong decisions are needed and we are waiting for them,” Mr. Zelenskyy said, referring to being given the right to strike deep inside Russian territory.

A White House statement said the United States, Germany and Romania will donate modern Patriot missile batteries, while the Netherlands and other partners will provide Patriot components to enable the operation of an additional Patriot battery. Italy will donate an additional SAMP-T system, it said.

Patriot systems are capable of shooting down enemy planes and missiles from long distances, though analysts say Russia appears to be making gains in techniques to avoid the systems.

The pledge came a day after a barrage of Russian missiles slipped through defense systems across Ukraine, striking several civilian facilities, including Kyiv’s Okhmatdyt Children’s Hospital. At least 43 people died from the attacks, with scores more injured in what Mr. Biden called a “horrific reminder of Russia’s brutality.”

Mr. Zelenskyy welcomed the news of new air-defense systems, saying, “They will help,” but he cautioned that “it is not enough. It is never enough.”

He said Ukraine needs up to 130 F-16 fighter jets to achieve parity with Russia in the skies.

“Russia uses 300 warplanes against Ukraine every day. It was decided we get about 10 to 20. However, even if it were 50 planes, it is still nothing. To [efficiently] defend ourselves, we need 128 F-16s,” Mr. Zelenskyy said.

NATO leaders will also discuss a proposal by outgoing Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg to provide Ukraine with 40 billion euros (\$43 billion) in military aid next year.

Upon arriving at the summit and ahead of the speech, Mr. Zelenskyy said he would

(Continued on page 14)

Russia conducting ‘shadow war’ to destabilize European countries, leaders say

by Erin Osborne and Todd Prince

RFE/RL

WASHINGTON – Russia is carrying out a “shadow war” against European countries through cyberattacks, disinformation, sabotage and other measures and it’s time to recognize it and respond, according to European leaders attending the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit.

“There is a shadow war going on that is clear in all those domains,” Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas said at a panel discussion on July 10 on the sidelines of the summit in Washington.

“I think we have to raise awareness,” said Ms. Kallas, who was joined by Czech President Petr Pavel and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen. “We see this in our intelligence, but I’m not sure that everybody does see this in the same way.”

Russia is believed to be behind a series of cyber-intrusions, arson attacks and other non-kinetic attacks across Europe this year.

Mr. Pavel, a retired Czech Army general and former chairman of the NATO Military Committee, told the panel that Russia was in “continuous conflict” with European countries. The tools Moscow is using, he said, are “much cheaper” and “more effective” than bombs and guns.

The Czech Republic was among several European countries that accused Russia in May of conducting cyberattacks on their

defense and aerospace industries and on political parties. Russia has denied involvement.

Czech intelligence and security services also accused Russia of being behind the 2014 explosion of a munitions depot in the Czech city of Vrbitice.

Russia’s goal is to sow doubt among the public so that they lose confidence in their institutions and put pressure on leaders, Mr. Pavel said. “We need to take not only passive measures, but also active measures to defend ourselves against this kind of warfare,” Mr. Pavel added, without specifically stating what steps Europe should take.

Russia began testing out its hybrid capabilities on European countries two decades ago. Estonia was one of the first major victims when Russia unleashed a massive cyberattack in 2007 that blocked websites and paralyzed the country’s entire internet infrastructure.

Estonia’s Kallas said Russia was getting bolder with every attack, comparing European countries’ predicament to frogs in boiling water. She said the issue is being discussed inside NATO.

Russia is “trying to destabilize all of us, and they are using different measures,” Danish Prime Minister Frederiksen told the conference. She said the spate of attacks throughout Europe was not isolated and countries had to “take it more seriously.”

Leaders must show “that we are willing

to do whatever it takes to defend Europe” from such attacks, Ms. Frederiksen said.

During a separate panel on the Nordic region, Finnish Defense Minister Antti Hakkanen said that Russia was employing new hybrid tools, like migration.

Finland closed its long border with Russia last year to stop a surge of arrivals from countries including Syria. Finland, which joined NATO in 2023, accused Moscow of seeking to destabilize its society by weaponizing migration, an assertion the Kremlin denies.

“That is why we have to run fast and do closer cooperation between NATO countries,” Mr. Hakkanen said.

Swedish Defense Minister Pal Jonson told the Nordic panel that countries need to take a “whole of society” approach to defend against Russian hybrid activities, such as developing strong interagency and public-private cooperation.

“[Make] sure your security services are working well with the police and the military intelligence. I think it is really crucial. We have to be able to share intelligence [with the private sector] going two ways,” he told the panel.

Ms. Kallas, Mr. Pavel and Ms. Frederiksen are among the leaders from all 32 NATO states who have gathered for the NATO summit to discuss strengthening their collective defense as well as new measures to support Ukraine.

Ms. Frederiksen said European countries will likely have to spend more than the target of 2 percent of gross domestic product on defense each year if they hope to defend themselves against growing global threats, including an aggressive Russia.

“I see no signs, no signs in Russia and in the Russian behavior that they are going to stop with Ukraine,” Ms. Frederiksen said.

Mr. Pavel said that NATO must step up aid to Ukraine so it can drive Russian forces back. He also said the West may have to accept that parts of Ukrainian territory may be “temporarily occupied.”

However, he added, “such a situation shouldn’t prevent us from going on with the Ukrainian integration into NATO, or the E.U., and pushing on restoring their full sovereignty.”

Ms. Kallas said that Ukraine’s nonaligned status left it open to attack by Russia and called for the country to be admitted into NATO. “Ukraine is having this war because they are in a gray zone. My conviction is that Ukraine will have to become a member of NATO [if] we want to get rid of conflicts,” she said.

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NATO shows 'commitment and resolve' for Ukraine by establishing operations in Germany, Poland

by Margret Johnston and
Erin Osborne
RFE/RL

WASHINGTON – North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) officials have agreed at a summit in Washington to take further steps to bring Ukraine closer to the alliance and to counter the growing security threat posed by Russia by taking over the coordination of training and weapons deliveries from the United States.

The moves, announced by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg at a news conference on July 10, include the launch of a centralized command in Germany and the establishment of a training and analysis center in Poland.

They come with Russia making incremental gains on the battlefield in the wake of monthslong lags in aid and weapons supplies from the United States and Europe. Those delays highlighted Ukraine's vulnerability in trying to repel invading Russian forces.

Mr. Stoltenberg said the security assistance center will be located in Wiesbaden, Germany, and will be led by a three-star general overseeing around 700 personnel from across the alliance. They will be responsible for the coordination and provision of most of the international security assistance that is sent, he said.

NATO countries until now have coordinated support to Ukraine through an informal, U.S.-led body called the Ukraine Defense Contact Group.

The new center, which was approved by NATO defense ministers in June, will be for-



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (left) meets with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg at NATO headquarters in Brussels in June.

mally known as the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) and will be part of Ukraine's "irreversible path" to NATO membership.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said it will be the first time NATO has dedicated a command to helping a country join NATO.

The operation in Poland will be known as a joint training and analysis center (JTAC), which will focus on improving NATO interoperability with Ukraine and studying how the Ukraine war has changed warfare.

Polish Foreign Affairs Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said the JTAC, which will be built in his hometown of Bydgoszcz, will examine the use of drones and other modern aspects of the Ukrainian war, which he said are causing NATO to reevaluate its assumptions.

"The role of drones has been transformational in this war, and we need to study it and learn [from] the lessons," Mr. Sikorski said, speaking at a panel discussion on the sidelines of the summit. He envisions it becoming a state-of-the-art war analysis center that examines how drone warfare is

changing the battlefield. And he predicted that Ukrainians eventually will take on major roles at the JTAC.

"In the future, it won't be us training the Ukrainians; the Ukrainians will be teaching us. And I hope JTAC will serve that," he said.

Mr. Stoltenberg said NATO's plans to establish these two support facilities are within the elements of the "robust" security support package agreed to during the summit. Summit participants also agreed to provide Ukraine with more equipment, including air-defense systems, and 40 billion euros (\$43 billion) in military aid next year.

He said the decisions were "major" and would further strengthen NATO's support for Kyiv and help Ukraine uphold its right to self-defense but would not make NATO a party to the conflict.

"We are not doing this because we want to prolong the war. We are doing this because we want to end the war as soon as possible," Mr. Stoltenberg said.

Mr. Stoltenberg said that it's important for NATO to show commitment and resolve at this point in the war.

"The more credible and enduring our support, the quicker Moscow will realize it cannot wait us out and the sooner the war can end," he said.

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Chicago's Ukrainian National Museum exhibits portraits of refugees by Lithuanian photographers

by Mark Raczkiwycz

CHICAGO – Relative to economic output, the tiny Baltic country of Lithuania devotes more military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine than do the U.S. and Britain.

The country is also hosting more than 80,000 Ukrainian war refugees since Russia launched a full-scale invasion in February 2022, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union member country has provided millions of dollars in aid to Kyiv.

"Ukrainians now represent the biggest community of foreigners living in the country," said Ukraine's Consul General in Chicago Serhiy Koledov at a black-and-

white photo portrait show of war refugees held at the Ukrainian National Museum.

The exhibit opened on July 10 and it runs through September 15 in the heart of Chicago's Ukrainian Village neighborhood. It includes 27 pictures shot one year after the all-out invasion, each with captions telling the stories of their subjects as they fled Russia's onslaught.

Three photographers took part in capturing a total of 71 pictures. Some have already been shown in New York and Washington, D.C.

Lithuania's best-known photographer, Antanas Sutkus, 85, was one of the three photographers who exhibited his work, along with two others who are considered



Dmytro Kullyesh of the Donetsk regional town of Svitlodarsk is pictured with his mother Lyudmyla Kullyesh in 2023 during a photo session in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius devoted to capturing the stories of Ukrainian refugees who fled their war-torn country.



Ukraine's Consul General in Chicago Serhiy Koledov delivers a speech at a photo exhibit by three Lithuanian photographers of Ukrainian refugees living in their country at the Ukrainian National Museum on July 10.



Lithuanian Consul General in Chicago Sigrda Muleviciene speaks about a photo exhibit on July 10 at the Ukrainian National Museum by three Lithuanian photographers who took photos of Ukrainian refugees living in their country.

part of a new generation of rising shutterbugs.

Each portrait focuses on children and has mothers visible, although occasionally the moms are not in full view.

Only after he looked at the images later did Mr. Sutkus realize that "these mothers made a strong impression on me. They were so beautiful, so warm, and had such tight bonds with their children," he said in an artistic statement accompanying the exhibit. "I was also struck by how proudly the women incorporate elements of traditional folk styles into their modern fashion

apparel."

No credits were given to any of the photo portraits in order to "draw the viewer's direct attention to each subject," said Ieva Dilyte of the cultural department of the Lithuanian Consulate General in Chicago.

The black-and-white portraits provide a human perspective and draw out raw emotion, as opposed to the nearly three-dimensional character that color pictures can evoke.

The exhibit is accompanied by a short

(Continued on page 6)

U.N. Security Council to discuss ‘massive’ Russian attack that killed dozens in Ukraine

RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service

The United Nations Security Council was scheduled to meet on July 9 to discuss a Russian missile attack on Kyiv's Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital that was part of a "massive" attack on July 8 that hit several cities across the country, killing at least 41 people and injuring at least 140, officials said.

The British mission to the United Nations announced the Security Council meeting, which had been requested earlier by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"The U.N. Security Council will meet tomorrow at 10 a.m. to discuss Russia's missile attack on the Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital," the mission said in a statement on X.

According to the Kyiv city military administration, 27 people were killed, including three children, in the attacks in the city. Serhiy Popko, the head of the capital's military administration, said 82 people were injured.

The U.K. ambassador to the U.N., Barbara Woodward, added separately on X that Britain "will call out Russia's cowardly and depraved attack on the hospital ... in the Security Council."

The head of the U.N. General Assembly, Dennis Francis, the former ambassador to



People remove rubble as they search for survivors at the children's hospital. Kyiv Mayor Vitaliy Klitschko told Reuters that the attack was "one of the worst" on the city in the 28-month-old full-scale war.

the U.N. from Trinidad and Tobago, strongly condemned the attack, calling it "a gross violation of international law and the principles of the U.N. Charter."

The U.S. State Department denounced the strike on the hospital and said it

believed it was deliberate.

"Russia unleashed another savage missile attack on civilians," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told reporters.

Ukrainian law enforcement officers believe that a Russian X-101 cruise missile

hit the children's hospital. One law enforcement source told RFE/RL that a video of the attack shows a missile that "in terms of shape and proportions fully corresponds to a cruise missile."

Mr. Zelenskyy vowed retaliation after the "massive" air attack on targets all over Ukraine and demanded that the West deliver a "stronger response."

Earlier, he said that "more than 40 missiles of various types" had targeted Kyiv, Dnipro and Kryviy Rih in central Ukraine, and Kramatorsk and Sloviansk in the eastern Donetsk region. The Ukrainian Air Force said it had shot down 30 of 38 Russian missiles in the attack.

The U.N.'s humanitarian coordinator and the European Union's top diplomat both quickly condemned the Russian air strikes, which left an unknown number of victims buried under the rubble of the hospital. Video taken by RFE/RL of the hospital showed lines of people helping to clear the debris as smoke billowed out of the facility.

