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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

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

Vol. XCII

No. 32

THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 2024

\$2.00

As F-16s soar over Ukraine, Zelenskyy announces new era of airpower on Air Force Day



Office of the President of Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announces the arrival of F-16 fighter jets in Ukraine at an undisclosed location on August 4.

by Roman Tymotsko

LVIV – As a pair of F-16s flew overhead accompanied by Ukraine's older generation MiG-29 and Su-27 fighter jets, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy officially announced on August 4 – Ukrainian Air Force Day – what those on the ground could see with their own eyes: the famed and feared U.S.-made F-16 Fighting Falcons – a single-engine fourth-generation supersonic multirole fighter aircraft – is now patrolling the skies over Ukraine.

"F-16s are in Ukraine. We did it. I am proud of our guys who are mastering these jets and have already started using them for our country," Mr. Zelenskyy said, speaking to military pilots and reporters at an undisclosed location in Ukraine.

The news marks a new stage in the development of Ukraine's Air Force, Mr. Zelenskyy said, adding that Ukraine has done a lot to ensure it moves toward a new, Western standard in combat aviation.

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Ukraine launches large-scale assault into Russia's Kursk region, as Putin calls national security meeting

Incursion causes local governor to call state of emergency



Courtesy of the 24th Mechanized Brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces

A Ukrainian soldier runs down a path during heavy fighting on August 8 near the Donetsk regional town of Chasiv Yar, where there is constant fighting and Russia has been making incremental gains in the surrounding village for the past three months.

by Mark Raczkiewicz

CHICAGO – Not since World War II has Russia faced a large-scale military operation on its territory after a mechanized, swiftly moving mobile force of at least two Ukrainian battalions caught thinly spread Russian defenses by surprise in the Kursk region on August 6.

Heavy fighting was still ongoing according to mostly Russian official and military blogger sources. Those accounts were but-

tressed by geolocated reports by the Washington-based Institute of the Study of War (ISW).

Unlike previous smaller-scale raids into that area by pro-Kyiv Russian volunteer units subordinated to Ukraine's Defense Intelligence, this assault constituted regular army units accompanied by armored vehicles, infantry, air defenses, electronic warfare and swarms of drones in a paralytic attack.

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Olha Kharlan, Ukraine's most-awarded Olympian, dedicates medals to 'athletes killed by Russia'

by Dilyana Teoharova and RFE/RL's Bulgarian Service

Saber-fencing world champion Olha Kharlan won Ukraine's first medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics on July 29, a bronze, giving her country something to celebrate as it battles invading Russian forces.

Ms. Kharlan is one of the most decorated athletes in Ukrainian history, with more than 100 medals from various competitions to her name, and its most decorated Olympic athlete.

"It's really special for me," Ms. Kharlan said in an interview with DW. "It's special because it's for my country. It's for people in Ukraine, it's for defenders [soldiers], it's for athletes who couldn't come here because they were killed by Russia."

The 33-year-old athlete has already said that the Paris Olympics could be the last of her sporting career, and she managed to make the most of it.



Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine

Ukraine's gold medalists (from left to right) Olena Kravatska, Alina Komashchuk, Olga Kharlan and Yuliya Bakastova are seen during the victory ceremony for the women's team sabre event at the Grand Palais during the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris.

The five-time Olympian and four-time world champion in the event said her latest medal was nothing like the others she won at previous Olympics, including a team gold in 2008 in Beijing.

"I brought a medal to my country, and it's the first one, and it's going to be a good start for all our athletes who are here because it's really tough to compete when your country is at war," she said.

After winning bronze in the individual event, she was part of the women's team that won Ukraine's first Olympic gold in Paris, a milestone that did not go unnoticed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who wrote on X: "I thank them for the result, for the spirit, for showing that Ukrainians win!"

It was a stunning performance for the leader of Ukraine's national fencing team, who has become a figurehead for

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NEWS ANALYSIS

NATO states undertake security commitments to Kyiv under Ukraine Compact

Part I

by Vladimir Socor
Eurasia Daily Monitor

From January through July of this year, amid Russia's war of state annihilation, Ukraine has concluded bilateral agreements on security cooperation with 23 member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Designed by NATO member states with a common pattern, these agreements will nevertheless operate outside of the alliance framework. This half-hearted solution allows for postponing Ukraine's NATO membership to yet another remote horizon in deference to Russia. The security agreements, nevertheless, implicitly recognize NATO's own vital stake in Ukraine's state survival. They entail major benefits for Ukraine as the recipient of assistance and for NATO via its member states as donors in the interest of their common security.

NATO partner Japan and the European Union have also concluded bilateral security agreements with Ukraine, bringing the total to 25 countries that have done so. Several additional agreements are in the offing. The United States-Ukraine security agreement is the flagship among these bilateral agreements (President.gov.ua, June 13). They all envisage large-scale military assistance and national security-related economic support to Ukraine for a 10-year period, effective immediately.

All of these documents, however, are nonbinding agreements, as distinct from binding treaties. The agreements stipulate

"commitments" (in some cases, "intentions"), as distinct from guarantees, to provide Ukraine with security and related assistance. The assistance offers are potentially massive in volume but do not entail the certainty and reliability of treaty-based security guarantees.

The network of bilateral agreements was officially introduced during NATO's 75th anniversary summit in Washington on July 11. The alliance did not provide an institutional framework but only a festive context for publicizing this initiative (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 17, 18). On that occasion, all 25 signatories to the bilateral agreements, as well as Ukraine, endorsed "The Ukraine Compact," a joint declarative document. The compact proclaims a shared political commitment "to support Ukraine as it defends itself now and to deter aggression against Ukraine in the future, as part of its bridge toward NATO membership. ... We affirm that the security of Ukraine is integral to the security of the Euro-Atlantic region and beyond and that we intend to support Ukraine until it prevails against Russia's aggression" (Whitehouse.gov, July 11).

The launch event was held on the sidelines of NATO's summit, not as part of the official event. The Ukraine Compact and the bilateral agreements are not included among NATO documents. The compact itself – "endorsed," distinct from being signed – is a political statement of principle without specific obligations. Symbolically

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Western leaders misunderstand roots of Russia's war on Ukraine

by Taras Kuzio
Eurasia Daily Monitor

Since February 24, 2022, the United States under the Joe Biden administration has been a leading military and economic supporter of Ukraine. Washington has also been a backer and initiator of sanctions against Russia and those countries supporting Moscow's military machine, primarily China and Iran (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, April 3). The Biden administration, however, has never declared Russia's military defeat to be its ultimate goal in supporting Kyiv. This has contributed to debates over the conflict turning into a "never-ending war." Although many opposition leaders in the United States have criticized this lack of clarity, similar sentiments are echoed in peace plans from that side. For example, in April, the America First Policy Institute (AFPI) – a staunch supporter of former U.S. President Donald Trump – outlined a detailed peace plan for the war in Ukraine (AFPI, April 11; see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 2).

The plan envisages that Washington would address the conflict alone without input from other states. It stipulates that the United States would only continue militarily supporting Ukraine if Kyiv agreed to join peace talks. Russia meanwhile would be invited to join the peace talks and warned that if it refused the United States would increase its military support to Ukraine. The plan itself, however, does not define how "victory" would be achieved for

Kyiv and does little to address the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity. The AFPI plan reflects similar proposals for a ceasefire without providing a solution for the occupied territories and Crimea (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, March 2, 6, November 20, 2023, March 4, June 20). Such unrealistic plans are rooted in serious misunderstandings of the Kremlin's true intentions for its war against Ukraine.

The AFPI peace plan, and many Western leaders, have an incomplete understanding of the roots of Russia's war against Ukraine. Kyiv would likely ignore this and similar plans due to public opinion and distrust of Putin's Kremlin to follow through on any agreements made with the stipulations outlined (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, May 10, 2023, February 26). Russia would flatly reject the plan because it does not allow it to achieve the genocidal goal of destroying Ukraine and Ukrainian identity as well as the absorption of the whole Ukrainian nation. Thus, any peace plan built on the fundamental misunderstanding of Russia's true goals for its war will be incomplete at best and likely impossible to implement (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 2).

The AFPI peace plan rests on several assumptions about the war. For example, it assumes Ukrainians will accept that they cannot join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in return for peace. Ukrainians, however, are distrustful of Western "security guarantees" after the

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NEWSBRIEFS

Ukraine says it sank Russian submarine

Ukraine's military said on August 3 that it had sunk a submarine in Russian-controlled Sevastopol, attacked a southern Russian airfield and targeted oil depots and fuel and lubricant storage facilities in a number of regions. "A Russian submarine went to the bottom of the Black Sea," the Ukrainian Defense Ministry said on X, naming the vessel as the B-237 Rostov-on-Don attack submarine. The military's General Staff said the attack on the Crimean port also significantly damaged four launchers of the S-400 anti-aircraft Triumf defense system. There was no immediate comment from Russia on the attack. Earlier, on the night of August 2, dozens of drones were launched against targets in at least three Russian regions, setting two oil storage facilities ablaze, Russian authorities reported. Rostov regional Gov. Vasily Golubev reported that 55 "Ukrainian drones" had attacked his region overnight, damaging "storage facilities in the Kamensky and Morozovsky districts." He said no casualties had been reported. A military airfield in the region's Morozovsky district has been the target of drone strikes in the past. Video posted by the Astra Telegram channel purported to show fires at the airfield and at an oil-storage facility in the Kamensky district. Ukraine's military said on August 3 that it destroyed antiaircraft weaponry and "enemy aviation equipment" at the Morozovsky airfield and had carried out the strikes against the oil facilities. Vyacheslav Gladkov, governor of the Belgorod region, reported that an oil reservoir there had been destroyed by a drone strike, but no casualties were reported. He said the fire had been extinguished. In the Oryol region, Gov. Andrei Klychkov wrote on Telegram that three drones had been destroyed while "two drones fell on a residential building." He said no casualties were reported. The Russian Defense Ministry reported that 36 drones had been intercepted overnight, 17 in the Oryol region, nine in the Belgorod region and eight in the Kursk region. Small numbers of drones were reportedly intercepted over the Ryazan region, Krasnodar Krai, the Voronezh region and the Sea of Azov. RFE/

RL is not able to independently verify combat reports inside Russia. Meanwhile, Ukraine's military reported that 29 Russian drones were launched against the country overnight and 24 were shot down. Ukrainian authorities also reported that five civilians were killed and 22 injured in Russian shelling in the Donetsk, Kharkiv and Kherson regions. Despite strong evidence to the contrary, Russia maintains it does not target civilians in its war against Ukraine. The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission has reported that at least 11,284 Ukrainian civilians have been killed by hostile actions since Russia invaded in February 2022, emphasizing that the real figure is likely to be much higher. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service and Russian Service, with reporting by Reuters)

Ukraine asks Mexico to arrest Putin

Ukraine's embassy in Mexico has asked the government to arrest Russian President Vladimir Putin if he attends the October 1 inauguration of President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum. In a statement on August 7, the embassy said Kyiv was "confident that the Mexican government would comply" with an international arrest warrant for Putin, referring to a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court in March 2023 for alleged war crimes. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Russia tortures Ukrainian soldiers in captivity

Danielle Bell, the head of mission for the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, told the NOS television channel in the Netherlands that 95 percent of Ukrainian soldiers captured by Russia face torture. "[Ukrainian soldiers] are subjected to torture during initial interrogation, and that includes being beaten with metal rods, sticks, [they are] stripped, brutally beaten, [tortured] with electric shocks," Ms. Bell said, adding that it is "certainly the worst that I have seen in my career of 20 years in the U.N., visiting places of detention." Ms. Bell said her conclusion was based on information she received from Ukrainian soldiers released from

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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

FOUNDED 1933

An English-language newspaper published by the Ukrainian National Association Inc., a non-profit association, at 2200 Route 10, P.O. Box 280, Parsippany, NJ 07054.
Yearly subscription rate: \$90; for UNA members — \$80.