Moscow has routinely denied targeting residences, schools, hospitals and other civilian structures despite frequent bombings that suggest otherwise.

(Continued on page 10)

Russian missiles...

(Continued from page 1)

The main target was the Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital that mostly treats cancer patients. At the time of the Russian attack, 627 people were undergoing treatment at the clinic, according to the Health Ministry.

Citywide, 121 civilians suffered injuries, including 10 children, the State Emergency Services said.

"Russian terrorists have to answer for this. Just concern does not stop terror," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on his Telegram channel. "Compassion is not a weapon. It is necessary to knock down Russian missiles. It is necessary to destroy Russian combat aviation where it is based. You need to take strong steps that will not leave any safety deficit."

Despite Russia's recent maiming of Ukrainian children, U.S. National Security Council Coordinator John Kirby said that Washington won't lift restrictions on Ukrainian forces being allowed to strike targets in Russia with U.S.-provided weaponry.

Kyiv has been asking for permission to strike Russian airfields from which enemy aircraft take off to fire payloads on civilian and military targets in Ukraine.

In contrast, newly elected British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said in Washington that Ukraine can use Storm Shadow missiles from the United Kingdom to strike targets within Russia.

NATO pledges more Ukraine aid

A three day summit in Washington to commemorate NATO's 75th anniversary saw the defense alliance say it would pledge "a minimum" of \$40 billion in financial assistance to Kyiv, the White House said during a press briefing.

The first batch of U.S.-made F-16 Fighting Falcon multi-role jets are being sent to Ukraine, U.S. President Joe Biden, Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said in a joint statement by July 10.

Ukrainian pilots have for months been training to fly and maintain the aircraft in various countries, including in Arizona.

Denmark has committed to sending 19 F-16s, the Netherlands 24 and Norway said on July 10 that it would donate six.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and First Lady Olena Zelenska place flowers at the Holodomor memorial in Washington, D.C., on July 9 ahead of a three-day summit to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's existence.

Mr. Zelenskyy urged summit participants to provide Ukraine with more air defense systems to protect the country's vulnerable skies.

"Yesterday [July 9], we secured a decision on five more Patriot [air defense systems] and dozens of other air defense systems for Ukraine, and today – a decision on aircraft," Mr. Zelenskyy said in his nightly address to the nation.

Mr. Biden said the U.S. will provide a third Patriot system from its stockpiles, while the other four were previously pledged by other countries but have yet to be delivered.

Meanwhile, Germany announced a new military aid package for Kyiv that includes armored combat vehicles, air defense systems, drones and drone defense systems, protective and special equipment and ammunition.

"In total, Germany has now made military aid of around 28 billion euros available to support Ukraine or will make it available for the coming years," a German government statement said.

In addition, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni promised \$1.7 billion worth of new military aid for Kyiv in the next year.

Foreign debt repayment looms

Meanwhile, Ukraine has failed to reach an agreement with creditors on the \$20 billion in debt it owes to foreign creditors, with about \$3.75 billion due by the end of the year on principal and interest on Eurobonds that were due in 2022-2023, but for which Kyiv received a grace period due to Russia's full-scale invasion.

Thus, interest is due this year on Eurobonds for three years at once and that initial grace period for certain bonds will expire on August 1. Kyiv has not been able to reach a restructuring agreement with foreign creditors, mostly emerging fund managers.

Many who invested in Ukrainian foreign-currency-backed Eurobonds knew in advance from multiple Western intelligence agencies of Russia's impending all-out invasion, yet still chose to invest and now want repayment.

Creditworthiness agencies S&P and Fitch currently rate the \$20 billion worth of bonds as "distressed," bordering on default. With interest, Ukraine owes about \$24 billion by the end of the year.

Ukrainian Finance Minister Serhiy Marchenko said he expects to reach a restructuring agreement by August 1.



Civilians and first responders in Kyiv search through rubble at the bombed Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital on July 9 after Russia struck it with a cruise missile the previous day.

THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

The dregs of humanity

The recent Russian missile strike on Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital in Kyiv has drawn international condemnation and stands as a stark testament to the depths of Russia's brutality and depravity. On July 8, a series of massive Russian airstrikes resulted in the deaths of at least 43 people, including hospital staff and visitors. This attack, the deadliest wave in recent months, has rightly been met with outrage from global leaders and organizations.

U.S. President Joe Biden described the incident as a "horrific reminder of Russia's brutality," while the Kremlin has denied targeting civilian buildings, instead blaming anti-missile fire for the destruction. However, analysts and officials have rejected Moscow's denials, pointing to clear evidence that the children's hospital was deliberately targeted. Indeed, videos of the daylight attack show what appears to be a Russian cruise missile flying directly into the hospital.

Ukrainian military expert Oleksandr Musiyenko provided evidence, asserting that the children's hospital was directly and deliberately hit by a Russian Kh-101 subsonic cruise missile. Mr. Musiyenko explained that Russia's strategy involves taking periodic pauses to accumulate missiles before launching massive attacks, often recording the devastation for propaganda purposes. This deliberate targeting of civilians during daylight hours exacerbates the psychological impact on Kyiv's residents.

Czech Foreign Affairs Minister Jan Lipavsky's response to the attack was swift and unequivocal. Summoning Russia's ambassador to Prague, Mr. Lipavsky declared that those responsible for the attack were the "dregs of humanity." He criticized those advocating for peace with Russian President Vladimir Putin, highlighting the stark reality that, while some Russian dupes promote negotiations, Putin continues to launch missiles at innocent civilians. Mr. Lipavsky's call for a long-term strategy to contain Russia underscores the necessity of firm and united international action against such atrocities.

The United Nations also condemned the attack, but we have little faith that the U.N. can in any way be an effective tool to curtail Russia's ongoing genocidal actions against the Ukrainian people. Joyce Msuya, the U.N.'s acting undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, said during an emergency Security Council meeting that the strike on the hospital is part of a disturbing pattern of systematic attacks on healthcare and other civilian infrastructure across Ukraine. Ms. Msuya reminded the world that intentionally directing attacks against a protected hospital constitutes a war crime, and perpetrators must face justice.

France's ambassador to the U.N., Nicolas de Riviere, labeled the attack a further entry on a growing list of Russian war crimes. Even China, typically a close ally of Russia, expressed veiled criticism through its deputy ambassador to the U.N., Geng Shuan, who highlighted the brutality of the ongoing conflict and the heavy toll it has taken on civilians.

The hospital's director, Volodymyr Zhovnur, described the heroic efforts of the medical staff who, despite the chaos, continued to provide critical care to their patients. The hospital lost one of its best specialists, who had been ensuring the safety of children during the attack. The resilience of the medical teams, now working in temporary locations, is a testament to their dedication and the indomitable spirit of the Ukrainian people.

The deliberate targeting of a children's hospital is a reprehensible act that highlights the extent of Russia's disregard for human life and international law. The global community must stand united in condemning this atrocity and ensure that those responsible are held accountable. The attack on Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital is not just an assault on Ukraine but on the very principles of humanity and decency. It provides yet more evidence that Russians who celebrate the deaths of Ukrainian children – openly, publicly and gleefully on social media – truly are the dregs of humanity.

July
17
2015

Turning the pages back...

Nine years ago, The Ukrainian Weekly's editorial marked the one-year anniversary of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (MH17), which occurred on July 17, 2014, when the Boeing 777 was shot down by a Russian made Buk missile, killing all 298 people on board.

Australia's Foreign Affairs Minister Julie Bishop said it was "sickening to watch" footage of Russia-backed "separatists" sifting through the wreckage as they realized it was a civilian aircraft, and then callously going through the belongings of the dead.

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott noted that images showed the perpetrators deliberately shot "out of the sky what they knew was a large aircraft." Mr. Abbott had no doubt that the aircraft was shot down with a Russia-supplied surface-to-air-missile, because "rebels don't get hold of this kind of weaponry by accident. I mean this was obviously very sophisticated weaponry."

A Dutch-led international investigation supported Western intelligence conclusions that Russia-backed forces fired a Russian-supplied surface-to-air Buk missile, while the United Nations Security Council was petitioned by numerous countries for the creation of an international tribunal to prosecute those responsible.

In response, Russia attempted to obfuscate the conclusions of the Dutch-led investigation by questioning its impartiality. Russia suggested that the investigation be led by the United Nations and that any materials would be shared with "all interested states." Malaysia, Australia, the Netherlands, Belgium and Ukraine issued a joint statement that the criminal investigation needed to remain confidential so that any future prosecutions would not be jeopardized.

"Russia's latest moves should fool no one," The Ukrainian Weekly's editorial underscored. "Just as Russia denied that its forces are waging war in Ukraine, it is now denying any role in the MH17 disaster. The international investigation must continue, the international tribunal must be established, and justice must be served. The 298 souls mercilessly killed over the beautiful fields of eastern Ukraine deserve no less."

Source: "Remembering MH17," The Ukrainian Weekly, July 26, 2015.

Chicago's...

(Continued from page 4)

color film that documents the process of shooting the portraits at Vilnius's National Art Gallery and interviewing each of the subjects' war stories and how they fled to Lithuania.

"We all came together in solidarity to alleviate the suffering of Ukrainian [people] ... and most importantly emphasize the need to provide Ukraine with military support," said Lithuanian Consul General in Chicago Sigrida Muleviciene. "It's very important to keep the spotlight on Ukraine to preserve its sovereignty."

Lithuania, which was once also a republic of the Soviet Union, was occupied by repressive authorities during World War II and only regained independence in the late 20th century following decades of Russification policies and human rights abuses meant to quash Lithuanian culture and identity.

Perhaps because of that shared history, the country is a staunch ally of Ukraine. A quarter of one percent of its gross domestic product was allocated to provide Kyiv with defense and security assistance, Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda said on June 26.

Mr. Koledov also noted that the majority of refugees in Lithuania are highly educated and that more than half are either employed, self-employed or own their own businesses.

"Ukrainian refugees are highly qualified, speak foreign languages, usually have experience working in large enterprises and quickly adapt to the surrounding environment," he added.

Specifically, Vilnius has allocated more than \$15 million to establish three rehabilitation centers in Ukraine for military personnel.

Another program it is developing will



Mark Raczkiewicz

Ukrainian refugee Nikita Zdor of the Rivne region wears a traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirt as his mother, Inna Zdor, stands behind him during a photo session held at the National Art Gallery in Vilnius, Lithuania, in 2023.

help "facilitate the return of young Ukrainians to work in government institutions," Ms. Muleviciene said.

Altogether, Vilnius has provided Kyiv with more than 1 billion euros in bilateral aid since 2022.

Military assistance from 2024 to 2026 foresees a total of 200 million euros being spent to supply Ukraine, Lithuania's government says.

"The stories of these Ukrainians – their stories of what happened to parents and children – are like something from the history of the past," said photographer Arturas Morozovas.

Population...

(Continued from page 2)

the poll's results are so alarming that two Novyye Izvestiya journalists, Nikolay Vladimirov and Andrey Krasnobayev, chose to headline their report "Flight to the West: The Far East Continues to Lose Its Russian-Speaking Population" (Newizv.ru, July 7).

According to the poll, a third of the Russian-speaking population still in the Far East now says that it wants to move elsewhere because of the depressed state of the economy, the isolation of the region from the rest of Russia and pressure from immigrants coming from China and elsewhere. That figure has allowed some Russian officials to claim that two-thirds of all ethnic Russians in the Far East do not want to go anywhere. A closer examination, however, shows that the share of working-age Russians who want to leave is much higher and that another third of all Russians would apparently like to leave the region as well. This of course means that roughly two-thirds of the remaining ethnic Russians want to relocate, an enormous proportion. If even a majority of those were to do so, other nationalities, including both indigenous non-Russians and incompletely Russified Ukrainians, would form a majority of the population. Such a development will make it far more difficult for Moscow to maintain control over the region and far more likely that at least some in the region will look to independence or foreign countries such as China will dominate the situation.

Another finding of the poll is likely to spark alarm in Moscow. The survey found that Far Eastern identity is so strong that 62 percent of those taking part said that even when people from that region leave to live elsewhere, they retain their identity as

Far Easterners. This suggests that the regional identity may now be stronger than the ethnic identities that Moscow has used to play off one another to maintain control. That finding also indicates that groups, including Muslims from Central Asia, may be cooperating with residents of the region, with the latter taking up Islamist ideas. Some Russian analysts even see these various groups linking up and reinforcing one another (Kavkazgeoclub.ru, June 20). This reality likely means that incompletely Russified Ukrainians in the Far East may be influencing ethnic Russians there with ideas of freedom and independence in precisely the ways that some Russian commentators allege has already begun to happen (Sibreal.org, September 29, 2020).

None of this means that the Russian Far East is going to secede in whole or in part anytime soon or that China or anyone else is going to seize it. Nevertheless, it does mean that Russian control of this vital region will increasingly rest on coercion unless and until Moscow devotes vastly more resources to it than the Kremlin has in the past. The situation also reflects that playing divide-and-rule ethnic policies in the Far East will no longer work. Playing up what many in Moscow see as a Chinese threat may prove counterproductive, with ever more residents in this enormous region seeing the Kremlin and its cooperation with Beijing as a threat rather than something benefiting them. The longer Moscow remains at odds with the West and the more it tries to turn to the East, then the greater are the possibilities that it may lose what it has generally believed is not at risk – a genuinely Russian Far East.

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Russia's war against Ukraine in 2024 and looking ahead to 2025

by **Taras Kuzio**
Eurasia Daily Monitor

The failure of the Ukrainian 2023 offensive was in large part due to long delays in Western military assistance and the training of new Ukrainian brigades (Espresso, December 27, 2023). This gave Russia about nine months, from October 2022 to June 2023, to build fortifications along three "Surovikin lines," which include deep trenches, covered fighting positions, tank obstacles and mines with a density of approximately five per square meter (Slovo i Dilo, September 2, 2023; BBC Ukrainian, September 27, 2023). In particular, the delay in military supplies was caused by a lack of political will in the United States and Germany out of fear of nuclear escalation with Russia (Ukrinform, June 1; 24 Kanal, June 7). The rapid collapse and rout of Russian forces in the Kharkiv direction sparked fears in the Kremlin that a Ukrainian breakthrough might occur in the south toward the Azov Sea, potentially leading to the collapse of Russia's occupation in southeast Ukraine (Armiya Inform, September 6, 2023). In those conditions, Moscow's nuclear threats became the most intense, further enflaming fears of escalation in the West (Holos Ameryky, September 23, 2022). These developments over the past two years of war shed insight into what Ukraine can expect in the future. The increased interest from the West to provide aid to Ukraine and the continuing failures of the Russian army may open an opportunity for Ukraine to take the initiative in the war.

Since the failed offensive, contact along the frontlines has been roughly static, with large formations unable to break through defensive lines due to constant aerial threats, including an immense number of cheap drones (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 3). A six-month delay in the U.S. Congress aid package prevented the adoption of a \$61 billion aid package for Ukraine. During the delay, North Korea sent large quantities of low-quality artillery shells to Russia, a sign that Pyongyang has joined Moscow in its proclaimed wider conflict with the so-called "collective West" (TSN, January 15; Fakty, February 20; Foreign Affairs, April 23).

Russia enjoys several advantages over Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin outlined Russia's strategy of slow gains in capturing Ukrainian territory, preventing future counteroffensives and winning a long war of attrition (Kremlin.ru, June 7). Earlier this year, Putin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov signaled an official shift from prosecuting the "special military operation" to digging in and preparing for the "long war" (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, October 2, 2023, April 1). What the Kremlin did not disclose, however, was that this shift in rhetoric and military tactics mirrors those used in the Soviet Union, including the wholesale destruction of towns and villages, such as Bakhmut and Avdiivka.

Putin believes Russia has greater staying power in this war than Ukraine and the West (Pershyi Zakhidnyy, June 8). This is due in part to the willingness of Russians to accept high numbers of casualties, Russia's economy has been pushed onto a war footing and the general popularity of imperial nationalism, especially among ethnic Russians (TSN, May 18). The Kremlin is betting that Western governments will abandon Ukraine themselves or will do so after Russia persuades them to negotiate a trade of territory for peace.

Much of the Russian population has appeared to demonstrate an ambivalence to the high level of casualties (Teksty, November 6, 2023). According to an intelligence update by the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense, concurring with estimates by Ukrainian military intelligence, in May, Russia endured the highest number of casualties since the invasion began with a daily average of 1,200 and reaching a total of half a million (Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, May 25; Ukrinform, May 28; Europiyska Pravda, May 31). That may change should Moscow be forced to call for another round of mobilization – this time within the predominantly ethnic Russian city centers (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, September 18, 2023; Radio Svoboda, June 7). If Russians do continue to accept high casualties and if these losses can then be replaced by a similar number of recruits, then Russian forces will likely maintain the initiative on the battlefield.

An unwillingness to launch another round of mobilization, nevertheless, prevents Russia from launching large offensives to capture Ukrainian cities. Russian attempts to capture the strategic Donetsk city of Chasiv Yar have failed, as has the Russian offensive in the Kharkiv direction (Unian, June 5). Russia does not have large reserves of manpower that are required to capture Kharkiv, a city of 1.5 million, let alone Kyiv with 4 million inhabitants (Suspilne Novyny, May 6). Additionally, some Russian units are still reeling from the intense number of casualties incurred in the bid to capture Bakhmut in May 2023 and Avdiivka in February 2024 (Mediazona, June 10).

Two other factors working against the Kremlin are Western sanctions, especially the impact on Russia's energy exports, and the inability of Moscow's military-industrial complex to replenish military stocks (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, October 5, 31, December 7, 2023, April 3, 29, May 30; Glavkom, May 19). Russian equipment losses have been quite high for the duration of the war – nearly 8,000 tanks, 15,000 armored personnel carriers, 13,500 artillery systems, 700 aircraft and helicopters, and a third of the Black Sea Fleet (including a submarine) have been lost (MinFinMedia, June 10). Russia is drawing on Soviet stocks, but these are finite (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, March 14).

Ukraine also has several strong points that have prevented a Russian victory. First, Ukraine has a large volunteer movement and resilient civil society (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, March 16, 23, April 19, 2022, April 18, 24; National Institute of Strategic Studies, November 2022). Second, Ukrainians understand the war is existential to their identity, which Russian imperial nationalists seek to destroy. Third, Ukraine's army is reforming its military to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) standards, introducing increased flexibility and a stronger officer corps (Korrespondent, January 31). Fourth, Ukraine has a growing military-industrial sector, both state and private, which has been incredibly innovative, developing cutting-edge naval drones, unmanned land-based vehicles and drones that can both deliver payloads and shoot down targets (Teksty, April 19).

Ukraine's remaining weak points are important inhibitors to future offensives. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy delayed building fortifications along defensive lines and laying mines because it required a psy-

(Continued on page 9)

Condemnation of Russia mounts as Ukraine counts toll of attack on children's hospital

by *RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service*

KYIV – International condemnation grew as the death toll mounted at a children's hospital in Kyiv that was hit during a series of massive Russian air strikes, which U.S. President Joe Biden called a "horrific reminder of Russia's brutality."

A day after at least 43 people – including a staff member of and a visitor to the Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital – were killed in the deadliest wave of attacks in recent months, the Kremlin on July 9 denied that it had targeted civilian buildings and blamed anti-missile fire for the destruction of the hospital, but analysts and several officials rejected Moscow's denial.

Czech Foreign Affairs Minister Jan Lipavsky on July 9 said he had summoned Russia's ambassador to Prague, asserting that those who carried out the attack were the "dregs of humanity."

"While the useful idiots are rambling about peace with [Russian President Vladimir] Putin, he is sending missiles to a children's hospital. I'm currently heading to the NATO summit to push for a long-term strategy to contain Russia. One cannot yield to aggression," he added.

"Ukraine's success as a strong, independent, successful country is the best possible rebuke to the aggression that continues to be committed by Putin and Russia against Ukraine, including just 24 hours ago an attack on the largest children's hospital in Kyiv," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in Washington in a joint news conference with his Ukrainian counterpart, Dmytro Kuleba.

At the United Nations, Joyce Msuya, the U.N.'s acting undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, told an emergency Security Council meeting on July 9 that "these incidents are part of a deeply concerning pattern of systemic attacks harming health care and other civilian infrastructure across Ukraine."

"Intentionally directing attacks against a protected hospital is a war crime and perpetrators must be held to account," she said.

Nicolas de Riviere, France's ambassador to the U.N., labeled the attack a "further entry on a list of war crimes" and said Moscow must be held accountable.

Even remarks from China, a close ally of Russia, were seen by many observers as rare veiled criticism of the Kremlin.

China's deputy ambassador to the U.N., Geng Shuan, said that fighting in the Ukraine war has "intensified and there have been brutal attacks from time to time that have claimed many victims. China is deeply concerned about this."

Ukrainian military expert Oleksandr Musiyenko told Current Time, the Russian-language television and digital network run by RFE/RL, on July 9 that there was "sufficient evidence" showing that the children's hospital was "directly and deliberately" hit by a Russian Kh-101 subsonic cruise missile.

"We see that Russia, if we talk about massive missile attacks on Ukraine, usually takes a pause – one or 1 1/2 months, then accumulates the missiles, and after that resumes the shelling before another pause," he said of the rare attack that occurred in broad daylight.

"The Russian side often uses drones accompanying the missiles to video record the moment of the hitting the target and the aftermath for propaganda purposes. ... Also, in the daytime, resi-

dents of the [Ukrainian] capital are at workplaces and other public sites and the psychological impact on them is bigger," he added.

Hospital Director Volodymyr Zhovnir told RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service that doctors had "done everything" to ensure the treatment of critical patients as they seek temporary spaces for departments that are key to helping children with serious illnesses.

"The most important thing is that we have saved our people and specialists. Unfortunately, one of our best specialists was killed who took the children to the bomb shelter and returned to check whether there were children in the empty room or not," Mr. Zhovnir said.

"The team has survived, and these teams are now with these children. They are working in other locations, in other areas, and doing everything possible to ensure that the assistance does not stop," he said.

Ukraine's cabinet approved 100 million hryvnia (\$2.5 million) from a state budget reserve fund to help rebuild the hospital, Prime Minister Denis Shmyhal said.

Ukraine appeared to follow through on President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's vow to retaliate, launching over three dozen drones overnight on July 9 and shelling several areas that killed several people inside Russia.

The Russian Defense Ministry said on July 9 that a total of 38 drones in five regions had been intercepted, including 21 in Rostov, seven in Kursk, five in Astrakhan, three in Belgorod and two in Voronezh.

Local media reported that airports in the southern Astrakhan and Volgograd regions had restricted flights following the drone attacks.

Ukrainian shelling in Russia's Belgorod region in the early hours of July 9 killed four people and wounded 20, according to regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov. He added that the attack caused power outages and damaged 60 houses and 160 apartments.

In Volgograd, an oil depot and an electrical substation caught fire as a result of falling drone debris, according to regional Gov. Andrei Bocharov.

The United Nation's human rights monitoring mission said its assessment of the strike in Kyiv "indicates a high likelihood that the children's hospital suffered a direct hit rather than receiving damage due to an intercepted weapon system."

"Russia's missile strikes that ... killed dozens of Ukrainian civilians and caused damage and casualties at Kyiv's largest children's hospital are a horrific reminder of Russia's brutality," Mr. Biden wrote on X.

"It is critical that the world continues to stand with Ukraine at this important moment and that we not ignore Russian aggression," he said, adding that during this week's NATO summit in Washington, he will meet with Mr. Zelenskyy "to make clear our support for Ukraine is unshakable."

Moscow has routinely denied targeting residences, schools, hospitals and other civilian structures despite frequent bombings that suggest otherwise.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its air attacks near Kyiv were aimed at "Ukrainian military industry facilities and Ukrainian Air Force bases," adding that "the strike's objectives were achieved."

The Washington-based nonprofit Institute for the Study of War (ISW) countered Moscow's claims, saying video evidence "clearly shows a single missile flying

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St. Sophia Seminary receives accreditation from Association of Theological Schools

Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary

SOMERSET, N.J. – St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary, located on the grounds of the Metropolia Center of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the U.S.A., announced that it received full accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States. The milestone means that the seminary is the only self-standing Ukrainian Orthodox theological seminary outside of Ukraine to offer accredited theological education.

The formal announcement was made on June 19-20 during the ATS annual meeting held in Atlanta, Ga., which was attended by St. Sophia Seminary's leadership: Metropolitan Antony (rector); Archbishop Daniel (academic dean); and Fr. Theophan Mackey (associate dean of academic affairs), whose work underscores the seminary's commitment to providing high-quality theological education and fostering academic excellence within the Ukrainian Orthodox community.

"This accreditation is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff and students," said Metropolitan Antony. "We are honored to receive this recognition and look forward to continuing our mission of educating future leaders of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church."

"The rigorous standards set by ATS ensure that our programs meet the highest levels of academic and spiritual formation," added Archbishop Daniel. "This achievement will further enhance our ability to serve our community and the broader Orthodox Christian world."

"As St. Sophia Seminary approaches its 50th anniversary in 2025, this accreditation marks a pivotal moment in its history. Founded in 1975, the seminary has been dedicated to providing comprehensive theological education and spiritual formation for clergy and lay leaders. The institution's commitment to academic excellence and Orthodox tradition has been unwavering, and this new accreditation will undoubtedly strengthen its reputation and reach,"



Metropolitan Antony of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the U.S.A. (center) with Archbishop Daniel (left) and Fr. Theophan Mackey during the Annual Meeting of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States on June 19-20 in Atlanta, Ga. Saint Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary in Somerset, N.J., received accredited status from the ATS during the meeting.

Archbishop Daniel said.

"We are deeply grateful for the support and guidance of the ATS throughout the accreditation process," said Fr. Mackey. "This milestone will enable us to expand our aca-

demical offerings and continue our mission with renewed vigor and purpose."

Officials at the St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary invited the community and all interested parties to join in celebrating the achievement and said they look forward to a future of continued growth and service.

Founded in 1918 and officially recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), the Commission on Accrediting (COA) of the ATS is an accrediting agency responsible for the accreditation of graduate theological institutions and programs in the United States and Canada.