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

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

UNA:
Tel: (973) 292-9800; Fax: (973) 292-0900

Postmaster, send address changes to:
The Ukrainian Weekly
2200 Route 10
P.O. Box 280
Parsippany, NJ 07054

Editor-in-chief: Andrew Nynka
Editor: Matthew Dubas

e-mail: staff@ukrweekly.com

The Ukrainian Weekly Archive: www.ukrweekly.com

The Ukrainian Weekly, August 11, 2024, No. 32, Vol. XCII

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ADMINISTRATION OF THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY AND SVOBODA

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Chicago's mayor designates August as 'Ukraine month' in the Windy City

by Mark Rackzewycz

CHICAGO – America's third most populous city proclaimed August to be "Ukraine month in Chicago," according to an August 1 proclamation by Mayor Brandon Johnson at a Ukrainian flag raising ceremony in downtown's Daley Plaza.

"A few months ago, I met with [Ukrainian] Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and reaffirmed to him the city of Chicago's deep commitment to Ukraine," the mayor said of the proclamation two days later.

The historical moment comes as the massive Russo-Ukrainian war enters its 29th month and when Ukrainians worldwide will commemorate their nation's independence from Moscow's rule on August 24.

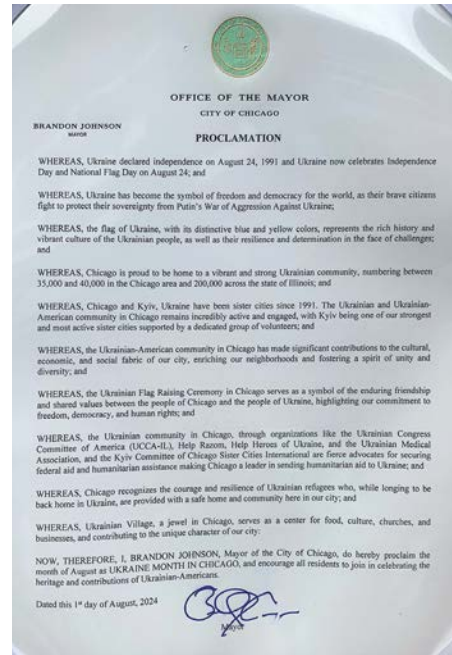
"It is our honor and privilege to provide a home for refugees as well as generations of Ukrainian residents who are part of the rich tapestry of our city," Mr. Johnson said.

As of July, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recorded some 6.6 million Ukrainian refugees worldwide.

The Illinois Division of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) and its president, Dr. Mariya Dmytriv-Kapeniak, were the main drivers behind the event, which included a flag-raising ceremony administered by Post 32 of the Ukrainian American Veterans (UAV).

Led by Peter Bencak, the veterans group has held the flag-raising ceremony near the Pablo Picasso steel cubist sculpture at the plaza for more than 20 years.

"Whereas, Chicago is proud to be home to a vibrant and strong Ukrainian community, numbering between 35,000 and 40,000 in the Chicago area," the proclamation reads, "whereas Chicago and Kyiv, Ukraine, have been sister cities since 1991 ..., and whereas the Ukrainian flag raising ceremony in Chicago serves as a symbol of the enduring friendship and shared values between the people of Chicago ... now, therefore, I, Brandon Johnson, mayor of the city of Chicago, do hereby proclaim the month of August as Ukraine month in Chicago, and encourage all residents to join in celebrating the heritage and contribu-



Pictured is the official proclamation of Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson to designate August as "Ukraine month in Chicago."



Mark Rackzewycz

Mariya Dmytriv (left), the head of the Illinois Division of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, holds the official proclamation while standing alongside Chicago's Deputy Mayor Beatriz Ponce de Leon on August 1 at Chicago's Daley Plaza where a Ukrainian flag raising ceremony was held as August was designated "Ukraine month in Chicago."



Members of the Ukrainian American Veterans of Post 32 salute the raising of Ukraine's flag in downtown Chicago on August 1 during the city's mayoral proclamation designating August as "Ukraine month in Chicago."

tions of Ukrainian-Americans."

Ukraine's Consul General in Chicago said during the event that more than 30,000 Ukrainian refugees have additionally settled in the Chicagoland area since February 2022 when the all-out war commenced.

During the ceremony, UCCA urged Washington lawmakers to increase weapons support to Ukraine "and allow Ukraine to hit critical targets deep inside Russia" with weapons they provide, UCCA – Illinois Division Vice President Pavlo Bandriwsky said.

"The U.S. shouldn't micro-manage how Ukraine" prosecutes the war, he added. "Sectoral sanctions should be expanded ... to slow down Russia's war machine."

The opening statement of the event was a reminder of the perils Ukraine still faces against a mightier foe bent on genocide and the reliance Kyiv has on Western materiel and financial assistance to withstand the daily onslaught of an advancing enemy.

Some 20 percent of Ukrainian territory

remains occupied by Russia.

Reading the proclamation was Deputy Mayor Beatriz Ponce de Leon, who oversees immigrant, migrant and refugee rights in the metropolis.

Speaking of "Chicago's solidarity with Ukrainians," she said, "Chicago is clearly a city that has been shaped by immigrants and refugees," both categories of which consist of Ukrainians who've settled en masse in the city since the late 19th century.

In a post-event news release, the UCCA noted that the city has a "tradition of honoring Ukrainian heritage in August."

In 1933 when Soviet dictator Joseph

(Continued on page 8)

The throttling of YouTube: Kremlin censorship enters uncharted waters

by Mike Eckel
RFE/RL

The billboard appeared on at least one bus stop in St. Petersburg sometime early on July 29 and was gone less than a day later: an advertisement for VK Video, a video streaming service from Russia's dominant social media giant, VK.

"Everything just loads so quickly," the ad quoted a user, nicknamed YouTube2024, as saying in a glowing endorsement of the VK service.

Though the ad appeared to have been placed by VK, it wasn't entirely clear who was behind it.

But what is entirely clear is the signal it sends: that the authorities are about to make another major move in their efforts to bring Russia's internet to heel. It's part of a long-running effort to mold the "RuNet" into a parallel online universe, in order to shape Russians' opinions and even routine interactions to official liking.

In the past, the effort has involved installing sophisticated monitoring hardware, squeezing major internet companies until they're taken over by pliant owners, and even ordering global tech giants to ensure that their servers are accessible to Russian regulators.

Now officials are trying to push Russians off YouTube – the Google-owned video streaming platform dominates not only in Russia, but around the world – and onto other homegrown services. Whether it will work is an open question.

The authorities spearheading the effort aren't hiding their intentions.

"The 'degradation' of YouTube is a forced step, directed not against Russian users but against the administration of a foreign resource that still believes it can violate and ignore our legislation with impunity," Aleksandr Khinshtein, who heads a parliamentary committee on technology, said in a post to Telegram on July 25.

The Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry went a step further on July 31, asserting, without evidence, that YouTube "is not a neutral platform; it operates at the political directives of Washington."

To regulate the RuNet

For well over a decade, Russia's main media regulator, Roskomnadzor, and affiliated agencies have tinkered with the underlying infrastructure for the RuNet, testing out an array of tools and methods for controlling what was once a vibrant, uncensored online universe.

As far back as the late 1990s, regulators

developed something called the System for Operative Search Activities, or SORM, which involved the mandatory installation of special devices by all internet service providers. The system allows the country's primary domestic intelligence agency, the Federal Security Service, to vacuum up and monitor anything floating around the RuNet.

SORM and related technologies were expanded over subsequent years, with tools like "deep packet inspection" making it easier for the state to thwart various privacy security or encryption measures.

In the mid-2010s, parliament passed a series of laws requiring major internet companies like Google, Facebook and Apple to house their servers on Russian territory, making it easier for authorities to control or monitor traffic. Many of the companies ended up pulling out of Russia.

In 2018, Roskomnadzor targeted Telegram, the messaging app that is widely used in Russia and the region. The popularity of the app and its reputation for strong encryption put it in the crosshairs of the intelligence agencies.

But the effort ended up also blocking millions of web addresses – technically known as Internet Protocols – housed on cloud computing services provided by

Amazon and Google. It disrupted myriad online businesses and services.

In 2019, lawmakers passed more amendments that, among other things, broadened Roskomnadzor's ability to blacklist and block websites and go after tools – called virtual private networks, or VPNs – that help people get around blockages and shield a user's identity and location. The effort was dubbed the "sovereign internet" law.

Officials also set their sights on the largest private companies involved in news, information, e-commerce and social media.

Yandex, a wildly successful homegrown tech giant once dubbed Russia's Google, dominated Russia's market for news and search services. But after the all-out invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the company was pressured to start censoring information about the war, prompting an exodus of top managers and executives.

In early July, Yandex effectively exited Russia completely, spinning off several divisions into a Dutch holding company and leaving the rest of the assets to a group of Russian businessmen.

Other major web companies like VK, Russia's equivalent to Facebook, have been

(Continued on page 11)

U.S. outlines plan for Ukraine's economic recovery and increased investment

by Erin Osborne
RFE/RL

WASHINGTON – U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine's Economic Recovery Penny Pritzker on July 31 outlined a five-step plan to make Ukraine's economy more attractive to private sector investment.

"Ukraine is undertaking Europe's largest, most complex reconstruction and economic recovery ever since World War II," Ms. Pritzker said, speaking at a think tank in Washington following a visit to Kyiv on July 29.

Ms. Pritzker cited a World Bank estimate from spring of this year that Ukraine's recovery will cost at least \$486 billion, but she said this came out prior to the increased fighting in March and the summer.

Ms. Pritzker said Ukraine's economy has shown resilience and growth in the midst of Russia's full-scale invasion and expressed confidence that Ukraine "has economic greatness in its bones." She noted that in 2023 Ukrainian GDP grew 5 percent and tax revenue was up 25 percent.

"We have helped the Ukrainians keep their economy going, tackle corruption and increase private sector engagement," Ms. Pritzker said. "Through it all, we have worked with the Ukrainians to develop a long-term recovery framework – a blueprint that I call Ukraine's Path to Prosperity."

In the long-term, Ms. Pritzker said Ukraine needs to focus on attracting foreign investment. She said the international community should be encouraged by the fact that investments have increased 17



Penny Pritzker, the U.S. special representative for the economic recovery of Ukraine, outlined a five-step plan on July 31 to make Ukraine's economy more attractive to private sector investment.

percent in Ukraine and there were over 37,000 new businesses registered in 2023.

Ms. Pritzker said Ukraine's expansion is "proof of concept" that Ukraine's economy will succeed through the mining of critical minerals such as lithium and titanium and the development of the agricultural and defense industrial sectors.

The defense industrial sector, which Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S. Oksana Markarova described as "an inseparable part of Ukraine's success," has experienced record growth.

Ms. Markarova, speaking at the same event, said Ukraine has increased metalworks production 27 percent, cable and

fiber-optics production 101 percent, and dozens of new companies that develop drones and unmanned aerial vehicles have been founded since the war began.

"The innovation-to-battlefield time is two weeks," Ms. Pritzker said, adding that U.S. innovators should try to learn from Ukrainian ingenuity.

Ms. Pritzker said her plan is "ambitious but achievable" and modeled after the Marshall Plan, the U.S.-sponsored program to rebuild Europe after World War II. She described the Path to Prosperity plan as a "new economic model and social contract" that will strengthen Ukraine in the war while easing its economic future.

The first step of the plan is to develop a body that plans and prioritizes reconstruction programs into a "single-project pipeline," which Ms. Pritzker said must integrate city, municipal and regional priorities. Ms. Pritzker called this integration the "missing link in Ukraine's reconstruction."

Next, Ms. Pritzker said Ukraine should "rapidly increase the number of shovel-ready projects" to prepare for investment and implementation.