The ATS is a membership organization of more than 270 theological schools, colleges and universities under a wide range of Christian denominations. The COA evaluates theological institutions and programs based on a set of accreditation standards that focus on educational quality, institutional resources and adherence to the mission of theological education. The COA reviews schools and programs on a regular basis to ensure that they continue to meet accreditation standards and maintains a list of accredited institutions and programs.

Accreditation by the COA is recognized by the USDOE and is an important credential for schools seeking to establish themselves as providers of high-quality theological education. Accreditation also provides assurance to students, faculty and other stakeholders that an institution meets rigorous standards of educational quality and integrity.

In addition to accreditation, the ATS provides a variety of services and resources to member institutions, including professional development opportunities for faculty and administrators, research and data analysis on theological education and networking opportunities for members of the theological education community.

Additional information can be found at the seminary's website, <https://stuots.edu>, or by contacting the St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary, located at 950 Easton Avenue, Somerset, N.J., 08873.

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NATO strongly...

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Stoltenberg defended the provision of weapons to Ukraine, saying it was Ukraine's right under international law to defend itself and to strike military sites on Russian territory.

The goal, Mr. Stoltenberg said, was not to prolong the war, but to end it, and that, "unless we want to bow to [Russian President Vladimir] Putin, we need to show commitment and resolve."

The summit, which will conclude on July 11, is set to discuss a proposal to provide Ukraine with 40 billion euros (\$43 billion) in military aid for next year after member states couldn't agree on a multiyear military aid package for Ukraine that Mr. Stoltenberg had proposed.

Mr. Stoltenberg also said that other decisions were made in an effort to make "NATO stronger and allies safer," including the establishment of a new antiballistic missile base in Poland.

Mr. Stoltenberg also had sharp criticism for China, whose support for Russia in its war against Ukraine, he said, increased threats to European security.

Mr. Stoltenberg earlier said that, should Russia be victorious in its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, it would embolden Iran, China and North Korea and shape the glob-

al security environment for decades to come.

The joint summit declaration singled out China as a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war against Ukraine.

U.S. President Joe Biden in his welcoming remarks to NATO leaders before their discussions lauded the new pledge by NATO members to ramp up their defense production while stressing that the alliance will not hesitate to defend its territory.

Mr. Biden noted Russia's advancements in churning out munitions and weaponry for use in its war against Ukraine.

"We cannot allow the alliance to fall behind," Mr. Biden said, adding that Russia's war effort benefited from the help of China, North Korea and Iran.

"This new pledge sends an unmistakable message to the world that every NATO member is committed to doing their part to keep the alliance strong," Mr. Biden said.

"We can and will defend every inch of NATO territory, and do it together," he said.

The first day of meetings opened with the United States saying that F-16 fighter jets were on their way to Kyiv while a draft commune being worked on noted Ukraine's "irreversible path" to NATO membership.

As NATO leaders began streaming into the main summit venue on July 10, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that, "as we speak, the transfer of F-16 jets is underway, coming from Denmark,

coming from the Netherlands."

A joint statement from the countries involved confirmed Mr. Blinken's comments, with the fighters expected to arrive during the summer.

"This is a clear signal that Russia's ability to terrorize Ukrainian people, cities and communities will continue to [be] reduce[d]," said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who for months has been urging NATO leaders to speed up deliveries of all types of weaponry, especially jets and anti-missile systems as Russia intensifies its air campaign.

Putin has made clear that Russian demands for a peace settlement include Ukraine's exclusion from NATO.

In addition to the announcement on F-16s, officials have been preparing further support for Kyiv that will be unveiled over the course of the summit.

The summit takes place against the backdrop of U.S. political uncertainty and Russia's intensification of its bombing of Ukraine.

Officials and analysts have noted recently that, as Russia steps up its attacks, it appears to be positioning itself for a long war.

A senior NATO official, briefing reporters on condition of anonymity, said that despite dwindling resources Russia would likely be able to maintain its war economy for three to four years.

However, the official added that the

Kremlin lacked the munitions and troops to launch a major offensive against Ukraine in the near term.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, whose pro-Russian views have irked the alliance, is likely to test NATO's unity.

Mr. Orban, who just took over the rotating presidency of the European Union, flew to Moscow last week and then to China without informing the bloc ahead of time to discuss an end to the war with Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Mr. Biden's performance at the summit will also be closely watched amid concerns about his age and ability to lead after a dismal showing in a debate with Republican rival Donald Trump as Americans prepare to vote in a presidential election on November 5.

A growing number of fellow Democrats have called for Mr. Biden to end his reelection campaign since the debate on June 26.

Mr. Biden's poor debate performance and the specter of another Trump presidency has many European allies worried.

(With reporting by RFE/RL Europe Editor Rikard Jozwiak)

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Ukraine strengthens...

(Continued from page 2)

difficulties in reaching these goals, including the problem of scaling development and production. The solution here may be to attract foreign companies to speed up the development of production facilities. During the roundtable discussion "Ukrainian Defense Industry and its Capabilities to Meet the Needs of the Frontline," Yaroslav Kalinin, director of the Infozahyst Research and Production Center, which produces signals intelligence, electronic warfare and cyber defense equipment, addressed another side of the scaling problem. "If we do not bring foreign business here and do not allow local businesses to negotiate terms, then after the victory, we will face the collapse of the military-industrial complex caused by overload," he said (GDIP.com.ua, February 7).

Another issue is sourcing sufficient funds to support increased production in Ukraine's war-torn economy. Ukrainian Minister of Strategic Industries Oleksandr Kamyshin has said that Kyiv is seeking funds from the European Union to boost production. According to Mr. Kamyshin, Ukraine can develop the proper production capacities, but "the only thing that is missing is funding." The Ukrainian leadership is currently focused on three key initiatives. First, Ukraine is working to extend European Peace Facility funds to reimburse member states that procure equipment directly from Ukraine. Second, Kyiv is hoping to use the profits from frozen Russian assets for the procurement of domestic military equipment. Third, Ukraine is looking to include procurement from Ukrainian producers in the European Defence Industry Programme (Euractiv, May 9). This is necessary to fill the gap between available capacities and required production (Interfax, April 15).

Several countries have already joined these initiatives. On May 22, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson announced a long-term assistance program for Ukraine worth 6.5 billion euros (around \$7 billion) from 2024 to 2026 (X.com/SweedishPM, May 22). On June 13, Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov

signed a memorandum of understanding with his Danish colleague Troels Lund Poulsen on the purchase of weapons and equipment from Ukrainian manufacturers. "This is a big step, as Denmark has become the first foreign North Atlantic Treaty Organization country to invest in arms production in Ukraine," Mr. Umerov said (Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, June 14).

Such support for Ukraine is becoming a priority for the United States. In particular, during the opening session of the Ukraine Defense Industrial Base Conference in Washington, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin said Ukraine's ability to produce critical military equipment domestically is key to its ability to maintain lasting freedom and sovereignty within its borders (The Pentagon, December 6, 2023). Additionally, as part of the recently signed U.S.-Ukraine bilateral security agreement, Washington agreed "to engage with international partners and their respective defense industries to support increased Ukrainian production over the long term" (The White House; President of Ukraine, June 13).

Several successful examples of international cooperation with Ukrainian defense companies, both state-owned and private, have already begun. Turkish drone producer Baykar is currently constructing a factory in the Kyiv region (Reuters, February 7). Additionally, German defense company Flensburger Fahrzeugbau has announced the creation of a service center for armored vehicles in Ukraine. The center will reportedly be able to repair "Leopard-1" tanks provided by Germany (Texty, January 9). Rheinmetall, one of Germany's largest arms producers, is also building a factory to produce German armored vehicles in Ukraine, particularly "Fuchs" armored personnel carriers (APC) and "Lynx" infantry fighting vehicles (IFV). Rheinmetall CEO Armin Papperger explained in an interview with the German weekly WirtschaftsWoche that he expects production of the first Fuchs APC in late summer 2024 and Lynx IFV as early as summer 2025 (WirtschaftsWoche, December 2, 2023). The first part of the factory became operational in June (Ukroboronprom, June 10).

Establishing joint ventures in Ukraine carries several risks. Most apparent is the

vulnerability of any stationary facilities to Russian attacks, air strikes or sabotage. As of September 2023, 37 Ukrainian defense sector companies suffered from Russian attacks, according to Mr. Shmyhal (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, September 30). Ukrainian industry is suffering from blackouts and a lack of qualified personnel, part of which were mobilized to the front (Economichna Pravda, September 20, 2023; see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 3). Additionally, the production of foreign weapons systems requires permits and licenses that are sometimes held up by political issues.

According to Ukrainian Finance Minister Yulia Sviridenko, the development of Ukraine's domestic defense sector could bring additional benefits, including the creation of jobs, support for the national economy, boosting of other sectors of industry,

and easier and faster delivery of equipment to the front (LB, June 18). Most importantly, this could ensure autonomy and self-sufficiency in case of any sharp change in the political situation among Ukraine's partners. For foreign manufacturers, this means additional profits, first-hand access to the latest Ukrainian projects and experience, and the opportunity to test equipment in real combat conditions (Polskie Radio, September 30, 2023). Beyond immediate considerations, the state of Ukraine's economy, particularly the military-industrial complex, will continue to play a significant role in Kyiv's reconstruction of the country following the war.

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Russia's war...

(Continued from page 7)

chological adaptation from an offensive to defensive posture. Additionally, Ukraine has a smaller pool of manpower than Russia and delayed mobilization until the adoption of two laws in May (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, 10, 24; Ukrainian Parliament, May 9, 18).

Ukraine is reliant on Western financial support of approximately \$5 billion per month (Kyiv Post, May 20, 2022; Voice of America, October 2, 2023). The slow delivery of air defense systems to Ukraine has provided Russia with the ability to destroy a large portion of Ukraine's energy infrastructure, reducing the availability of electricity and leading to blackouts (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, June 20, 27, July 3). This will require additional Western funding to overcome the shortcomings ahead of the winter campaign.

The Kremlin's long war of attrition proclaims the same goals of "de-militarization" and "de-nazification" of Ukraine and the destruction of Ukrainian identity to opening the way for the creation of a truncated "Little Russia" (Armiya Inform, October 31, 2023; Kuzio, Crimea: Where Russia's War Started and Where Ukraine Will Win, July 8).

Moscow is fully aware that a long war is not in Ukraine's interests as it increases social problems, severely damages children's education, destroys the economy and disincentivizes millions of Ukrainian refugees from returning home (Bruegel, September 27, 2022; UNICEF, February 21, 2023; Kyiv School of Economics, October 3, 2023).

Overall, it is in the best interest of Ukraine and the West to end the war quickly and definitely. The unwillingness of some Western countries to declare Ukraine's ultimate victory and Russia's complete defeat as their overarching goal, hesitant policies over using Western weapons to hit targets inside Russia, and the drip feed of military assistance have created the conditions for a long war (Unian, May 31).

The theme of 2024 will be a year of Ukraine defending against Russian assaults in Donbas, Kharkiv and elsewhere. Nevertheless, with new Western and Ukrainian weaponry, including long-range missiles and jets, along with the steady mobilization of more military personnel, Ukraine will be ready to launch a determined offensive in 2025.

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Five Ukrainian surgeons take part in Connecticut medical training before returning to war's frontlines

by Ihor N. Stelmach

HARTFORD, Conn. – Hartford Healthcare's Hartford Hospital together with Global Response Medicine sponsored an initiative to have five Ukrainian surgeons and two translators travel to here for a two-week training session that took place from May 18 to June 1.

The Ukrainian surgeons have been actively working on the frontlines of Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine. Aside from three days allocated for travel, the Ukrainian medics had 11 full days of daily lectures, group discussions, clinical rounds and simulations in order to give them updated expertise on treating wounded soldiers and civilians in battlegrounds throughout their war-ravaged homeland.

Two of the visiting doctors were general surgeons while the other three included specialists in urology, orthopedics and anesthesiology. Their names along with those of the two translators are being withheld to ensure their safety. A representative from Global Response Medicine joined them for most of their two-week training. A correspondent for The Ukrainian Weekly met up with the visitors on two occasions and had an opportunity to spend time with them.

The group of seven visiting Ukrainians stayed at the adjacent Hudson Suites and had daily sessions at the Klein Conference Room. Topics at the outset of the training included the following themes: "Challenges on the Frontlines" and "What are their training needs?"

An introductory tour of Hartford Hospital got the surgeons acclimated to their new surroundings, where they spent the next 10 days. Their daily routine included regular intensive care unit and trauma rounds, clinical rounds and observation of



Five visiting Ukrainian surgeons and two translators (who asked not to be named for security reasons) take part in a meet and greet with the local Ukrainian community at the Hartford Ukrainian National Home.

the surgical intensive care unit. Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) field transfusion was a focus in week one. Advanced cardiac ultrasound and emergency critical care were additional areas of concentration.

Other medical areas of attention included vascular trauma, an amputation lecture, damage control surgery, neck and upper extremities, chest and abdomen injuries and a penetrating bullet simulation.

The five Ukrainian surgeons were given nightly homework assignments and made morning presentations while performing clinical rounds with hospital surgeons and physicians. The supervising and training physicians were very impressed with the Ukrainians' intelligent responses to their

assignments and their diligent preparations for their daily presentations and rounds. They expressed admiration and praise, saying that, based on previous similar experiences with other initiatives, the Ukrainian surgeons exceeded expectations.

The Hartford Hospital staff was so impressed with the success of this two-week training initiative that there has already been discussion of additional projects and collaborations with Ukrainian surgeons in the future.

A major eye-opening realization for the local medical personnel was the actual conditions along the frontlines of the war in eastern Ukraine. The American doctors could not believe how normal it is for Ukrainian medics to have to physically

carry wounded soldiers for several miles to the nearest first aid station or hospital due to a shortage of vehicles along the frontlines of the war.

There is a need for ambulances and motorized military transport in addition to ammunition and healthy, well-trained personnel to defend their nation from the Russian aggressors. In conversations with the visiting Ukrainian surgeons, the locals found it difficult to comprehend that in 2024 civilized people are involved in a war that resembles the horrors of World War II or even World War I.

When asked about their most traumatic or worst personal experience on the front-

(Continued on page 11)

U.N. Security...

(Continued from page 5)

On July 8, the Russian Defense Ministry said its air attacks near Kyiv were aimed at "Ukrainian military industry facilities and Ukrainian Air Force bases," adding that "the strike's objectives were achieved."

It said that "numerous published photos and video footage from Kyiv clearly confirm the fact of destruction as a result of the fall of a Ukrainian air-defense missile."

"Russia cannot claim ignorance of where its missiles are flying and must be held fully accountable for all its crimes. Against people, against children, against humanity in general," Mr. Zelenskyy said.

Missile Strike On The Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital In Kyiv

The Okhmatdyt children's hospital in Kyiv was hit on July 8 during a wave of Russian missile strikes against cities across Ukraine. Two people were killed and the hospital, which is Ukraine's biggest pediatrics facility, sustained major damage in the blast.

Photo: Sergei Dolzhenko (EPA-EFE) © OpenStreetMap contributors

Falling rocket debris was reported in more than half a dozen other areas around the capital.

U.N. Resident Coordinator in Ukraine Denise Brown said that "dozens of people have been killed and injured" on July 8, adding, "It is unconscionable that children are killed and injured in this war."

E.U. foreign policy chief Josep Borrell accused Russia of "ruthlessly" targeting Ukrainian civilians and urged "air defense" for the war-ravaged country.

"Russia keeps ruthlessly targeting Ukrainian civilians," Mr. Borrell said on X.

Mr. Zelenskyy's chief of staff Andriy Yermak said on Telegram that the shelling of Ukraine came at a time when there were the most people on the streets. He blamed "obsessed Russian terrorists."

Daytime attacks on cities have been rare, even as Russia has stepped up aerial bombardments of Ukrainian population centers and power and other infrastructure over the past six months.

In Mr. Zelenskyy's hometown of Kryviy Rih, in central Ukraine, the Dnipropetrovsk regional military administration head said that at least 10 people had been killed and 30 injured in a "massive enemy attack from the air."

In northeast Ukraine, Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov said two women were hospitalized for injuries after Russian shelling struck three residential buildings there.

Kharkiv's governor said later on July 8 that a mine blast in the region had killed five people.

In fighting on the ground, the Ukrainian General Staff said Russia was continuing offensives in the Kharkiv region.

But it said the Russian focus appeared

to be on an offensive in the Pokrovsk area of the eastern Donetsk region where Russian troops with air support are trying to dislodge Ukrainian forces. The regional governor said that at least three people were killed in Pokrovsk in the July 8 missile attacks.

It said Ukrainian troops were trying to "stabilize" the situation to prevent Russian forces from "advancing deep into Ukrainian territory" there.

Outside analysts recently predicted that Russia will soon launch attacks across a canal in the strategic city and logistics hub of Chasiv Yar in Donetsk, where Kyiv recently acknowledged losing a district nearly three months into an intense battle focused on that city.

The Russian domestic intelligence service, the Federal Security Service (FSB), claimed on July 8 that it had thwarted a Ukrainian attempt to bribe a Russian military pilot into hijacking a Tu-22M3 strategic bomber and flying it to Ukraine.

It was not possible to independently confirm the FSB's claim, which it said included a promise of Italian citizenship in exchange for landing the Russian bomber on Ukrainian territory.

RFE/RL cannot independently confirm reports by either side of battlefield developments in areas of the heaviest fighting.

(With reporting by Reuters)

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Five Ukrainian...

(Continued from page 10)

lines, the doctors did not say it was a devastating injury or even having someone die in their arms. Instead, they said they feared that Ukraine does not have the soldiers or weapons needed to win the war.

All five surgeons said they witnessed death, the loss of body limbs, profuse bleeding, bodies shocked into comatose states, uncontrolled sobbing and loud screaming from pain caused by a nearby missile or bomb explosion, direct gunfire or the triggering of a hidden land mine.

When speaking about such tragic experiences, the Ukrainian doctors' voices were calm and unemotional, as if they were describing scenes from a movie or an excerpt from a novel. What was grotesque and shocking to hear for those in their presence was merely a daily accounting of life and death on the battlefields of Ukraine's war with Russia.

As a welcome respite from the intense daily sessions at Hartford Hospital, the visitors enjoyed a meet and greet with the local Hartford Ukrainian community at the Ukrainian National Home, a special private dinner at the home of Dr. Maria Gluch Briggs, an outing at a Hartford Athletic soccer game and a day trip to New York City.

The gathering at the Ukrainian National Home on May 23 included a traditional Ukrainian dinner of varenyky and kovbasa at the club's Sunflower Café and mingling with Ukrainian locals where a replay of the Oleksandr Usyk-Tyson Fury heavyweight championship fight was airing on television.

The guests later visited Zoloty Promin Ukrainian Dance Ensemble's rehearsal in the upstairs hall where the group was preparing for their 30th anniversary performance at

Central Connecticut State University.



The visiting Ukrainians were most impressed with how the community has retained its ethnic identity and continues to educate future generations in all things Ukrainian, including language, religion, history, music and dance.




The five surgeons and their two translators unanimously decided that they wanted to take a trip to New York City and the group took advantage of a transportation connection with one of their local shuttle bus drivers. They enjoyed a full Saturday tour of Manhattan and a visit to the city's famous Statue of Liberty.

Daria Budas, who played caretaker, hostess and guide for the group, greeted the honored guests with welcome bags, helped prepare a home-cooked dinner for them upon their arrival in Hartford, and checked in on them every day as her office was in the same building where the surgeons and translators were staying.

Ms. Budas coordinated the meet and greet at the Hartford Ukrainian National Home and attended the Hartford Athletic football match. The guests from Ukraine expressed their profound appreciation for Ms. Budas' efforts by giving her a gift bag that included an exclusive autographed group photo, an embroidered Ukrainian cloth and an official military patch from their battalion.

The five surgeons boarded a plane headed for Detroit, with connecting flights to Copenhagen, Denmark and Warsaw, before an immediate return to their duties on the frontlines, fortified with all of their freshly accumulated knowledge to more efficiently and successfully fulfill their critical responsibilities in the ongoing war. The two translators and a Global Response Medicine representative were off to Florida to meet with another group of visiting Ukrainian surgeons.





Veronika Zamryha
Second-year student
in Ethics, Politics,
and Economics
Andriy Galych
Scholarship recipient
(Svitla Systems)

Roksolana Rudyk
Third-year law student
Andriy Galych
Scholarship recipient
(Svitla Systems)


Vladyslav Ivanisov
Second-year student
in Ethics-Politics-
Economics
Andriy Galych
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Zelenskyy urges...

(Continued from page 1)

has tried “to intimidate us from providing support,” if anything the opposite has happened and NATO allies are “actually stepping up their support for Ukraine.”

Mr. Zelenskyy, speaking shortly before he was to participate in a session of the NATO-Ukraine Council, called the aid offered at the summit “a success.” He has repeatedly called on partners to boost Ukraine’s air defenses.

But Mr. Zelenskyy stressed that Ukraine needs more control to hit military targets deep inside Russian territory – specifically, aircraft used to strike Ukraine with glide bombs. Some air bases that house the planes, he said earlier this week, are located up to 310 miles from Ukraine’s border.

Prior to the day’s discussions, Andriy Yermak, the head of Mr. Zelenskyy’s administration, said that lifting restrictions on how Ukraine uses donated weapons would be a “game-changer.”

“It is just impossible to fight when the enemies don’t have any restrictions,” Mr. Yermak told the NATO Public Forum on July 11.

Mr. Stoltenberg on July 10 said that Ukraine had the right under international law to defend itself against invading Russian forces, including with strikes against legitimate military targets in Russia.

But he said that the issue of how Ukraine uses its donated weaponry is up to individual NATO members to decide. Some have said Kyiv can use them to strike inside Russian territory, while others have said their donated weapons can only be used within Ukraine.

The United States in early May dropped its ban on Kyiv using U.S. weapons to strike Russian territory. Britain likewise loosened restrictions in early May.

Germany has expressed opposition to allowing the use of NATO-provided weapons to strike inside Russia and has refused to send Ukraine its long-range Taurus cruise missile. Berlin did say in late May, however, that Ukraine could use weapons it supplies to defend itself against strikes from positions just inside Russia.

Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis told RFE/RL on May 31 that allies need to change how they are looking at the war in Ukraine and allow Kyiv to use weapons to a fuller extent.

At the NATO summit on July 11, Mr. Landsbergis called for the restrictions to be lifted so that Ukraine could strike those targets from where Russia is firing into Ukraine.

When asked by journalists if he agreed to lifting restrictions, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said there have been no changes to Berlin’s position.

U.S. President Joe Biden, in a meeting with Mr. Zelenskyy earlier in the day, said he was pleased to announce the new aid allocation.

“We will stay with you, period,” Mr. Biden said ahead of bilateral talks.

In a subsequent statement announcing the aid package, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that, “as President Biden has made clear, the United States and the international coalition we have assembled will continue to stand with Ukraine.”

White House national-security adviser Jake Sullivan, speaking to reporters on the sideline of the summit, said that Ukraine’s position on the battlefield had improved since the aid package was passed in April.

Mr. Sullivan said that Russia is “grinding away and not breaking through,” suffering significant casualties in the meantime. However, he warned that the days ahead for Ukraine “will be difficult.”

A joint declaration issued by NATO leaders on July 10 in which it called China a “decisive enabler” of Russia’s war effort received a sharp rebuke from Beijing.

In response to the declaration, which also said that China posed systemic challenges to transatlantic security, Beijing on July 11 accused NATO of spreading false information and undermining cooperation between China and Europe.

NATO has acted on its concerns by showing increased interest in forming bonds with four Indo-Pacific countries – Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea – whose leaders were scheduled to meet with NATO leaders on July 11 to discuss security challenges and cooperation.

Mr. Stoltenberg highlighted the meeting in his news conference on July 10, telling reporters that the NATO leaders agreed to continue to strengthen their partnerships, especially in the Indo-Pacific, amid rising concerns that China might attack Taiwan and worries about Russia’s stepped-up security ties with China and a nuclear-armed North Korea.

“In this dangerous world, friends and partners are more important than ever, so today we agreed to continue to strengthen our partnerships, especially in the Indo-Pacific. Security is global; it’s not regional. [Russian President Vladimir] Putin’s war is fueled by those who do not share our values,” he said.

Iran and North Korea are providing direct military support to Russia, while China is propping up Russia’s war economy, he added.

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Poland...

(Continued from page 1)

“Every word in this document is significant, and there will be practical consequences. We take the words as a mutual commitment, not as empty promises. In the near future, together with other allies, we will implement the provisions of the document step by step,” the head of the Polish government said.

For his part, Mr. Zelenskyy said that the security agreement with Poland includes a provision to develop a mechanism to shoot down Russian missiles and drones that move through Ukrainian airspace in the direction of Poland.

“I am confident that our teams, our teams of the ministries of defense will work together with our military on how we can quickly implement this point of our agreement,” Mr. Zelenskyy said.

The president also noted that the deal also calls for the forming and training of a Ukrainian Legion in Poland.

“We have a very positive experience of the Polish-Ukrainian-Lithuanian brigade, and based on this experience, we will allow Ukrainian citizens who are now in Poland, Lithuania, and other E.U. countries to join the defense of Ukraine voluntarily. Every citizen of Ukraine who decides to join the legion will be able to sign a contract with the [Ukrainian] Armed Forces,” Mr. Zelenskyy said.

He also said that, at a meeting with the Polish prime minister, he discussed the possibility of transferring aircraft with modern NATO avionics to Ukraine.

According to the Polish Presidential Office, the newly signed pact calls on Warsaw to continue supporting Ukraine for 10 years.

The agreement states that, since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, Poland has provided Kyiv with various types of weapons and ammunition worth more than 4 billion euros that were delivered across 44 military aid packages. Poland is expected to provide several more military aid packages this year.

Poland will consider providing Ukraine with at least one additional MiG-29 squadron of at least 14 fighter jets, according to the agreement.

The agreement contains a section on cooperation between the two countries in the defense sector, including the location of Polish defense companies’ production facilities in Ukraine and it states the two countries will explore additional opportunities for joint defense production.