This is followed by the continuation of reform efforts. Ms. Pritzker said Ukraine must "keep up the momentum" on new asset declaration and anti-monopoly laws. She also said Ukraine should codify the Digital Restoration Ecosystem for Accountable Management (DREAM) database platform to monitor corruption and maintain transparency.

Ms. Pritzker also said the world must marshal more funds for Ukraine.

Ukraine needs a "runway to prevail in the war" supported by the international community, but that "justice requires that the reconstruction be largely underwritten by Russia," Ms. Pritzker said.

Ms. Pritzker said the fifth and final step of her plan is that Ukrainians should return to their country to work when it is safe to do so.

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The dealings of Dmitry Patrushev, a star of Russia's 'new nobility' and a possible Putin successor

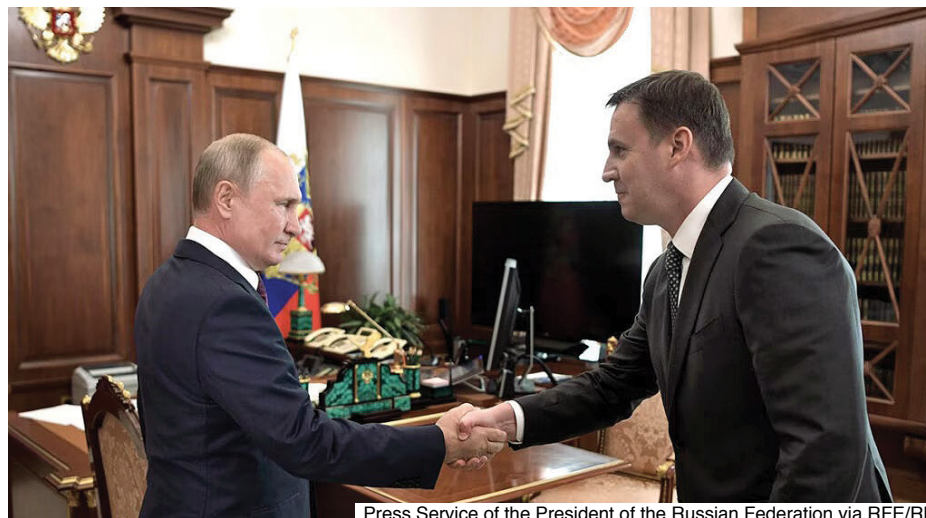
by Sergei Titov and Systema
RFE/RL

In 2017, a Cyprus-based offshore company called Pimodo invested 3 million euros (\$3.25 million) in 10 residences at the five-star Salinas Sea Resort in the Atlantic Ocean archipelago nation of Cape Verde. The money for the investment was provided by the Russian agricultural-trading firm Agrotorg Tulsy, an affiliate of Russian Agricultural Bank (Rosselkhozbank), which the Russian government created in 2000 to support the agricultural sector.

Agrotorg Tulsy then purchased Pimodo itself in April 2018, meaning that the bank set up to develop Russian agriculture became the owner of luxury housing in a remote country known for its white sand beaches and as "an important transit hub for South American cocaine moving to Europe," according to the U.S. government.

The Cape Verde resort purchase opens a window into an elite realm of Russia's opaque leadership circles, Systema, RFE/RL's Russian-language investigative unit, has found. And the brightest star in this particular constellation is Dmitry Patrushev, the 46-year-old Russian deputy prime minister who is the eldest son of presidential aide and former Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev. The younger Patrushev has been tabbed by experts as a leading candidate for a successor if President Vladimir Putin, 71, relinquishes power – though there's no sign he plans to anytime soon.

"The biggest plus" of Dmitry Patrushev as a potential successor "is his combination of silovik and civilian. Thanks to his father, the chekist corporation will perceive him, if not completely as 'their own,' then 'socially close,'" wrote political consultant and for-



Dmitry Patrushev (right) meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin in 2022.

mer Putin speechwriter Abbas Gallyamov, using Russian terms that refer to senior officials with military or security backgrounds. "At the same time, most of society – tired of militaristic rhetoric and the endless hunt for enemies – won't be frightened by his 'epaulettes.'"

The main minuses for Mr. Patrushev, Mr. Gallyamov continued, are the scandals surrounding him and his unpalatable image as a "fortunate son."

'New nobility'

Nikolai Patrushev, 73, has known Putin since the 1970s and is one of the most trusted members of the president's inner circle, as well as one of the most hawkish and anti-Western. A career KGB and Federal Security Service (FSB) officer, Mr. Patrushev succeeded Putin as FSB director when the ailing President Boris Yeltsin appointed Putin prime minister in August

1999, a quarter-century ago. Mr. Patrushev sent both his sons, Dmitry and Andrei, to the FSB Academy.

In 2000, Mr. Patrushev published a memorable article defending the "arrival in the highest echelons of power" of KGB stalwarts like himself and Putin and denouncing supposed attempts to "demonize" them as a threat to democracy. He described them as "strict pragmatists" selflessly guarding the country from foreign and domestic enemies.

They were, he asserted, Russia's "new nobility." Like traditional nobilities, this one is in some cases hereditary.

Dmitry Patrushev has made a dizzying career under Putin. At the age of 32, he became the chairman of Russian Agricultural Bank, Russia's fourth-largest bank in terms of net assets. At 40, he was named minister of agriculture, while this year, at 46, he was made deputy prime

minister overseeing the agro-industrial complex, natural resources and the environment. He regularly attends Kremlin meetings with Putin.

As might befit a member of the "new nobility" in Putin's increasingly nationalistic, anti-Western and isolated Russia, Mr. Patrushev does not spend the New Year's holiday abroad, but rather with close friends and family at his vacation home a couple hundred miles north of Moscow in the Tver region, a source close to the Patrushev family who asked not to be named due to safety concerns told Systema.

The home is officially the property of Mr. Patrushev's common-law wife, television personality Marina Artemyeva. Ms. Artemyeva is also the official owner of Mr. Patrushev's estate outside of Moscow and two apartments in the elite Zolotoi residential complex near the Kremlin. According to Systema's estimates, she officially owns property worth about \$31 million.

Studying the history of the Tver region dacha, comparatively modest by the standards of other members of the Putin elite, enabled Systema to uncover a number of apparent insider deals and manipulations that led from that plot on the banks of the Volga River to Cape Verde, off Africa's Atlantic coast. And all of these deals were connected to Russian Agricultural Bank, which to this day remains within Mr. Patrushev's purview.

None of the people mentioned in this story responded to Systema's requests for comments.

On the Volga

On November 21, 2022, Mr. Patrushev, then agriculture minister, hosted the open-

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'Defeating Russia is the best thing we could do for Russia': Historian Timothy Snyder on the Ukraine war

by Sashko Shevchenko
RFE/RL

Timothy Snyder, a professor of history at Yale University and the author of books including "Bloodlands" and "The Road to Unfreedom," spoke to Sashko Shevchenko of RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service about possible scenarios for ending Russia's war against Ukraine, what the collapse of Russia as an empire could look like, the current mobilization efforts in Ukraine and other matters related to the war.

RFE/RL: You have said in one of your lectures that history does not repeat itself, although a widespread saying claims the opposite. Is this a reason for optimism for Ukrainians who think that the Ukrainian nation has repeatedly made the same mistakes in its relations with Russia? Will they learn the lessons of the past?

Mr. Snyder: If history did repeat, then none of us would be free. If history repeated, [it] would be like a song on the radio that we just listen to and can't change. But it's not like a song on the radio. You can use history to see patterns. You can use history to learn. You can use history even to anticipate things sometimes. But inside history, there are always the people thinking about the moment that they're in [and] doing unpredictable things.

The history of Ukraine is very long, and many interesting things have happened. The episode with Russia is actually a small part of the history of Ukraine. The more I learn about [it], the more the history of Ukraine invites me to think about different human possibilities. It's not that it makes



Historian Timothy Snyder: "I have a very specific view, which is that it's good for empires to lose wars."

you optimistic; it makes you realize how many open possibilities there are.

RFE/RL: For Ukrainians, what's at stake in this war is the question of preserving the Ukrainian state. Is there a real chance that Ukrainians could lose their statehood? Could the West allow this to happen? Taking into account how history works, is this a real possibility?

Mr. Snyder: Anything is possible. From a historical point of view, the side with a larger economy usually wins. Ukraine should be the side because it should be backed by the United States, Canada, most European countries, [and] to some extent South Korea, Japan. If those countries mobilize their economies just a little bit, Ukraine will eventually win the war. That's one historical generality.

Another is that wars are fought in territory and not in people's minds. The Russians have been quite good at getting inside the minds of people in the West and distracting us from basic territorial realities. Ukraine can win if Ukraine controls the north coast to the Black Sea. Ukraine can win if it is able to make it too costly for Russia to continue the war.

I believe those things are possible, but no historian and no political scientist can tell you what's going to happen. It's possible for Ukraine to win this war if it has the support of its allies, if we focus on controlling the correct territories, and we understand that war is essentially political, not psychological. It's not about our feelings; it's about how long [Russian President Vladimir] Putin politically can keep doing what he's doing.

RFE/RL: Western leaders say they support Ukraine so that it has a strong position in future negotiations. Will such negotiations be actually possible? What will they look like?

Mr. Snyder: It's a tricky question for me because I'm not a diplomat. I can only say that the best negotiating position is when you've won the war. The distinction people make between a strong negotiating position and winning the war is not a distinction I think is really valid. If you want Ukraine to be in a strong negotiating position, that means you want them to win the war. And you should say so, because that's much clearer.

It also leads to more effective action because the language about helping Ukraine "as long as it takes" or the language about Ukraine prevailing or the language about Russia not winning is practically unclear. But if you start talking about winning, then you think, "OK, what can I do to make a victory possible?" And that leads to a different political dynamic or a different institutional dynamic. It's also the most humane way to talk about the war, because it's only going to end when Ukraine wins. If you want it to end, the best way to talk about it is [by saying] it should end.

I've been trying to get Americans to talk about winning since March or April 2022, and they have been moving in that direction. It's just been frustratingly slow. I don't want to promise you anything that's not going to happen, but I do think that they are slowly moving in that direction. It'll be interesting to see what the Biden adminis-

(Continued on page 6)

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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

Letting Russia lose

The time has come for the United States and Kyiv's Western allies to let Russia lose, and lose decisively. The war that Russia has waged against Ukraine is not just an attack on a neighboring country; it is an assault on the very principles of freedom and self-determination. As Timothy Snyder, a renowned historian at Yale University, aptly noted, Ukraine's victory is not just possible – it is necessary to ensure a world order based on the rule of law rather than the rule of barbarism and brute force.

Ukraine is now nearly two and a half years into a war that many expected to last only two or three days. Given little chance of repelling what many thought was the second strongest army in the world, Ukrainians have demonstrated remarkable heroism, a deep love of freedom and the values that support open, democratic societies. They have shown that, despite overwhelming odds, they can win a war launched by Vladimir Putin for imperial gain and the annihilation of everything Ukrainian, including the Ukrainian people themselves.

The language used by Kyiv's Western allies of "helping Ukraine for as long as it takes" or "ensuring that Russia does not win" is insufficient and weak. Ever the gangland bully, Putin preys on weakness. The United States and its allies must speak openly about ensuring that Ukraine wins and Russia loses because that is the only message Putin will understand.

The Russian strategy has often focused on psychological warfare, attempting to weaken Western resolve by spreading fear and misinformation. History shows that fear of the consequences of Russia's resounding defeat is a major weapon in Putin's arsenal of psychological warfare.

The concern that Russia's defeat might lead to its disintegration or trigger nuclear proliferation is overstated. History shows that empires, including Russia, tend to fall not because of external pressure but because of their internal contradictions and the failures of their leaders. The United States did not cause the breakup of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia – these events were the result of internal dynamics. If Russia's current leadership continues to pursue an unwinnable war, any resulting instability will be the consequence of their own choices, not Western intervention.