Poland will also continue to operate the POLLOGHUB logistics hub and use the potential of the LitPolUkraine Brigade to strengthen the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

The document aims to strengthen cooperation in the non-military sphere, particularly in intelligence, cybersecurity, maritime and information security and critical infrastructure protection. Separate blocks of the agreement relate to economic recovery and reconstruction, border infrastructure and the development of transit infrastructure.

Political cooperation between the two countries will address issues of European integration, implementation of the Ukrainian Peace Formula, sanctions, compensation for damages to Ukraine, and bringing Russia to justice, according to the agreement, which also notes that Poland reaffirms its support for Ukraine’s membership in the European Union and NATO.

“No one has the right to make decisions about the future peace and its form without Ukraine or on behalf of Ukraine. And nothing about European policy regarding Ukraine should be decided without the E.U. as a whole,” Mr. Tusk said.

According to the Office of the President of Ukraine, as of the end of May, Kyiv has signed security agreements that include more than \$23 billion in military and financial support.

In total, Kyiv has already signed security agreements with 21 countries as part of the declaration of support for Ukraine adopted in Vilnius, Lithuania, in July of 2023 by members of the Group of Seven (G-7) countries.

On June 13, on the sidelines of a G-7 summit, Mr. Zelenskyy and U.S. President Joe Biden signed a bilateral security agreement. The same day, Ukraine signed a security agreement with Japan.

On June 27, Ukraine and the European Union signed a security agreement on the sidelines of the E.U. Leaders’ Summit. Security agreements were also signed with Lithuania and Estonia.

Mr. Zelenskyy said that Kyiv was preparing to sign similar security agreements with 10 countries.

Most Ukrainians believe that security agreements with partners in the follow-up to the G-7 Vilnius Declaration are useful for Ukraine’s defense capabilities, but they are cautious with their expectations, according to a survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology.

Overall, 65 percent of respondents in the survey said they believe that security agreements with Western partners help strengthen Ukraine’s defense capabilities. A small number, roughly 18 percent, consider the agreements to be “very useful,” while 47 percent consider them “rather useful.” Twenty-seven percent believe the agreements will have little or no impact on the country’s defense capabilities. At the same time, 51 percent of the respondents believe that Ukraine will still receive insufficient support to counter Russia effectively.



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NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 2)

the F-16s ... I can't announce any specific dates. We know that the Russians and [President Vladimir] Putin are also interested in when these F-16s will be delivered." Mr. Bekelmans added that the advanced fighter jets will be provided "as soon as possible." He also said that his country and NATO allies were "working hard to open a European training center in Romania" to prepare Ukrainian pilots to fly the F-16s. Norway on July 10 said it would begin providing the six F-16s it has pledged to Ukraine "in 2024." On July 10, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken confirmed that "the transfer of F-16 jets is underway." On July 9, the Netherlands joined the United States, Germany, Italy and Romania in a pledge to provide much-needed air defense capabilities to Ukraine. Daily Russian drone and missile attacks have pummeled the country and caused considerable damage to

Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the pledges "a clear signal that Russia's ability to terrorize Ukrainian people, cities and communities will continue to [be] reduce[d]." Mr. Zelenskyy told a conference in Berlin on June 11 that Ukraine needs at least seven additional Patriot systems to protect its urban population centers. When Mr. Zelenskyy arrived in Washington for the July 9-11 NATO summit, he told journalists that his delegation would focus on acquiring additional air defenses and fighter-jet capabilities. The summit is expected to discuss a proposal to provide Ukraine with 40 billion euros (\$43 billion) in military aid in 2025 after member states could not agree on a multiyear military-aid package proposed earlier by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Putin forces NATO to deal with reality

Against the backdrop of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Minister Gabrielius Lands-

bergis said North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) leaders must remember what's at stake as they celebrate the military alliance's 75th anniversary at a summit this week. Mr. Landsbergis, who spoke on July 9 at a Washington think tank as the summit got under way, said his team approached the gathering reflecting on the reality of what NATO faces in Ukraine, not the memory of the alliance's inception in 1949. Russian President Vladimir Putin "is making sure we do that, unfortunately, with a very brutal attack against civilian objects again in Ukraine - with an attack on a children's hospital," Mr. Landsbergis said, referring to a deadly attack that occurred in Kyiv on the eve of the summit. The attack was a clear message that Putin feels that if there's no answer from NATO, then he can act with impunity, the Baltic country's top diplomat added. "Therefore, we have to make sure that he doesn't get away with this," Mr. Landsbergis said, speaking at the Hudson Institute. He noted that the war is taken seriously in Lithuania, which has increased its defense spending to just over 3 percent of economic output. Lithuanians - many of whom remember life under Moscow's rule before breaking free from the Soviet Union in 1991 to regain independence - know what's at stake, he said, and recognize that the fight in the trenches of Kharkiv is a fight to defend Lithuania's security as well. Reflecting that reality, he said that his country is ready to consider a proposal put forward earlier this year by French President Emmanuel Macron to provide military instructors and other noncombatant personnel to Kyiv. Lithuania is "politically ready" to consider the steps that Mr. Macron laid out, he said, clarifying that the proposal was never about sending French troops, but it was about sending specialists who would handle policing, demining and border patrol duties. Mr. Landsbergis noted that this type of assistance was provided by Western countries before the war, and he believes it's possible to plan for a return to this level of assistance. It also would send a very strong signal to Putin that NATO doesn't think he should be able to call the shots in Ukraine. "If [Ukraine] wants this and if we have the means, it's up to us to decide. It's not [Putin's pervue] to set the rules," Mr. Landsbergis said. "That's the thinking, and we want to be part of it." Mr. Landsbergis said the proposal is still alive and he is waiting for a new coalition government to form in France following its elections on July 7. The leadership exists to drive the proposal once a coalition forms, he said. Mr. Landsbergis said that his expectations for the NATO summit are not high, however, and he believes the allies will not

have the will to push the line beyond what was achieved last year when the summit was held in Lithuania. The mood is different than it was when the leaders of the 32 NATO countries met in Vilnius, he said. "A year ago, one might have had a sense that we are writing a new passage, at least for NATO and maybe for Ukraine. Now the expectations are really lower, meaning that the allies really want to stick to a consensus [and] avoid any political battle," he said. The communique for the summit is still being written, and the leaders are only looking to "bring a clean text" that everyone will be able to sign. But it's known that Putin's aim is to test NATO, and the summit's message must be one of deterrence, Mr. Landsbergis said, adding that it should say that NATO is united and strong and tell Putin that "you don't want to test us."

Tsikhankouskaya urges West to show unity

The exiled leader of Belarus's democratic movement, Svyatlana Tsikhankouskaya, has urged Western leaders to be "united" and "decisive" in their resistance to "the imperialistic ambitions of Russia." Speaking to RFE/RL on the sidelines of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit in Washington, Ms. Tsikhankouskaya argued that the people of Ukraine are not just fighting for their own country, but also "for the values that democratic countries are based on." "Believe me, if we allow Ukraine to lose this war, the democratic world - powerful Europe or the U.S.A - will be the next to be attacked by dictatorship," she said. Ms. Tsikhankouskaya, 41, is a former teacher who ran for president in Belarus in 2020 after her husband, popular blogger Syarhey Tsikhankouski, was barred from doing so and imprisoned. She was forced to flee to Lithuania during a brutal crackdown on a wave of pro-democracy protests that erupted after strongman leader Alyaksandr Lukashenka was awarded a sixth presidential term following an election widely viewed as deeply flawed. "The fates of Belarus and Ukraine are intertwined," she told RFE/RL. "We fully encourage NATO countries to support Ukrainians and to give Ukraine everything they need to win this war. But don't overlook Belarus." Ms. Tsikhankouskaya said that "dictators" like Mr. Lukashenka and Russian President Vladimir Putin perceive Western sluggishness and indecisiveness as "weakness." "And they think that they can cross red line after red line," she said, adding that they are challenging the Western world to see how far they can go before there is a response. "That is why all possible tanks and equip-

(Continued on page 15)

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Condemnation...

(Continued from page 7)

at a sharp downward trajectory before making contact with the hospital building."

Kyiv's Civil Defense Department said on July 9 that the body of a missing boy had been retrieved from an apartment building hit during the missile attacks, which also partially destroyed another hospital and hit a business center in the capital as well.

RFE/RL cannot independently confirm reports by either side of battlefield developments in areas of the heaviest fighting.

(With reporting by Current Time's Aleksei Aleksandrov and dpa)

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Zelenskyy calls...

(Continued from page 3)

also press for NATO commitments on additional warplanes and to provide enhanced security guarantees.

In a video posted on his Telegram account, Mr. Zelenskyy said: "We are fighting for additional security guarantees for Ukraine. And these consist of weapons and

finances, political support."

"We are doing, and will always do everything, to make the Russian terrorist lose," he added.

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NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 14)

ment for Ukraine had to be [there] already yesterday," she said. "We don't have time." "I am waiting for NATO countries' unity and decisiveness because that is what the people who are fighting against tyranny, against the imperialistic ambitions of Russia, against the dictators of the world, are waiting for," Ms. Tsikhanouskaya said. (RFE/RL's Margret Johnston)

Ukrainian men enter illegally into Moldova

Some 23,500 Ukrainian men have entered Moldova illegally since the start of Russia's unprovoked invasion in February 2022, according to data seen by RFE/RL's Moldovan Service. While some 15,000 men aged 18-59 arrived illegally in Moldova from February 2022 until the end of last year, the trend accelerated substantially after Ukrainian authorities in April lowered the mobilization age from 27 to 25 years amid an increasingly acute shortage of military personnel caused by battlefield losses. Moldovan frontier police data show that more than 7,700 Ukrainian men crossed illegally into Moldova in the first five months of this year. Moldova and Ukraine share a 760-mile-long border and Chisinau, under pro-Western President Maia Sandu, has offered shelter to thousands of Ukrainian refugees, mostly women and children, but also men, on its territory. Ukrainian authorities have admitted that the high number of losses and the frontline impasse have dampened the patriotic enthusiasm of the first months of the war, which saw the Ukrainian Army grow from 260,000 people to 700,000. Mobilization efforts are running into obstacles, as many able-bodied men go into hiding to avoid increasingly frequent checkups on the streets and on the public transport of Ukraine's cities. Moldovan legislation provides for four types of protection for foreigners: refugee status, humanitarian protection, political asylum and temporary protection, introduced in March last year. In the first 14 months since the introduction of the temporary protection status, official data shows, nearly 12,800 Ukrainians have benefited from it. Moldovan Frontier Police chief Ruslan Galusca, in a reply to RFE/RL, said that Ukrainians who are detained immediately after illegally crossing the border with Moldova or who officially ask for international protection at a police precinct

"are not sanctioned for illegal entry." In February, Moldova's western neighbor, European Union member Romania, which shares a 372-mile-long border with Ukraine, reported that some 9,000 Ukrainians crossed its border illegally in the first two years of the war. Many of the Ukrainians crossing illegally into Moldova do so with the intention of continuing their journey to European Union countries. Neither Moldova nor Ukraine is a member of the bloc, although both have started accession negotiations with Brussels. Moldovan police, increasingly concerned by the proliferation of human trafficking networks, have been making efforts to debrief the runaways about who helped them cross the border. Vasyi, a Ukrainian man who arrived in Moldova in April and is heading to Poland, told RFE/RL that he paid \$10,000 to traffickers who brought him across the Dniester River into Moldova aboard a speedboat. "I am not fleeing because I do not love Ukraine. I am fleeing from death. It hurts to see people dying in my country, and I do not want to be next," he said. (RFE/RL's Moldovan Service)

Ukraine impounds cargo ship

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) says it has detained an unidentified foreign cargo ship in the Black Sea and is holding its captain. The SBU statement said the ship, which flew the flag of a Central African country, was illegally exporting agricultural products from the Russian-occupied Ukrainian region of Crimea for sale in the Middle East. The captain was identified only as a national of a South Caucasus country. Kyiv alleges that Russia has been illegally exporting Ukrainian agricultural products since shortly after its February 2022 full-scale invasion. As of November 2023, Kyiv says, Russia had exported about \$1 billion worth of looted goods. Moscow denies stealing Ukrainian grain. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Warrant issued for journalist Lazareva in exile

A Moscow court on July 10 issued an arrest warrant for journalist Tatyana Lazareva on a charge of justifying terrorism. The charge stems from a report Ms. Lazareva made about Ukrainian drones attacking sites inside Russia. Last month, the Russian authorities added Ms. Lazareva to the country's wanted list and the registry of "terrorists and extremists." In July 2022, Ms. Lazareva, who has openly condemned Moscow's full-scale aggression against

Ukraine, was added to Russia's list of "foreign agents." Ms. Lazareva fled Russia after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. (RFE/RL's Russian Service)

Voronezh targeted in suspected drone attack

A state of emergency was declared on July 7 in parts of Russia's Voronezh region near the border with Ukraine following a suspected Ukrainian drone attack that set an ammunition depot on fire, regional authorities said. Regional Gov. Aleksandr Gusev said Ukrainian drones were shot down by Russian air-defense systems and that the fire was ignited by debris that fell on an ammunition depot in the Podgornensky district overnight. Videos posted on Telegram purported to show at least one drone heading toward the depot and then a long series of blasts could be heard while plumes of black smoke were rising in the air. Mr. Gusev said there were no immediate reports of casualties. Later in the morning, he announced that he had declared a state of emergency in the settlement where the burning depot was located, without identifying it by name. The road that leads into the area has been closed and authorities have begun evacuating residents to temporary accommodation centers, reports said. Ukraine, whose energy and civilian infrastructure has been decimated by months of intensive Russian drone and missile strikes, has in turn start-

ed targeting industrial facilities, mainly oil refining capabilities that work for the military, inside Russia. On July 7, Ukraine's military intelligence (HUR) claimed in a message on Telegram that its agents on the previous day had struck a logistics center in Debaltseve, in the Russia-occupied part of Donetsk, that housed tank equipment and ammunition. HUR also claimed that an electronic warfare jamming communication station was destroyed in Novoluhansk in the occupied Luhansk region. The claims could not be independently verified. Separately, Ukraine's Air Force said on July 7 that its air-defense systems had repelled a fresh Russian missile and drone attack on several regions earlier in the day. "The enemy attacked with 2 Iskander-M ballistic missiles and 13 Shahed drones," the Air Force reported on Telegram, adding that 13 drones were shot down in the Kirovohrad, Kharkiv, Sumy and Poltava regions. Russia's Defense Ministry, meanwhile, said on Telegram that its Iskander missiles had destroyed two Ukrainian launchers for Patriot surface-to-air missile systems and a Giraffe radar station in the village of Yuzhne in the Odesa region. However, Ukrainian Air Force commander Lt. Gen. Mykola Oleshchuk asserted on Telegram that Russian forces had struck decoy launchers aimed at fooling Moscow into firing off expensive missiles at fake targets. Claims on either side could not be independently verified. (RFE/RL)

With deep sorrow, we inform you that



Dr. LUBOMYR TARAS ROMANKIW

born April 17, 1931 in Zhovkva, Ukraine; died June 27, 2024, in Hackensack, NJ, USA.