Moreover, the potential disintegration of Russia, should it happen, is not something the West can or should try to control. Putin's defeat would likely force a reckoning within Russia, possibly leading to internal reforms or a rethinking of its imperial ambitions. Just as it was ultimately beneficial for France to lose in Algeria or for Germany to lose in 1945, a Russian defeat in Ukraine could open the door to a more stable and peaceful future for Russia, its neighbors and the broader world. The vein of public opinion calling for a Ukrainian compromise that would lead to peace should recognize that the quickest road to stopping the bloodshed is a decisive Ukrainian victory.

The United States must recognize that Ukraine's willingness to fight, despite the immense sacrifices, reflects a deep-seated commitment to its independence and democratic values. The U.S. must abandon any ambivalence about Ukraine's victory and commit fully to ensuring that Russia is defeated. This is not just about Ukraine's future; it's about the future of international order, the defense of democracy and peace throughout the world. Allowing Ukraine to win is the most humane and strategic course of action, and it is the only way of ensuring a lasting peace throughout Europe and the world.

Aug.
15
2014

Turning the pages back...

Ten years ago, on August 15, 2014, a "who's in, who's out among Donbas rebels" list was published by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Glenn Kates. The list included the likes of Igor "Strelkov" Girkin, Volodymyr Kononov, Aleksandr Borodai, Oleksandr Zakharchenko, Valeriy Bolotov, Ihor Plotnitskiy and Igor Bezler.

Girkin was sentenced by a Russian court in 2024 to four years imprisonment for extremism for his criticism of Vladimir Putin, whom he accused of incompetence.

Borodai, who was prime minister and deputy prime minister of the Russia-occupied Donetsk region, resides in Moscow.

Kononov, who was born in Luhansk and currently resides in Russia-occupied Donetsk Oblast, served as defense minister (holds the rank of major general) of the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" (Russia-occupied Donetsk Oblast).

Zakharchenko, who in 2014 succeeded Borodai as head of the Russia-occupied Donetsk region, was killed by a car bomb explosion on August 31, 2018, in Donetsk.

Bolotov, who was "elected" governor of the Russian-occupied "Luhansk People's Republic," was found dead, under suspicious circumstances, at his home in Moscow in 2017. His cause of death remains undetermined, with some sources reporting evidence of poisoning, while others cite evidence of heart failure.

Plotnitskiy, who resigned as prime minister of the "Luhansk People's Republic" in 2017 after a failed assassination attempt in 2016, has faded into obscurity since being forced out of office.

Belzer, who is suspected of war crimes in Ukraine and giving the order to shoot down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (MH17), is believed to be residing in Russia-annexed Crimea. He was born in Simferopol.

Source: "Who's in, who's out among Donbas rebels," by Glenn Kates (RFE/RL), *The Ukrainian Weekly*, August 24, 2014.

'Defeating...'

(Continued from page 5)

tration does now because they are, in a way, liberated. They don't have to worry so much about the election or about what the press says. I think they're going to have much more of a free hand in the next four to five months.

RFE/RL: There also is a popular idea that every empire eventually falls. Do you think Russia will inevitably disintegrate into ethnic states?

Mr. Snyder: I have a very specific view, which is that it's good for empires to lose wars. They don't always lose them, but it's good for them to lose. Poland, Germany, Italy – these are all postimperial countries. Spain, France, Britain – these are postimperial countries. This thing called European integration is a postimperial phenomenon. In daily political practice, trying to maintain an empire is inconsistent with trying to maintain the rule of law or human rights at home.

One sees that with Russia they're obviously trying to just carry out a genocide in Ukraine, but the war makes it impossible for any kind of normal politics to function in Russia. Do I think the Russian Empire has to fall apart? The Russian state could continue without being an empire. That's also possible. I think that's more likely.

But I think Americans and Ukrainians and others should think about it this way: Defeating Russia in war is the best thing that we could do for Russia. What happens in Russia, though, after that is up to the Russians, up to the people who live on that territory. I'd put it that way. It would be good for them to lose this war, just like it was good for France to lose in Algeria, just like it was good for Germany to lose in 1945.

RFE/RL: There is an impression that people in the West are afraid of Russia's possible disintegration in the same way they feared the disintegration of the Soviet Union. How does one convince Western societies that nuclear proliferation will not be a problem and that Ukrainians should not pay for this fear with their lives?

Mr. Snyder: That's a good question. The problem in a way is that we overestimate our own power. We didn't want Yugoslavia to fall apart. It fell apart. We didn't want Czechoslovakia to fall apart. It fell apart. We didn't want the Soviet Union to fall apart. I'm just going to stop on that moment because there's so much myth around that now, largely thanks to the Russians. But the Americans were working really hard in 1991 to keep the Soviet Union together. That's what we wanted. But we couldn't do it.

What we should be learning is that we don't actually have that much control. I personally don't think the Russian Federation will fall apart. But what I'm sure of is that it's not going to be America that does it. It'll be Russians or Chechens or Bashkirs. It won't be us. Our policy probably won't make any difference.

What happens is that we get trapped in our own vanity. We think we control so much, but we don't really control whether Russia falls apart or not. If Russia falls apart because Putin fought a stupid war, that won't be our fault. It's a possible scenario we should prepare for. But what we shouldn't think is, "We have to stop that," because that's not our job and we can't even if we wanted to. That's not the kind of thing that we in the West have the power to do.

That fear is understandable, but I think it becomes a kind of excuse because people

always feel safer when they're doing nothing. But you have to compare risks. The risk of Russia destroying Ukraine, carrying out a genocide, becoming more powerful, preparing the way for a Chinese-led world order, and so forth is much greater than the risk of Russia losing the war and then Russians deciding, "OK, now that we've lost a war, what are we going to do?"

Personally, I think it would be fine for Russia to be in a moment like they were in 1905 when they lost to Japan. Their attitude toward Japan was very similar: "We can't possibly lose this war. It's an inferior country, inferior culture." Then when they lost, they had some elections and land reform and they thought about things. It wouldn't be bad for Russia for that to happen [again]. If Russia does lose, the outcome is probably going to be a good one.

RFE/RL: One of the main topics in Ukraine is mobilization and the fact that not many volunteers are left. According to a recent opinion poll by [the Ukrainian think tank] Razumkov Center, only 30 percent of Ukrainians believe it is shameful to hide from conscription. From a historical point of view, how important is the capacity to mobilize new soldiers and to motivate the population? Is it possible to win a war when the people aren't motivated to join the military?

Mr. Snyder: We're in a different kind of war now. Ukrainians have shown a remarkable willingness to defend their country and in the previous 2 1/2 years have made enormous sacrifices on a scale which I think most Western societies would have trouble even imagining. The polling about mobilization now has to be taken [into account] in that context.

The sort of war we're in now is going to be won by drones and anti-drone protection and is going to be won by airplanes. It's going to be won by destroying Russian airfields. It's going to be won by making it impossible for Russia to do anything else. Russia's in a position where they think they have to take all of the Donbas. They think they have to keep taking territory.

It's true that there are fewer Ukrainians [willing to fight], and it's true the Ukrainians are fighting alone. It's reasonable for Ukrainian authorities to be planning for a war where they're going to make it impossible for Russia to continue rather than trying to forcibly push away every Russian soldier on Ukrainian territory.

Certainly, willingness to fight is a factor on the Ukrainian side as well as on the Russian side. It's kind of a race to see where it gets worse first. The Russians are now losing a lot of men to gain very little territory, and they're telling ever-worse stories about why they're doing it.

[We know more about this issue in Ukraine, because] Ukraine is a democracy, it's a country where people have freedom of discussion; it's different in Ukraine than in Russia. We can have this conversation. In Russia, we'd immediately be in prison if we talked about people not mobilizing. We'd literally be breaking the law.

But that doesn't mean that in Russia it's not an issue. In Russia it becomes a political issue. It's important but inside these larger contexts.

(This interview has been edited for length and clarity.)

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The dealings...

(Continued from page 4)

ing of a poultry farm in the western Siberian Tyumen region. A video link connected governors and business representatives from the Moscow, Kaliningrad and Kursk regions. Putin participated virtually from the Kremlin. One of the participants whom Putin lauded by name was Sergei Novikov, the owner of the agrobusiness Agropromkomplektatsiya.

Mr. Novikov, 64, started his empire on the foundation of a collective farm in the Tver region shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The company with the tongue-twisting name started out with 200 head of cattle and 2,000 hectares of land.

Today, the conglomerate raises some 40,000 cows and 1.3 million pigs on more than 100,000 hectares of land, an area about 17 times the size of Manhattan. It is one of Russia's top three dairy producers and seventh in pork production. Its 2023 revenues came to about \$1.9 billion.

In a 2020 interview, Mr. Novikov was explicit about the role that Mr. Patrushev played in the meteoric growth of his company.

"We began working with Russian Agricultural Bank in 2006," he said. "But the big breakthrough and serious development of our business began in 2010 with the arrival of the new team of D.N. Patrushev."

Systema has calculated that during Mr. Patrushev's time as chairman of the bank, from 2010 to 2018, it extended 35 billion rubles (\$1 billion) in credits to Mr. Novikov's company. A full 21.3 billion rubles (\$609 million) of that total came in 2014 alone. The money helped the firm get through a serious outbreak of swine flu that swept a dozen Russian regions in 2013. Small farmers at the time accused the authorities of failing to help them and of colluding with major agrobusinesses instead.

In April 2013, about a year before Russian Agricultural Bank began doling out massive credits to Mr. Novikov's group, the

agrobusiness Korovinskoye left the holding. It was taken over by a businessman named Andrei Aleshkov, an old schoolmate of Dmitry Patrushev's. In 2016, according to Novaya Gazeta Europe, Mr. Patrushev's bank gave Mr. Aleshkov a loan of 1.89 billion rubles (\$54 million) to build the Praim-Taim residential complex in Moscow.

There are other indications that Korovinskoye had come under Mr. Patrushev's wing. The company's new general director, Ivan Pleshakov, and its new phone number were both connected to a company called Trial, a supplier to the state's emergency reserve fund, Rosreserv, which the investigative journalism website Projekt tied to the Patrushevs in a 2023 investigation.

Korovinskoye, in addition to raising cattle, owned an idyllic swathe of land on the banks of the Volga in the Tver region, just north of Moscow. This is where Dmitry Patrushev's vacation home now stands. Later in 2013, the trees had already been cleared from about 3 hectares of land, an area a bit larger than Red Square. According to images captured on Google Earth, construction was underway in 2014.

By 2016, the work was nearly completed and, in addition to residences, one can identify outbuildings, lawns, a football field, a boat dock and a swimming area. Around the same time, Korovinskoye began shedding other plots of land, most likely for far less than market value. In 2016, the firm recorded revenues of 11 million rubles (\$160,000), while the land it sold was worth at least five times as much.

Two of the four plots were formally transferred to Mr. Novikov. However, a source close to the Patrushev family said the family regularly spent the New Year's holidays there. In 2023, Mr. Novikov transferred the plots to the Patrushevs, according to documents examined by Systema.

The other two Korovinskoye plots were transferred to entrepreneur Andrei Sadovsky, who still owns them.

'Recreation and sport'

The owner of the poultry plant that Putin and Mr. Patrushev opened in

November 2022 was a man named Naum Babayev. His agrobusiness, Damate, is one of the world's largest producers of turkeys and, according to the company's website, Russian Agricultural Bank was instrumental to its growth.

Over the years, Mr. Patrushev's bank handed Mr. Babayev's companies more than 70 billion rubles (\$1.2 billion). In addition, Mr. Babayev was repeatedly allowed to take over some of the bank's distressed assets under attractive terms.

"It turned out that we became Russian Agricultural Bank's janitor in the Penza region," Mr. Babayev joked in a 2020 interview with the Russian Forbes magazine.

In 2020, the bank allowed Mr. Babayev to take over his bankrupted main competitor, a firm called Yevrodon.

Until 2018, the bank's department on distressed assets was headed by Dmitry Sergeyev, an important figure in Mr. Patrushev's inner circle. Messrs. Sergeyev and Babayev have long-standing business ties, while Mr. Sergeyev's wife and oldest son also have partnerships with Mr. Babayev.

Messrs. Patrushev and Sergeyev have been acquainted at least since the mid-2000s, when they were both top managers at the state-controlled VTB Bank. Mr. Sergeyev became Mr. Patrushev's deputy at VTB, his first deputy at Russian Agricultural Bank, and, later, a deputy minister at the Agriculture Ministry.

In 2019, Mr. Sergeyev was named head of the Unified Grain Company (OZK), which is a state agroporation that operates the country's grain infrastructure and is controlled by the Agriculture Ministry. At least one Telegram channel has referred to Mr. Sergeyev as Mr. Patrushev's "right hand."

According to Systema's source close to the Patrushev family, Dmitry Patrushev's family sometimes vacations with the Sergeyevs, and Mr. Sergeyev has a vacation home not far from Mr. Patrushev's family. The man who took over the plots adjacent to Mr. Patrushev's, Andrei Sadovsky, turned out to be Mr. Sergeyev's brother-in-law.

In March 2023, the Tver region forestry authorities ordered the auction of a plot of

forest adjacent to Mr. Patrushev's land. Mr. Sergeyev won the auction at the starting price of about 209,000 rubles (\$2,700) and won control of 2 hectares of forest for 49 years.

The forest has already been taken under control and cleared of many trees, according to images on Google Earth. According to the terms of the lease, the plot can be used for "recreation and sport."

In 2018, Russian Agricultural Bank's subsidiary took over the Cypriot offshore company Pimodo and its investment in the Cape Verde resort complex. Pimodo was represented by Montenegrin businessman Stela Kolman, according to the Cypriot corporate registry. Ms. Kolman had business connections through the Montenegrin firm Open Investment with former Russian Agricultural Bank manager Ivan Chepovoi. Mr. Chepovoi, in turn, was Mr. Sergeyev's deputy at VTB Bank and worked under Mr. Sergeyev again in the distressed-assets section of Russian Agricultural Bank. Now, Mr. Chepovoi is Mr. Sergeyev's deputy at OZK.

This arrangement lasted until 2022, when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine and it became necessary to shield Russian assets abroad. Three weeks before the February 24 invasion, Pimodo was sold to another offshore shell company called Fiosal Ventures. According to the Cypriot corporate registry, Fiosal Ventures has indirect corporate ties with Mr. Novikov's Agropromkomplektatsiya.

"Our best colleagues, the honor and pride of the FSB, don't do their work for the sake of money," Nikolai Patrushev claimed in his "new nobility" article in 2000. "They all look different, but there is one very special characteristic that unites all these people, and it is a very important quality: It is their sense of service."

(RFE/RL's Robert Coalson contributed to this report.)

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Western leaders...

(Continued from page 2)

security assurances they received in the Budapest Memorandum, in return for giving up the world's third-largest arsenal of nuclear weapons, were ignored by the West. Additionally, the plan assumes that Washington has sufficient leverage to pressure Ukraine and Russia to enter peace talks. This is partly true in the case of Ukraine but not so with Russia. Putin's Kremlin remains the largest obstacle to any U.S. peace effort (TASS, June 15).

Putin believes Russia will win the war because it has greater staying power and political will than the West (Vazhnyie Istori, June 21). The day before Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's peace summit in Switzerland, Putin outlined his conditions for peace talks, including the withdrawal of Ukrainian forces from the Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia and Kherson oblasts (the latter three are only partially occupied by Russia) and Ukraine's inability to join NATO (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, May 29, 30, June 20; Kremlin.ru, June 14; Vazhnyie Istori, June 21). U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris called Putin's proposals "manipulative" and "absurd" (White House, June 15).

Other Russian elites echo Putin's terms. Deputy Head of the Russian Security Council Dmitry Medvedev said that Russia will accept "only complete and unconditional capitulation. And now it is necessary to act in

the same way – by forcing former Ukraine to peace exclusively on Russian terms" (Argumenty i Fakty, July 17). Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Sergei Lavrov described the Ukrainian peace formula outlined in Switzerland, which called for the withdrawal of Russian forces from all internationally recognized Ukrainian territory, as "absolutely unacceptable" for the Kremlin (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 16).

Moscow will not be satisfied with only occupying a fifth of Ukrainian territory. The Kremlin demands that control over Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa and Dnipro is essential to Russian imperial nationalist mythology. Some leaders in the West often do not fully recognize Russia's long-standing imperial plans and the invasion goal of replacing an independent Ukrainian state with a smaller "Little Russia." Russia's annexation and continued occupation of Crimea, Donbas and southeast Ukraine ("New Russia") is non-negotiable, as Putin has repeatedly said (Kremlin.ru, July 12, 2021, September 30, 2022; Kuzio, Crimea: Where Russia's War Started and Where Ukraine Will Win, July 8).

Understanding why Russia invaded Ukraine is essential for developing an effective peace plan. Over 50 percent of Ukrainians, both those who support and those who oppose territorial concessions for peace, believe the goal of Russia's invasion is to destroy the Ukrainian nation and national identity as well as to turn Ukrainians into Russians (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, July 27). Over 60 percent of both groups believe that Moscow

aims to commit genocide and physically liquidate most Ukrainians. This is confirmed by the Kremlin and Russian Orthodox Church's (ROC) promotion of the ideology that Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians are one people and that Ukrainians are not sovereign people (Patriarchia.ru, March 27). This ideology was most recently highlighted at the "Russian World" forum on July 29. At the forum, one of the key topics discussed was the "return to the doctrine of the trinity of the Russian people as one of the key aspects of solving the problem of the denazification of Ukraine" (Kremlin.ru, September 30, 2022, November 28, 2023; Russkoye Edinstvo, July 29).

The ROC is a major contributor to the ideology that Ukrainians are not sovereign people but Russian, which is a major pillar of Putin's rhetoric. The ROC supports the war through its Telegram channels, religious print and electronic media; fundraising for soldiers and veterans; participation in official ceremonies on the war; and censorship and repression of anti-war clergy (Re-Russia, January 1; T.me/pravoslavie_ru, accessed August 5). The ROC has expanded its jurisdiction over occupied Ukrainian lands by pushing out the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine (Russian Orthodox Church, March 8, 2022; see Eurasia Daily Monitor, April 10). On March 27, the World Russian People's Council (WRPC) issued a decree that gave full backing to the "holy war" against a "satanic" West that allegedly controls Ukraine (Religious Information Service of Ukraine,

April 3). The WRPC described the "liberation" of the core of "Holy Rus" (Ukraine) as a mandate given to Russia by God. The council also called for all of Ukraine to be returned to the canonical control of the ROC, from which it was removed by Constantinople in 2018. In a "liberated" Ukraine, there will be no room for a "Russophobic" regime, and Moscow would plan to install a pro-Russian puppet regime in Kyiv. "Liberation" of Ukraine will lead to the "restoration of the unity of the pan-Russian people," or the replacement of Ukrainians by "Little Russians" (Russian Patriarchate, March 27).

Russia's war against Ukraine is deeply rooted in Moscow's ongoing imperial ambitions and its goal of eradicating Ukrainian sovereignty and identity. The West's approach, while supportive of Ukraine, lacks the clear objective of Russia's ultimate military defeat, which has contributed to the protraction of the war. The Kremlin's unwavering demand for territorial control and the complete subjugation of Ukraine, coupled with the ROC's ideological support, underscores the complexity of achieving a peaceful resolution. To end this war, those involved in the peace process must understand why Russia invaded Ukraine and the propagandistic ideology that Putin and his Kremlin continue to spread to justify his war.

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Independent collaboration between Ukrainian artist and Polish poet goes on display in Chicago

by Mark Raczkiewicz

CHICAGO – As the popularity of the genre of jazz music evolved from its heyday in the 1920s-1930s, artistic collaborations emerged that involved onstage poetry readings accompanied by musical iterations in the genre, usually with solo saxophone or trumpet players.

Famed tenor saxophonist John Coltrane would play a rendition of his poem “A Love Supreme” by syncing the sounds of his Selmer Mark VI horn to music while sounding out those musical notes based on the handwritten verse on his music stand.

African American writer and poet Langston Hughes often collaborated with such jazz legends as pianist Thelonious Monk and bassist Charles Mingus, often leading to what became known as “jazz poetry.”

Sometimes, poets would write verse based on the jazz notes, other times musicians would improvise off poetic lyrics.

In this vein, Ukrainian artist Vasyl Savchenko has been indirectly collaborating with Polish poet and art historian Aleksander Najda to match visual images with poetic verse.

Their works are on display in the heart of Chicago’s Ukrainian Village neighborhood at the Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art (UIMA) through the end of August in an exhibit called “The Ground of Things.”

Mr. Najda pens verses that inspire Mr. Savchenko’s creativity for a canvas iteration using coal. They sometimes switch turns



A poem titled “Orpheus” by Polish poet and art historian Aleksander Najda is accompanied by an iteration originally in charcoal and transferred to silkscreen by Ukrainian artist Vasyl Savchenko. Both are currently on display at Chicago’s Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art.

when the Lviv-born Ukrainian – currently based in the Polish port city of Gdansk – would hand over a piece of art so the lyricist can put words on paper.

While Mr. Savchenko uses charcoal as his medium, in nearly all of the works he transferred the charcoal onto silkscreen for the show. Only a panamorphic 4-piece canvas was originally done in that medium.

Many of the Polish poet’s works “are in

Haiku form,” UIMA curator Adrienne Kochman told The Ukrainian Weekly. “However, they work independently.”

That collaboration was borne from a chance meeting between the two in 2019 in Gdansk, Poland, a UIMA news release says.

“‘The Ground of Things’ is not what one might think of as a traditional collaboration, where both consult with each other, see each other’s work, then have more conversations about what their contribution will be,” UIMA says. “Aleksander and Vasyl work cooperatively but independently.”

Most importantly, Ms. Kochman said, is that “neither edits the other’s poetry or art, nor makes suggestions about what the other’s ought to be or how to think about the process. They accept it.”

The duo’s first iteration took place in 2022-2023 in Poland.



Mark Raczkiewicz

An outdoor promotional banner announces an art-poetry combination show on display at Chicago’s Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, which runs through the end of August.

Because of their busy travel itineraries and schedules, both share their works via various modes of communication and Mr. Savchenko could be found working on a piece of art “at 2 a.m.,” the news release said.

In the Haiku streamlined style of three-line poems written in five/seven/five syllable counts, Mr. Savchenko’s use of charcoal prefers to “say more with less,” UIMA said.

Among his many accomplishments, the Ukrainian holds two master’s degrees and is a co-founder of the Savchenko Foundation in Gdansk, his official biography says.

UIMA describes his artistic colleague as a “vocational poet who is ‘an enthusiast of silent films’ and he says his favorite book is ‘Ulysses,’ which was written by James Joyce and is widely considered the greatest novel of the 20th century.



Lviv-born artist Vasyl Savchenko applied charcoal to four canvases for this untitled image in the back lot of Chicago’s Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art in July.

Chicago’s...

(Continued from page 3)

Stalin and his henchmen were implementing genocidal Holodomor – death by starvation – policies in greater Ukraine, the city declared Ukrainian week from August 14 to 20, as well as Ukrainian Day on August 19. It was the same year that Chicago hosted the World’s Fair, known as The Century of Progress, where Ukrainians had a pavilion complete with a restaurant.

“This act was a bold declaration of support for the rights of an independent Ukraine, even though it did not exist on the world map at that time,” the UCCA said.

Several festivals to celebrate independence and Ukrainian heritage are planned for the greater Chicago area this month.

The Saints Volodymyr and Olha Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church is hosting a two-day festival starting on August 10 that will feature Oksana Bilozir as one of the musical performers.