Dr. Romankiw was an outstanding metallurgist who worked most of his life as a leading scientist and later a Fellow at IBM Laboratories in Yorktown Heights, NY. He was responsible for the development of magnetic storage devices.

Dr. Romankiw held over 50 international patents and contributed over 120 basic ideas that made modern computers possible. He received numerous technical and scientific prizes and awards in recognition of his contributions to the field.

In 2012 Dr. Romankiw was inducted to the US National Inventors Hall of Fame,

He was also a leading figure in the Ukrainian Scouting Organization "Plast," where he served as Chief Scout as well as in a number of other executive positions. He was also a member of several scholarly organizations.

Memorial services for Dr. Romankiw were held at Jarema Funeral Home, on July 7, 2024, and the funeral services July 8 at St. George Ukrainian Catholic Church, New York.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Ukrainian Scout Magazine "Plastovy Shliakh", c/o Roman Bilynsky, 1756 Flintville Road, Delta, PA 17314-9163

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Ukrainian pro sports update

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Mahuchikh sets new world record

Ukrainian Yaroslava Mahuchikh achieved world record-breaking form at the Diamond League meet on July 7 in Paris, which became a perfect dress rehearsal for the upcoming Olympics that kick off on July 26 in France's capital.

Mahuchikh broke the 37-year-old women's high jump world record with a new best of 2.10 meters, beating Bulgaria's Stefka Kostadinova's previous best of 2.09 meters.

Mahuchikh cleared 2.03 meters to secure victory in the event. She then set a new Ukrainian record with a jump of 2.07 meters. She boldly raised the bar to 2.10 meters and cleared it on her first attempt, easily making her the prohibitive favorite in the high jump competition at the Games.

Sebastian Coe visits Ukraine before Olympics

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe visited Ukraine to personally show his support for Ukrainian athletes before this summer's Olympic Games in Paris. Coe attended Ukraine's national athletics championships in Lviv, Ukraine, over the weekend of June 28-30 and met with Zelenskyy.

In an international media session after his return, Coe proudly said that he had fulfilled a promise he made to Ukrainian athletes that he would personally visit them in their war-torn country.

"I wanted them to know that I was in their corner. This wasn't about politics and passports. It really wasn't. It was about a commitment to go and see them and let them

know we think about them. I understand a lot more than I did about the circumstances they confront every minute of the day, and for that I'll forever be grateful," Coe said.

Less than 30 Ukrainian track and field athletes will compete in Paris this summer, compared to 44 in 2021 (Tokyo) and 65 in 2016 (Rio de Janeiro), underlining the impact the war has had on sport in Ukraine.

Coe's discussions with Zelenskyy centered on how to fund the development of athletes in the under-20 category in Ukraine, having identified the 18-20 age range as the "biggest attritional period in our sport even without the complex circumstances of life in Ukraine."

In meeting with some Ukrainian athletes, Coe related how one athlete doesn't have a coach at the moment because he was forced into military duty on the frontline. Female athletes he spoke with are constantly worrying about their husbands, brothers or fathers.

World Athletics has imposed a total ban on Russian competitors from track and field competitions at the 2024 Olympics because of Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine. Other sports are allowing some Russians to compete as neutrals, providing they meet specific criteria.

Coe stipulated the decision was not one individual's viewpoint, but the unanimous view of the World Athletics' 26-person Council.

World Athletics passed along Zelenskyy's gratitude for Coe's ban on Russian athletes.

"Thank you for your strong steps and decisions. Russia needs to feel that its terrorist war will cause its athletes to

be treated accordingly. And that the price for this war is very high," he said, according to World Athletics.

Coe invited Zelenskyy to attend the athletics events at the Paris Games later in July as his guest.

This is the second year that World Athletics has supported Ukrainian athletes in an effort to help them continue training and competing in international events. Italy, Turkey and Portugal have provided training camps for Ukrainian athletes in their countries.

German club Schalke to host Shakhtar's UEFA Champions League matches

Ukrainian Premier League champion Shakhtar Donetsk will play their home UEFA Champions League matches at German club Schalke next season. The two clubs made a joint announcement that said Shakhtar's four home games in the new-look league stage will be played in the 62,000-capacity Arena AufSchalke in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. Schalke stipulated the agreement also includes any knockout games. The stadium hosted four European Championship matches in late June.

Shakhtar has been unable to play European games in Ukraine since Russia launched a full-scale war on the country in February 2022. The Ukrainian club held games in Hamburg, Germany, and Warsaw over the past two years. They have not been able to play in their home city of Donetsk since that region of Ukraine was illegally annexed after being taken over in 2014 by Russia-backed separatists. Shakhtar continues to play in the Ukrainian Premier League where matches are played in empty stadiums without spectators.

(Continued on page 17)



Ukrainian pro hockey update

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Sixty-seven Ukrainians played pro hockey during 2023-2024 season

A total of 67 players of Ukrainian heritage saw game action in North American professional hockey leagues in the 2023-2024 season. This included 22 skaters in the National Hockey League (NHL), 25 in the American Hockey League (AHL), 14 in the East Coast Hockey League (ECHL), two in the Southern Pro League and four in the Federal Prospects League (Players who dressed in more than one league are counted once in the higher league).

In the NHL, Florida (Keith Tkachuk, Josh Mahura, Mackie Samoskevich), Ottawa (Brady Tkachuk, Jakob Chychrun, Zack Ostapchuk) and Chicago (Kevin Korhinski, Taylor Raddysh, Frank Nazar) each boasted three Ukrainians on their rosters. By position, there were 12 for-

wards and 10 defensemen. Grand Rapids led the way in the AHL with a trio of Ukrainian skaters. Cincinnati likewise employed three Ukrainians on their 2023-2024 ECHL team. Of the 67 pro Ukrainians, 40 played forward, 21 skated on defense and six tended goal.

Below is a quick glance at some of the top Ukrainian performers in 2023-2024.

Makar again nominated for James Norris Trophy

Colorado's Cale Makar (77GP, 21G, 69A, 90PTS, 16PIM) was one of three finalists for the 2023-2024 James Norris Trophy, awarded to the NHL's most outstanding defenseman. He topped all blueliners with 1.17 points per game, the third-highest average in the past 30 years. He set single-season franchise records for assists and points by a defenseman and ranked second among 2023-2024 defensemen in goals, assists and points. He was first in defensemen power-play points (39) and registered his 300th point in his 280th game becoming the second-fastest defenseman in history to achieve this milestone, only one game shy of Bobby Orr (279 games). Makar is a Norris Trophy finalist for the fourth time in his first five seasons, having won the honor in 2021-2022.

Matthew Tkachuk a 'franchise changer' in Florida

Matthew Tkachuk (80GP, 26G, 62A, 88PTS, 88PIM) continued his impactful play for the Florida Panthers, finishing second in team scoring, first in assists and third in goals. Through May 5, in 25 playoff games with Florida, he scored 14 goals and had 19 assists for 33 points, with 76 PIM and a plus-16 rating with five game-winning goals. Described by many as a "franchise changer," there are no regrets by Panthers management for signing the Ukrainian as a free agent after the 2021-2022 season. Oh, and the Panthers won the Stanley Cup.

Brady Tkachuk tired of losing

Sick and tired of losing and going home in April, Ottawa Senators captain Brady Tkachuk (81GP, 36G, 37A, 74PTS, 134PIM) wants to play in the Stanley Cup playoffs. In his six seasons, his teams have not come close to postseason action, while older brother Matthew has tasted the playoffs in six consecutive campaigns. His high hopes entering



Wikipedia

Ottawa Senators defenseman Jakob Chychrun, seen in 2023 during a game against the Seattle Kraken, leads Ottawa's defensive squad in goals and points.

2023-2024 made it the most difficult year so far, with some days being no fun at all, a first in his career. His key to future success with a young Senators club is to play meaningful hockey every game day.

Chychrun and Zary pleasant surprises

Other notable NHL performers in 2023-2024 included Brady Tkachuk's Ukrainian teammate and Ottawa's top defenseman Jakob Chychrun, who rebounded nicely with 14G, 27A, 41PTS in 82 games, leading his club's defense

(Continued on page 19)



Wikipedia

Colorado Avalanche defenseman Cale Makar (standing), who was nominated for the James Norris Trophy in 2024, stays on his skates during the Stanley Cup playoffs in 2023 against the Seattle Kraken.



Ukraine at the 2024 Summer Olympics: Preview

by Ihor Stelmach

Onoprienko showcasing rhythm leading up to Olympics

In various ways, the Olympics often help focus the world's attention on major events. Berlin 1936 was showered with Nazi propaganda. Montreal 1976 saw New Zealand in the headlines after an All Blacks tour of apartheid South Africa leading to a 29-country boycott of the Games. Barcelona 1992 followed the breakup of the Soviet Union while Tokyo 2020 is remembered for mask-wearing Olympians competing in front of empty stands during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This summer's Paris Olympics are sure to do the same as it is already evident that these Games will transpire amid major geopolitical events. Athletes from the Middle East, Ukraine and other countries face incredible obstacles while trying to train and qualify for the right to compete in Paris.

One of these athletes is Ukrainian gymnast Viktoriia "Vika" Onoprienko, the subject of an Olympic Channel documentary entitled "Viktoriia: Ukraine's Gymnastics Hope." For Onoprienko, the Olympic journey begins with the Ukraine-Russia war.

Onoprienko will compete in rhythmic gymnastics at the 2024 Summer Games. Russian gymnasts will not be there, having been banned by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) because of their country's unprovoked full-scale war on Ukraine. Russian gymnasts elected not to compete in Paris, even refusing to take part as neutral individual athletes without flags, emblems or anthems in protest against the IOC's decision.

Russian athletes have won more Olympic medals in rhythmic gymnastics than any other nation. Onoprienko hopes to be standing on the medal podium in Paris on August 10 and that doing so will inspire some cheer and hope for her homeland.

The documentary film begins in Kyiv with the now 20-year-old saying goodbye to her father who is returning to the war's frontlines in eastern Ukraine. As he drives away, Onoprienko wipes away tears in her eyes as she tries to stay strong.

A little later in the film, the champion rhythmic gymnast is seen leaving a stadium in Baku, Azerbaijan, at the end of the 2023 European championships. The gold medalist and her Ukrainian teammates hear some clapping, but it is not for them. One of the Ukrainian gymnasts assumes those cheering are relatives of another team's athletes. Onoprienko cynically observes that the Ukrainians' parents "are at the front."

Only days after the 2022 Winter Olympics closed, bombs began falling on her hometown of Kyiv. She initially struggled to continue her athletic career, but after her father, grandfather, brother and cousin went to fight in the war, she drew inspiration from their bravery.

Lilia Onoprienko, Viktoriia's mother, explains the terrible psychological state her daughter was in at the start of the war with Russia. She did not want to practice, exercise or do much of anything. She finally began to cope with the situation when her mother told her that she has her own battlefield and her father has his own battlefield on Ukraine's frontlines.

These days Onoprienko is on a mission, foremost motivated by the giant tragedy her country is living through. With Ukraine in the third year of a brutal war, she wants to show the world that her nation is invincible.

The impediments remain enormous. Among the moving scenes in the film, the gymnasts doing warmup exercises in their daily training session at Kyiv's Palace of Sports are interrupted by yet another air raid siren. It is time to quickly get dressed and hustle downstairs into a small room in the basement where they nervously tap on their phones and learn that ballistic missiles are hitting their city. Ukrainian air defense systems and loud explosions create a temporary break from training.

After a while, their head coach reminds the gymnasts why they are there and suggests they at least do some stretching exercises in the cramped room filled with furniture.



Wikipedia

Rhythmic gymnast Viktoriia Onoprienko, seen at the Sofia World Cup hoop quarterfinal in 2024, has been performing well in international competitions and hopes to win an Olympic medal in Paris.

Once the air raid alert ends, the athletes return to the gym as the lights come on again. They resume their training, but the group seems unnerved. They are also tired of the Russians' night-time shelling limiting their sleep time to some three or four hours.

Rhythmic gymnastics is a popular sport in Ukraine. It is an expression of art as much as a sport. Onoprienko's choreography includes signs of Ukraine's ongoing battle against the Russian aggressor. She has performed to the patriotic Ukrainian song "Oy u luzi chervona kalyna" ("Ой у Лузі Червона Калина"). It is a song about Ukraine's independence that was banned during the Soviet era.

Onoprienko's mom says her daughter "performs for her father's sake" and for the sake of all fallen Ukrainians. Her cousin lost his life along with a godfather.

Gymnasts hope handmade flag brings good luck

On the last day of the 2024 European Men's Artistic Gymnastics Championships on April 24-28 in Rimini, Italy, Ukraine won the European team title and coach Iryna Gorbacheva clutched an embroidered Ukrainian flag to her chest. She was about to hear her nation's national anthem for the third time in the five-day event, tears ready to spill over her joyous face. She was especially proud because her own gymnast, Illia Kovtun, won gold on the parallel bars and high bar.

Along with Nazar Chepurnyi, Igor Radivilov, Radomyr Stelmakh and Oleg Verniaiev, the Ukrainian team totaled 255.763 points, just squeaking past Great Britain on the final apparatus, the high bar.

The Ukrainian foursome watched anxiously, their arms linked, as Kovtun came through with a final high-scoring routine to edge out the Brits for gold.

This second-ever men's European team title came as the country's gymnasts were forced to train overseas because of Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine. Kovtun and his coach were hosted in Croatia by local club Sokol Osijek.

An Instagram post featuring Kovtun and Gorbacheva heading back to the Croatian gym with three European gold medals in hand included an emoji of the nation's flag and an expression of gratitude to the Croatians "for love, care, trouble, help, support, overtime humanity, sincerity and authenticity!"

The Ukrainian team made Croatia their home before the start of the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris on July 26. Before that, the team took part in two FIG World Challenge Cup events in Varna, Bulgaria, and Koper, Slovenia.

Accompanying the gymnasts was the unique flag, featuring elaborately stitched flowers, courtesy of an anonymous Ukrainian woman, who handmade the item for Kovtun to bring him luck and help the team win.

(Continued on page 19)

Ukrainian pro...

(Continued from page 16)

In a video announcing the news, Shakhtar highlighted the mutual coal-mining background of Donetsk and Gelsenkirchen. At the Arena AufSchalke, players arrive on the pitch through a tunnel modeled to look like an unfinished mineshaft.

For Schalke, playing host to a Ukrainian team contrasts with its strong ties with Russian state gas company Gazprom, which sponsored the club until 2022. After Russia invaded Ukraine, Schalke had Gazprom's logo removed from their jerseys.

The German Federal Office for Migration has said that more than one million Ukrainian refugees have settled in Germany since February 2022.

Kostyuk makes headlines in Vogue photo shoot

Wilson's first-ever head-to-toe sponsored athlete's tennis outfits consistently have Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk on the sport's best-dressed lists. As this year's edition of Wimbledon kicked off, she got extra attention online.

The 21-year-old Ukrainian was selected



World Athletics President Sebastian Coe (second from the right) meets with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (left) and athletes from the war-ravaged country on July 1 in Kyiv

as one of the principals of a special Olympic and Paralympic photo shoot by Vogue in Ukraine. She was joined by several Ukrainian sports stars, including four-time Olympic medalist fencer Olha Kharlan,

Greco-Roman wrestling gold medalist Zhan Beleniuk and 2016 gymnastics all-around silver medalist Oleh Verniaiev.

Kostyuk's images caught fire online because, in her photograph, the tennis star

was wearing nothing except for a pair of white tennis shorts.

She shrugged off any criticisms of her fashion statement, writing on social media that it was "an honor" to represent her war-torn homeland in the magazine spread with some of Ukraine's most decorated athletes.

The World No. 18 is set to make her Olympic debut in Paris, leading a Ukrainian women's contingent that features bronze medalist Elina Svitolina, Dayana Yastremska, Anhelina Kalinina and the Kichenok sisters (Lyudmyla and Nadiia) in doubles. Kostyuk and Yastremska will be Ukraine's second doubles team in the women's draw.

Kostyuk hopes to head into Paris in better form after Wimbledon, where she reached the third round last year. Since making the finals at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in April, Kostyuk lost five of her last six matches, including first-round losses in two grass court tune-up events in Nottingham, England, and Berlin.

(Based on reporting by Yahoo! Sport via AFP, AP and Tennis.com.)

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



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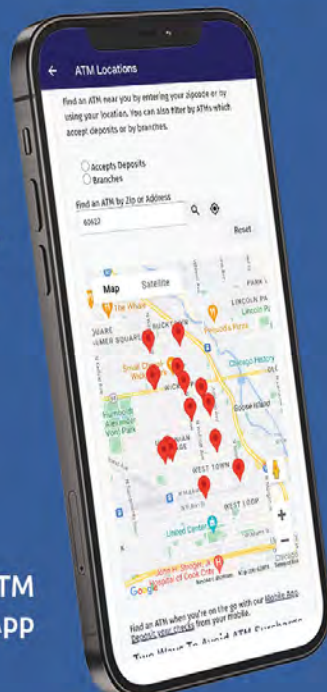
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OUT & ABOUT

Through August 10 Chicago	Photo exhibit, "Not All of Them: Portraits of War Refugees," by Atanas Sutkus, Arturas Morozovas and Tadas Kazakevicius, Ukrainian National Museum, 312-421-8020	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
Through August 30 Chicago	Exhibit, "The Ground of Things," works by Aleksander Najda and Vasyl Savchenko, Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, www.uima-chicago.org	July 28 Chicago	Concert, "Resonance of the Banned: Ukrainian Composers Unleashed," with violinist Markiyan Melnychenko and pianist Peter de Jager, Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, www.uima-chicago.org
July 17 Cambridge, MA	Presentation by Oxana Shevel, "Russia and Ukraine: Entangled Histories, Diverging States," Harvard University, https://huri.harvard.edu	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 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	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 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 31 Cambridge, MA	Presentation by George Grabowicz and Bohdan Tokarskyi, 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	August 1 Philadelphia	Fundraiser, Iskra Surgeries for Children in Ukraine, featuring live music, silent auction, Iskra Global, Ukrainian American Citizens' Association, https://iskraglobal.org
July 24 Rosendale, NY	Film screening, "Veselka: The Rainbow on the Corner at the Center of the World," Rosendale Theatre, https://rosendaletheatre.org	August 1 Chicago	Ukrainian flag-raising ceremony, Ukrainian Congress Committee of America - Illinois Division, Richard J. Daley Center, www.uccaillinois.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	August 1-2 Jewett, NY	Pysanka workshop, with instruction by Sofika Zielyk, Grazhda Music and Art Center of Greene County, https://grazhdamusicandart.org
July 25-27 Cleveland, OH	Ukrainian winter carol workshop, "Christmas in July," Borderlight Theatre Festival, Playhouse Square, www.borderlightcle.org/christmas-in-july	August 2-4 McAdoo, PA	Parish picnic, St. Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, 570-929-7058 or stmarysmcadoo@gmail.com
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	August 3 Jewett, NY	Piano recital with Serhiy Salov, featuring works by Bach, Mozart, Chopin and Kapustin, Grazhda Music and Art Center of Greene County, https://grazhdamusicandart.org
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	August 3-4 Williamsburg, NY	Film screening, "Veselka: The Rainbow on the Corner at the Center of the World," Nitehawk Cinema (Williamsburg Brooklyn theater), https://nitehawkcinema.com/williamsburg
July 27 King of Prussia, PA	Convention banquet, featuring the Soloway Live Music Band, Ukrainian Orthodox League, Crowne Plaza Hotel Ballroom, 77thUOLConvention@gmail.com	<i>Entries in "Out and About" are listed free of charge. Priority is given to events advertised in The Ukrainian Weekly. However, we also welcome submissions from all our readers. Items will be published at the discretion of the editors and as space allows. Please send e-mail to mdubas@ukrweekly.com.</i>	

Pro Hockey...

(Continued from page 16)

corps in goals and points. He is being looked upon as one of the leaders going forward based on the organization's electing not trade him at this year's trade deadline.

Calgary rookie Connor Zary made headlines during his initial couple of months in the NHL only to suffer an injury and hit the proverbial rookie wall halfway through his inaugural season. Nonetheless, his production (14G, 20A, 34PTS) in 63 games placed him eighth among rookie scorers, eighth in rookie goals and seventh in assists. Expectations will be higher in his sophomore campaign.

Bellows makes the most of his time with Marlies

Kieffer Bellows was the New York Islanders' 19th overall selection in the 2016 NHL Entry Draft, but Brian Bellows' son didn't pan out and ended up playing twice as many games in the AHL as he did in the NHL (189-95) for three different organizations (Islanders, Flyers and Maple Leafs). His third stop, with Toronto's AHL affiliate Marlies, may prove most fruitful for the now 25-year-old. His professional try-out deal transitioned into an AHL contract

that resulted in his most productive pro season (52GP, 27G, 22A, 49PTS). His valuable mix of youth and NHL experience could enhance the Toronto Maple Leaf's forward depth in 2024-2025, particularly as a physical player who is willing to be coached.

Mazur a Red Wing hopeful

Detroit Red Wings' prospect Carter Mazur should get multiple chances to make the big club beginning in 2024-2025 with five forwards hitting unrestricted free agency, especially if the 21-year-old Ukrainian has a productive off-season and preseason. Mazur still needs to add size, but he's made a smooth transition from college to the pro ranks with the AHL's Grand Rapids Griffins, posting 37 points (17 goals) in 60 games and being equally productive in all three zones. Mazur has the mentality that is needed from a young player who might debut in the NHL next season.

Maksimovich fuels Indy

The ECHL's Indy Fuel had a Ukrainian newcomer raise the roof off their arena - Kyle Maksimovich was not only the Fuel's top rookie, but he was also their leading scorer. In February, Maksimovich earned Rookie of the Month honors by scoring five goals and 12 assists for 17 points in a dozen

games. For the season, he tallied 26 goals and 33 points for 59 points in 67 games.

Sawchuk produces points in Toledo

In his first pro season, Ukrainian Riley Sawchuk has shown that he's a clutch and productive goal scorer. The 25-year-old scored 25 goals and added 27 assists in 50 games for the Toledo Walleye, including six game-winning goals. His performance earned him a 12-game promotion to the Grand Rapids Griffins (AHL) where he scored one goal. For a first-year player, coach Pat Mikesch gave him a lot of responsibility, specifically using him in clutch faceoffs in critical parts of games. Sawchuk has embraced his defensive responsibilities and settled in at the center position, utilizing his hockey intelligence.

Boyko named SPHL rookie of the year

The news came on April 24 when the

Southern Pro Hockey League announced that Simon Boyko of the Fayetteville Marksmen was selected as the league's Rookie of the Year in voting by league coaches, broadcasters and staff. The Ukrainian center led all first-year players with 27 goals, eight power-play goals and 11 power-play assists. He ranked second among rookies in points (56) and plus/minus rating (plus-20), while finishing tied for third in assists (29). He enjoyed a 20-game point-scoring streak from November 17, 2023, to January 20, the longest in the SPHL this past season. Boyko also earned All-SPHL Second Team All-Star.

(Based on reporting by The Hockey News, The Hockey Writers, Octopus Thrower, Indy Fuel, The Blade and SPHL.)

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Ukraine at the 2024...

(Continued from page 17)

The good luck charm worked again at both FIG Cups with Kovtun, Chepurnyi, Radivilov and Verniaiev all capturing medals and continuing their elite-level preparations for the Paris Games.

More of the same is now expected at the Olympics as the special gift travels with them to Paris. Ukraine's five-person team for the XXXIII Olympiad consists of Chepurnyi, Kovtun, Radivilov, Stelmakh and Verniaiev.

Verniaiev won gold in the parallel bars at the 2016 Rio Games.

(Based on reporting by Newsroom and Paris 2024.)



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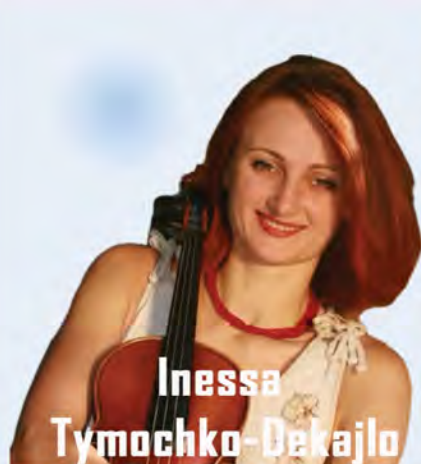
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