In the neighboring suburb of Norridge, Saint Joseph the Betrothed Ukrainian Greek-Catholic church will hold a two-day festival the following weekend that will also feature live music, food, entertainment and games.

Both festivals were preceded by the Taste of Ukraine festival held at the city’s Saint Volodymyr Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral for two days in late July.



Mark Raczkiewicz

The flags of the United States (left), Ukraine (middle) and Chicago’s municipal colors stand raised opposite of famed artist Pablo Picasso’s cubist sculpture made of Cor-Ten steel at Daley Plaza in downtown Chicago on August 1 after a flag raising ceremony.

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NATO states...

(Continued from page 2)

crowning that network of bilateral agreements, the compact does not envisage any consultation or coordination mechanisms among signatory countries. Those mechanisms remain purely bilateral between each signatory country and Kyiv under the separate agreements.

Such precautions underscore, first, that the Ukraine Compact and bilateral agreements remain clearly outside of NATO's framework; second, that the joint document does not provide a basis for joint actions by the parties to bilateral agreements with Ukraine; and third, that the agreements themselves or their sum total are not being institutionalized and do not constitute an alliance, but potentially a coalition of the willing, to defend Ukraine.

Kyiv and supportive NATO member states insist that the bilateral agreements and the multilateral compact are not to be construed as replacements for NATO membership for Ukraine, nor as consolation prizes for postponing that membership indefinitely. Rather, the parties present them as a transitional solution. With this in mind, non-binding and non-institutionalized arrangements for Ukraine can be viewed as a two-sided coin. On the one hand, they fall short of guaranteeing Kyiv's security by treaty, and their practical implementation remains less than certain, subject to a range of future contingencies. On the other hand, such inadequacies are a constant reminder that there is no substitute for NATO membership, thus energizing efforts to advance Ukraine's accession to the alliance.

The Ukraine Compact and, in particular, the bilateral security agreements under its umbrella envisage neither the stationing of NATO forces in Ukraine nor joint exercises

on Ukrainian territory, let alone intervention by NATO members' joint or national forces in any crisis situation. This dispensation is considerably weaker overall compared to the original conception – the 2022 Kyiv Security Compact – which inspired the 2024 Ukraine Compact (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, December 16, 2022, May 16, 20).

On the forward-leaning side, the bilateral security commitments to Ukraine are non-transactional in the sense that they do not require Ukraine to choose neutrality or nonalignment in exchange. Their entry into effect is not conditioned on an eventual compromise settlement between Ukraine and Russia. Additionally, as a transformative element in European security, these commitments exclude Russia for the first time from security arrangements or conflict-resolution frameworks concerning Ukraine (see Part II).

Moscow will undoubtedly aim to roll back these Western commitments to Ukraine. The Kremlin will demand their abrogation as part of any political settlement between Ukraine and Russia or any negotiations on European security. Specifically, Russia will demand to be included again with veto rights among the powers guaranteeing Ukraine's security, will condition any putative guarantees on Ukraine's permanent neutrality or nonalignment, and will threaten in word and deed to continue the war of annihilation against Ukraine until Kyiv and Western powers satisfy those Russian demands. The NATO states' security commitments to Ukraine are therefore at risk of being negated by the same NATO members' failure – Washington's first and foremost – to arm Ukraine properly to defeat Russia.

The article above is reprinted from Eurasia Daily Monitor with permission from its publisher, the Jamestown Foundation, www.jamestown.org.

Andrei Kushnir's "My Maryland" collection of paintings to be featured in new book and upcoming exhibit



Courtesy of Andrei Kushnir

"Autumn Patuxent Reserve," a painting by Andrei Kushnir that will be featured in his upcoming exhibit and book titled "My Maryland."

by Nicholas Gordon

CUMBERLAND, Md. – Ukrainian-American artist Andrei Kushnir has been selected for a solo exhibition featuring works from his forthcoming book, "My Maryland," to be held at the prestigious C. William Gilchrist Gallery and Museum of the Arts in Cumberland, Md. The opening reception for the exhibit is on Sunday, August 10, from 5-7p.m., and the exhibit will run until September 1.

A resident of Maryland for 47 years, Mr. Kushnir has traveled broadly throughout his home state, creating on-site paintings documenting its every corner with his singular style. Over 50 of these works, capturing scenes ranging from Maryland's eastern shore to the farthest points in Western Maryland, will be on display in the upcoming exhibit. Images of all the paintings in Mr. Kushnir's collection will be the subject

of his upcoming book, "My Maryland," which will be issued by George F. Thompson Publishing.

"I'm looking forward to meeting new folks as well as longtime friends and collectors at the opening reception," Mr. Kushnir said. "August is a beautiful time of year to visit Cumberland, Md., and it will be a lot of fun coming together with everyone for this event."

Mr. Kushnir said that one of the overarching goals of his artistic career, in addition to capturing the beauty of American landscapes, is to help foster an ongoing appreciation between American and Ukrainian cultures.

"One of my main objectives as an artist is to actively participate in American culture so that a record is created through my paintings and books of American land-

(Continued on page 11)

Ukraine launches...

(Continued from page 1)

Two fortified Russian defensive lines were reportedly breached 15-17 miles deep into the region, with the Ukrainian force capturing at least 15 population centers as of August 8, according to official Russian statements and military bloggers on both sides, as well as the ISW.

Ukraine's military has kept operational silence just as it did in the 2022 counterattack in the Kharkiv region.

However, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on August 8 that "everyone can see that the Ukrainian army knows how to surprise [and] achieve results."

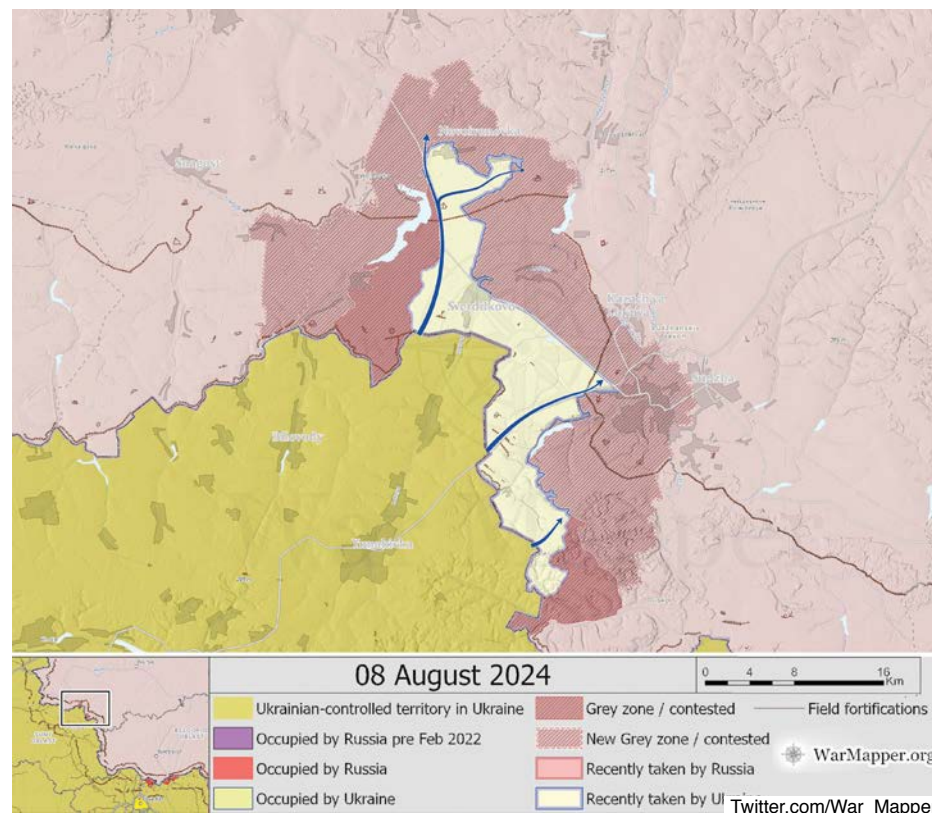
In turn, Kremlin dictator Vladimir Putin convened a national security meeting the previous day to address the matter and called the incursion a "major provocation" during the televised assembly.

White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said that Washington would be "reaching out to our Ukrainian counterparts to get a little better understanding" of the fluid situation in the penetrated Russian region.

Ukraine in three days has taken up to 135 square miles of Russian territory as of August 8, the Financial Times reported. Russia in all of July took over less than 77 square miles of Ukrainian territory in the entire month.

If Ukrainian estimates of Russian losses are accurate, it would translate to losing 38,940 military personnel last month for every six feet of territory gained.

The Ukrainian operation is mostly perceived as a massive diversion from the hotspots of the easternmost areas of the



A map of the border between Ukraine's Sumy region and Russia's Kursk region shows where Ukraine launched a surprise mechanized and infantry assault into the area on August 6 amid heavy fighting that is still ongoing about 9 miles into Russian territory.

Luhansk and Donetsk regions where Russia has made incremental gains due to Kyiv's weapons and manpower shortages.

Some experts have questioned the Kursk operation in lieu of sending reinforcements to stave off Russian advances on Chasiv Yar and Pokrovsk in the Donetsk region, areas where most of the territorial gains have been made.

Independent Russian news outlet Vyorstka (layout) reported that mobile phone communication, electricity and

water supplies were cut off in the Kursk regional town of Sudzha where Ukrainian forces have entered. The Ukrainian Weekly reviewed geolocated evidence of a Ukrainian flag atop a government administration building.

"The Kremlin's response to Ukrainian offensive activities in Kursk Oblast has so far been contradictory, as Russian officials are attempting to balance presenting the effort as a notable Ukrainian escalation with avoiding overstating its potential

implications and risking domestic discontent," the ISW said.

Forbes military expert David Axe questioned the Kursk operation, describing it as "pointless."

"It's all very dramatic – and also a shameful waste of precious military resources," the expert said.

Israeli military expert Yigal Levin said the opposite on his Telegram channel, saying that Ukraine's logic is to transfer "the war to enemy territory so that their territory burns and is destroyed, not yours. This is what the Kremlin has feared from the very beginning."

Rob Lee of the Philadelphia-based Foreign Policy Research Institute said that "Ukraine needs to maintain a favorable attrition ratio given the manpower situation, so taking heavy losses in this operation could make it more difficult for Ukraine to hold back future Russian assaults if it saps Ukraine's limited reserves."

In Australia, Mick Ryan, a senior fellow at the Lowy Institute, said that "the Ukrainians have attacked with a highly mobile, mechanized force," and that Kyiv "has achieved surprise, ... and [the attack] constitutes the biggest advance by any side since 2022" when Russia's full-scale invasion started.

One of several objectives that Ukraine might have is "to draw Russian forces away from its attacks on New York [the Ukrainian village of New York] and its advances in Toretsk and Pokrovsk," all of which are located in the Donetsk region, he said.

Chris Stevenson, and international editor for the London-based Independent newspaper said that the operation has "symbolic importance and [will] boost morale."

NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 2)

Russian captivity. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Zelenskyy endorses bills extending martial law

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on August 7 endorsed bills extending martial law and a general military mobilization for 90 days starting on August 12. Ukrainian lawmakers approved the bills on July 23. Martial law and the general mobilization were last extended in May, the 11th such prolongation since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. According to the new legislation, martial law and the general military mobilization remain in place until November 9. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Niger cuts ties with Ukraine

Niger's ruling military junta has announced it is breaking off diplomatic relations with Ukraine, becoming the second African state to sever ties with Kyiv following comments by a Ukrainian official perceived as lending support to rebels in neighboring Mali. The move comes as Russia continues to expand its influence in the Sahel region by supporting military regimes confronted with separatist and Islamist rebellions. Ukraine has yet to com-

ment on Niger's move, which comes after Mali's military rulers on August 4 also cut diplomatic ties with Ukraine over its alleged involvement – which Kyiv denies – in an attack by rebels that resulted in the killing of dozens of Malian soldiers and Russian mercenaries. "The Government of the Republic of Niger, in full solidarity with the Government and people of Mali, has decided, relying on its sovereignty, to sever diplomatic relations between the Republic of Niger and Ukraine. This decision comes into force immediately," government spokesman Abdourahamane Amadou said late on August 6 in a televised address. Armed groups in Mali's predominantly Tuareg north said they killed at least 47 government soldiers and 84 Russian Wagner mercenaries in fighting last month near the West African country's border with Algeria. The losses incurred by Wagner fighters arguably amounted to the heaviest defeat the Russian mercenary group has suffered in the two years since it began to give military assistance to the Bamako regime. Without directly confirming Kyiv's involvement, Andrey Yusov, a spokesman for Ukraine's Defense Ministry's Main Intelligence Directorate (HUR), told Ukrainian public television that the rebels "received all the necessary information they needed" to defeat the Russian mercenaries fighting alongside Malian troops. Mr. Yusov's comments prompted

Mali's military government to sever ties with Ukraine and accuse Kyiv of supporting terrorism and violating Mali's sovereignty. Kyiv, whose troops fought fierce battles against Wagner mercenaries in eastern Ukraine, strongly rejected Mali's move, calling it "short-sighted and hasty given that Ukraine is a victim of unprovoked full-scale armed aggression by the Russian Federation." "Ukraine unconditionally adheres to the norms of international law, the inviolability of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other countries, and resolutely rejects the accusations of the

Transitional Government of Mali of alleged support of international terrorism," the ministry said in a statement on August 5. Russia has been offering regime protection and other services to authoritarian governments in Africa and has recently expanded into Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger as military coups sweep through the Sahel. On August 6, some 40 people were arrested in Nigeria's north, which borders Niger, for waving Russian flags during protests against the high cost of living and govern-

(Continued on page 11)

Olha Kharlan...

(Continued from page 1)

Ukrainian athletes standing up to Russia's aggression.

Ms. Kharlan has been one of Ukraine's biggest sports stars for almost two decades. Powerful, fast and always focused, she says that when she is on the attack, "I can be like a train."

Controversy

Ms. Kharlan at one time felt that her chances of making it to a fifth Olympics were "ruined" after she was disqualified from the world championships in Milan in 2023 for refusing to shake hands with Russia's Anna Smirnova, who was competing as a neutral athlete.

"I thought this was the end, that this was the end of my career," she told The Guardian. "It was there that I felt in the worst condition of my life."

She had just beaten Ms. Smirnova 15-7 when, instead of shaking hands, as is customary, Ms. Kharlan offered her saber to tap blades. Ms. Smirnova then walked away before staging a 45-minute sit-down protest where she refused to leave the piste.

The International Fencing Federation (FIE) quickly reversed its decision to disqualify Ms. Kharlan, allowing her to continue to participate in the Milan competition.

She was also awarded a spot in the 2024 Paris Olympics by Thomas Bach, the head of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Mr. Bach acknowledged the "roller coaster of emotions and feelings" Ms. Kharlan was likely experiencing and called for "sensitivity" when it came to the issue of Ukrainian and Russian athletes competing against one another at international sporting events.

"I got a lot of negative comments about what I did," she said. "But people who talk like that don't understand what war means."

Humble beginnings

Ms. Kharlan was born in 1990 in the southern port city of Mykolayiv, which, since the start of the Russian invasion in 2022, has repeatedly been shelled by the Russian military. She managed to get her sister and nephew out of Ukraine, but her parents have insisted on staying unless Russia occupies the city.

As a child, Ms. Kharlan dabbled in dancing, but it proved to be too expensive for her family. When she was 10, she switched

to fencing because her godfather was a coach, and she didn't have to pay a fee.

At the age of 14, she won her first prize money in a fencing competition and shared it with her family to ease their dire financial situation.

When Ukraine won gold in the team saber competition for the first time at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the then-17-year-old claimed it was the most unforgettable experience of her life.

She later said that "fencing is like chess at 200 kilometers per hour."

In order to determine the winner of a match, judges must examine slow-motion video replays in order to see the fighters' movements, hesitations and errors that would otherwise be imperceptible to the unaided eye. For those unfamiliar with the sport, these regulations can make it challenging to watch.

To fame

Ms. Kharlan is among the world's most accomplished saber fencers, having won numerous titles. She is a six-time world champion, an eight-time European champion, as well as a winner of three bronzes and one silver medal in individual competitions at the Olympics.

She was also immortalized in a one-of-a-kind Barbie doll that was auctioned for over \$10,000, with the proceeds going to the rehabilitation of wounded Ukrainian soldiers.

Both her ex-husband, Dmitry Boyko, and her current boyfriend, Luigi Samele, are saber fencers. Today, she lives with Mr. Samele in Bologna.

Ms. Kharlan has tried her hand at politics. She joined the Mykolayiv city council in 2010 as a representative of the Party of Regions, despite the fact that she frequently missed sessions because of contests. She participated in the 2014 Kyiv municipal elections on behalf of the Green Party, but the party was unable to cross the 3 percent electoral threshold.

Ms. Kharlan has no intention of giving up the sport, even after she stops competing. She hopes to make fencing more approachable for kids in schools – like tennis and soccer.

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Andrei Kushnir's...

(Continued from page 9)

scapes, [and] that a Ukrainian-American had a deep interest in this country," Mr. Kushnir said.

Mr. Kushnir will also be the featured artist for the Cumberland Cultural Foundation's annual gala on Saturday, August 24. The Gala will be held in the gallery's back garden, and it will feature live music, food and a silent auction of a work created by Mr. Kushnir on site.

Upon first visiting the Gilchrist Museum, Mr. Kushnir said he was captivated by the historic building and its beautiful exhibi-

tion areas and welcoming grounds, not to mention the museum's gracious and accommodating staff.

"I knew right away that the exhibition of Maryland paintings that I had been envisioning would look absolutely great there," Mr. Kushnir said. "I'm overjoyed to be invited to show my work in such a beautiful and authentic Maryland venue!"

The C. William Gilchrist Gallery and Museum of the Arts is open Fridays to Sundays, 1-4 p.m. Eastern Time. The opening reception of My Maryland on August 10 will be held from 5-7 p.m. Eastern Time. More information about the gala and the museum can be found at <https://cumberland-cultural-foundation.square.site/>.

The throttling...

(Continued from page 3)

folded into companies controlled by Kremlin-allied tycoons or state-owned companies.

Regulators are also moving toward the creation of a "super app" – a single application that would be used for a range of online activities such as chatting, paying taxes, searching for romantic partners and paying traffic fines.

What to do about Google?

One of the thorniest problems for regulators, however, was reining in the Russian operations of the world's largest tech companies: Google, Apple, Facebook and similar companies.

Social media usage accounts for approximately 50 percent of all online activity for Russians, according to market researcher MediaScope. Of that usage, YouTube is the dominant platform in terms of time spent and number of Russians using it. Many of the country's main media companies use it heavily, as do influencers and cultural figures.

The service, which is owned by Google, had already butted heads with Russian lawmakers and regulators after it blocked dozens of accounts belonging to state-aligned performers, as well as some state-funded media outlets. Google also refused to remove thousands of accounts that Roskomnadzor demanded be taken down.

In early July, the pro-Kremlin performer Shaman staged a protest in front of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, complaining about his channel being blocked. Shaman, whose real name is Yaroslav Dronov, appeared to have been kicked off YouTube after being sanctioned by the European Union and the United States for his vocal support of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Days later, on July 12, as some YouTube services inside Russia showed signs of a slowdown, Rostelekom, a state-owned telecommunication provider that is one of Russia's largest, blamed Google, saying that it had not kept up service on its "caching servers" – locally housed servers that allow for quicker uploads and downloads.

"This approach leads to a decline in the quality of the video service, which we are already seeing," Rostelekom told the Interfax news agency.

Two weeks after that, Mr. Khinshtein publicly announced that YouTube would be throttled – a tech term describing the deliberate slowing of a web page or app.

Google did not respond to several e-mails from RFE/RL seeking comment.

"I assumed that the slowdown would be explained by the so-called degrading of cache servers for Google and YouTube," Sarkis Darbinyan, a legal expert on cyber policy at the advocacy group Roskomsvoboda, told Current Time. "Obviously, they are slowly failing."

Instead, he said, authorities have made clear they're looking to "slow cook"

YouTube: that is, increasingly slow down traffic so that the video quality worsens.

"This, from the Kremlin's point of view, should gradually motivate users to migrate to domestic analogues," he said. "They will push users to Russian analogs, gradually weaning them off the cool, high-speed, high-quality YouTube that everyone is used to."

'Their favorite toy'

Those Russian analogs are VK Video and RuTube, a video player owned by state gas giant Gazprom via its subsidiary, Gazprom Media. The CEO of Gazprom Media, which also owns a controlling stake in VK, is a former head of Roskomnadzor.

Another Russian-built video service, called Platform, debuted in June.

"The Russian Foreign [Affairs] Ministry calls for active participation [by Russians] in the development of RuTube," the ministry said in its July 31 statement.

Whether any of these streaming services can fully replace YouTube's reach inside Russia is an open question.

The regulator's move to "throttle" YouTube stems from the legislation that was amended in 2019 and bestowed that capability on Roskomnadzor.

In March 2021, regulators throttled Twitter, now called X, after the company refused to take down posts Roskomnadzor deemed in violation of regulations. It was the "first-ever use of large-scale targeted throttling for censorship purposes," according to a paper by U.S. and Russian academics.

The effort backfired, however, after a large number of Russian sites stopped working. A similar effort took place this past January – with similar results. Experts later said it was one of the most widespread and far-reaching disruptions the RuNet had ever experienced.

On July 26, when the YouTube throttling first began, Russians across Siberia complained of outages and problems with mobile data services that affected other apps, including Telegram.

Meanwhile, one of Russia's largest cellular service providers, MTS, has begun warning its subscribers about possible disruptions in YouTube, according to the state news agency TASS.

"For reasons beyond MTS's control, some subscribers may experience problems with YouTube," TASS quoted an automated message on MTS's tech help line as saying.

"YouTube has penetrated the lives of Russians so deeply that if it is blocked, a feeling of emptiness may arise, like when a child's favorite toy is taken away," the Russian online tech site ComNews wrote. "Some people may throw a tantrum, and people deprived of their favorite toy may start a revolution."

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NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 10)

ment policies. On August 5, the United States handed over Airbase 201 in Agadez, its last military base in Niger, to local authorities, the U.S. Department of Defense and Niger's Ministry of Defense announced in a joint statement. The handing over of Airbase 201 came after U.S. troops withdrew earlier this month from Airbase 101 in Niger's capital of Niamey. The closing of the two bases, which played a major role in U.S. counterterrorism operations in the region, came after Washington and Nigerien authorities agreed that U.S. troops will leave the country by September 15. Wagner was previously involved in some of the fiercest fighting of Russia's war in Ukraine, but its fate was put into question when founder Yevgeny Prigozhin was killed in a plane crash in August 2023, two months after leading a brief mutiny against Russian President Vladimir Putin. Wagner mercenaries who did not sign contracts with Russia's Defense Ministry after the mutiny are believed to have moved to Africa. (RFE/RL's Russian Service, with reporting by Reuters)

At least 1 Russian Su-34 destroyed in strike

At least one Russian warplane and

ammunition storage facilities were destroyed in a Ukrainian strike on a Russian military base in the Rostov region, the Ukrainian Defense Ministry's Main Intelligence Directorate (HUR) said on August 5. "Space intelligence data show that a Su-34 fighter-bomber was destroyed as a result of fire damage to the military airfield at Morozovsk on August 3," HUR said in a statement on Telegram, adding that satellite imagery shows two more Su-34 aircraft were likely damaged in the explosion of the aircraft ammunition storage facility. "Large areas of burnt ground can be seen in the satellite images," the message says. The Morozovsk air base is located some 165 miles east of the front line. Russia did not comment on HUR's claim, which comes after the General Staff of Ukraine's military said on August 3 that it had struck the Morozovsk airfield and oil depots in the Rostov region, without giving details. This is the second time Ukraine that has claimed to have struck Morozovsk. On April 5, Ukrainian sources told RFE/RL that at least six Russian military aircraft had been destroyed in a massive Ukrainian drone attack on the Morozovsk airfield, where Su-24, Su-24M and Su-34 bombers had been reportedly stationed at the time. That claim could not be independently confirmed. The Ukrainian Air Force, mean-

(Continued on page 13)



Oksana (Ksenya) Hildegard Nikorovich Trabocco

passed on July 19, 2024. She was born in a displaced persons camp in Krenicha, Poland on October 28, 1942 and settled with her family in Philadelphia, living first in the Oak Lane section before moving to Cheltenham and then Center City. She graduated Philadelphia High School for Girls in 1959 and Temple University.



A devoted daughter to Michael and Artemisia, she cared for her mother until she took her last breath. She was also a loving, single mother to her son, Tod. As a counselor for the School District of Philadelphia, first at the East Falls School and then at the Fox Chase School, her career was dedicated to helping children manage life's challenges.

Ksenya was a voracious consumer of current events and foreign affairs, riveted by the McNeil/Lehrer News Hour, Walter Cronkite and Dan Rather. She was not shy about her views of Israel's former Foreign Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu: «Oh, he's sooo handsome». In retirement she combined her interest in foreign affairs and love of her ancestral homeland, Ukraine, by teaching English in Kyiv during the summers.

In addition, she donated generously to many causes, especially those helping dogs, cats, horses, and any other of God's four legged creatures.

She adored Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley and Mick Jagger. In the 80s she would watch Larry Bird's Boston Celtics battle Magic Johnson's L.A. Lakers like a scientist at a microscope. Engaging company at dinner made her smile and roar with laughter. And she enjoyed nothing more than watching Connors, McEnroe, Borg, Nadal and Djokovic joust on Wimbledon's grass or Roland Garros' clay.

Then she welcomed into the world her first grandchild, Elizabeth. Marlon, Elvis, Mick and tennis took a back seat. Her joy multiplied with the arrival of Angelina and Nicholas. She taught them to swim and ride bicycles and to them she passed on pride in her Ukrainian heritage with annual traditions of making kutya and pascha and even taught them to make pysanky with the tiny «kistky» bequeathed by her own grandmother.

Truly, she was never happier than with her grandchildren and will doubtlessly continue to watch over them from her new, heavenly perch. On her deathbed, she heard their voices and twitched her hands, searching for a final hug.

She is predeceased by her parents and younger brother, Alexander Nikorovich. She is survived by her sister, Olenka Samango, her son, Tod, daughter-in-law Stephanie and three grandchildren Elizabeth, Angelina and Nicholas.

Viewing and service were held on Friday, August 2 at 9AM at St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral at 6740 North Fifth Street, Philadelphia, PA, followed by the interment at St. Andrew's Memorial Church in South Bound Brook, NJ.

May she rest in peace.



Ukraine at the 2024 Summer Olympics: the Games

by Ihor Stelmach

Ukrainian athletes win 8 medals in 2024 Paris Summer Olympics

Through the first 12 days of competition at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris Ukraine sat in 18th place in the medal standings and tied for 14th in total medals with three gold, two silver and three bronze medals, for a total of eight medals.

Ukrainian athletes have won three medals in athletics, a pair in fencing and one each in shooting, artistic gymnastics and boxing. Ukraine took gold in boxing after Oleksandr Khyzniak won his final bout. The team has a solid chance of winning additional medals in athletics, canoeing, rhythmic gymnastics and wrestling. Ukraine's Olympians have already won more gold medals in Paris than they did in Tokyo at

the previous Games.

First gold medal for Ukraine in women's team fencing

The Ukrainian women's saber fencing team won their country's first gold medal at the 2024 Paris Games by defeating South Korea in the final on August 3. The team, comprised of Olha Kharlan, Alina Komashchuk, Olena Kravatska and Yuliya Bakastova, recovered from six points down to win by a score of 45-42, which included 22 points from individual bronze medalist Kharlan. She entered for the final leg of the bout with her team behind 40-37 and went 8-2 to complete the victory.



Ukraine's women's saber fencing team celebrates its gold medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Olha Kharlan (left) also won gold in women's individual saber.



Facebook.com/OlympicUA

Pictured from left to right are Yaroslava Mahuchikh (gold, women's high jump), Mykhailo Kokhan (bronze, men's hammer throw) and Olena Gerashchenko (bronze, women's high jump) as they celebrate their medal-winning performance at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

This was Kharlan's sixth Olympic medal, third team medal, in a career that started with women's team saber gold at the 2008 Olympics when she was 17. Her sixth medal makes her Ukraine's most decorated Olympian, topping swimmer Yana Klochkova's five Olympic medals.

Mahuchikh takes gold, Gerashchenko bronze in women's high jump

Yaroslava Mahuchikh lived up to her favorite status in women's high jump at the Paris Games, managing a best jump of 2

meters to win the gold medal. The world champion and world record holder was joined on the medal podium by teammate Iryna Gerashchenko, who shared the bronze medal in the event with Australian Eleanor Patterson. Mahuchikh won Ukraine's first individual gold medal.

Wearing her traditional blue and yellow eyeliner, the colors of the Ukrainian flag, the 22-year-old added an Olympic gold medal to her trophy case, joining gold med-

(Continued on page 13)

Men's gymnastics team, synchronized platform divers and women's quadruple sculls all finish fifth

The Ukrainian men's gymnastics team came close, but finished in fifth place in their competition with 254.761 points, 3.032 points less than the bronze medal-winning score accumulated by the United States. Despite the efforts of Illia Kovtun and Oleg Verniaiev, Ukraine's team of five gymnasts could not climb atop the medal podium.

In individual competition, Illia Kovtun finished fourth in the men's floor exercise final with a total of 14.533 points, 0.4 points behind bronze medalist Jake Jarman of Great Britain. He also placed fourth in the men's all-around exercise final, 0.199 points off the bronze medal score.

Ukraine's Oleksii Sereda and Kirill Boliukh finished fifth in the men's 10-meter synchronized platform diving event with a total of 412.65 points, 9.48 points short of the bronze medal-winning point total compiled by the duo from Canada.

Ukraine's women's quadruple sculls team finished fifth with a time of 6:23.05 seconds. Germany's bronze medal-winning time in the event was 6:19.70 seconds.

Kostyuk earns quarterfinal berth in women's singles

When Elina Svitolina lost to Barbora Krejčíková of the Czech Republic 6-7(7), 6-2, 4-6 in the third round of the women's tennis tournament at the Olympics, many reasoned Ukraine's chances for a medal in tennis were also lost. This was not the case, however, as teammate Marta Kostyuk



Ukrainian Diving Federation

Oleksii Sereda (left) and Kirill Boliukh, seen at the 2023 World Aquatics Championships in Fukuoka, Japan, finished in fifth place in the 10-meter synchronized platform diving event at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

stepped up her game to earn a spot in the quarterfinal round. Kostyuk defeated Lulu Sun of China 6-4, 6-3, Clara Burel of France 7-6(3), 6-2 and Maria Sakkari of Greece 4-6, 7-6(5), 6-4 and put up a Herculean effort against Croatian Donna Vekic before finally being outplayed 10-8 in the decisive game of the third set.

Expectations were high when Svitolina upset World No. 6 Jessica Pegula of the U.S. 4-6, 6-1, 6-3 in the second round of action, but her tournament ended in the second round.

Kichenok sisters in doubles quarterfinal

Lyudmyla and Nadiia Kichenok successfully advanced to the women's doubles quarterfinal at the 2024 Summer Olympics tennis tournament by defeating the American pairing of Danielle Collins and Desirae Krawczyk, 3-6, 6-4, 10-7. In first-round action, the Ukrainians beat the Chinese duo of Xinyu Wang and Saisai Zheng, 6-1, 6-4.

Spain's doubles team of Cristina Bucsa and Sara Sorribes eliminated the Kichenoks 3-6, 6-2, 12-10 in a thrilling three-set

extended play affair.

Kalinina withdraws from Olympics due to illness

Ukrainian tennis player Anhelina Kalinina was forced to withdraw from the Paris Olympics after catching a cold from being outside in rainy weather for several hours on consecutive days. Much of the opening day's tennis matches were postponed due to inclement weather with players waiting for the conditions to improve. This was after the athletes paraded on boats along the Seine River during the four-hour opening ceremony on July 26. Kalinina woke up two days later with a sore throat and decided not to take any risks and avoid complications.

This was supposed to be her debut Olympics with the 27-year-old scheduled to represent Ukraine in singles.

Argentina eliminates Ukraine in Olympic football

It was a series of firsts for Ukraine's Olympic football team in Paris as Ruslan Rotan's squad played their first-ever Olympics match, a 2-1 loss to Iraq in which they scored their first-ever goal from Valentyn Rubchynskyi and won their first-ever game when they defeated Morocco 2-1 on a stoppage time goal by Ihor Krasnopir. Argentina eliminated Ukraine from the football tournament in the third and final match of group play by a score of 2-0.

(Based on reporting by Ukrinform, ESPN, African Football, mymotherlode.com., and Inside the Games.)

Ukraine at the 2024 Summer Olympics: Jenya Kazbekova

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Jenya Kazbekova described the late February 2022 morning when she was awakened from a deep sleep at 5 a.m. by the sound of bombs falling in her Kyiv neighborhood as a horrifying experience. She and her mother pulled out their phones and quickly read on social media that there were explosions all over Ukraine – Russia's aggression and attack had begun. She remembers trying to pack up her stuff and her hands could not stop shaking.

Back then, when she and her family fled their homeland following Vladimir Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the 27-year-old sport climber could not have imagined she would be competing in the boulder and lead climbing event at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Some two-and-a-half years ago she could not even imagine how her life was about to change. Ukrainians everywhere were trying to escape without food, with maybe a bag of clothes and no time to stop. Along with her parents and sister, Kazbekova drove four days to reach Germany and was forced to wait two days to enter Poland. Traffic was brutal, sleep was impossible and restrooms were rare. They arrived in Germany exhausted, yet feeling privileged to have escaped compared to those forced to stay behind.

During this time of turmoil and trauma, climbing was the one constant for Kazbekova, her key escape mechanism.

She subsequently relocated to Salt Lake

City, Utah, and her family settled in Manchester, England. Her grandparents decided to remain in Ukraine, staying put in her hometown of Dnipro. For Kazbekova, knowing what was transpiring in her home country made it difficult for her to get on with life, at times feeling a bit lost.

She benefitted from much support and understanding from her climbing coach Malek Taleb, a former Canadian National Team coach, who fled war in his home country of Lebanon at age 18. He helped convince her that it was important for her to pursue her dreams. Kazbekova said her coach pulled her out of darkness after feeling very lost for months.

For quite a while, she didn't see the purpose in climbing, asking herself why she was participating in competitions when Ukrainians back home were dying in a war.

Taleb made her realize that it was important for her to continue competing, setting an example for others and contribute to her country's cause in the sporting arena by doing what she does best.

Kazbekova is not the first member of her family to be a climber – she is the third generation of climbers in her family. Her parents and grandparents competed on the international level in the sport and she joined them as a young girl at world cup and championship competitions.

She readily admits the sport saved her sanity in the first months of the war, allowing her to focus on herself and do what she truly loves.

In Paris, her sights are firmly set on this



<https://kazbekova.com.ua>

Jenya Kazbekova, seen in 2013 in Spain, is a 2024 Olympic climber representing Ukraine at the Paris Games.

summer's Olympics where the sport of climbing appears for only the second time. This is her Olympic debut, having missed the Tokyo Games in 2021 due to testing positive for COVID-19 and suffering an injury before a final opportunity to qualify for the Olympics.

Her lifelong dream of wearing the Ukrainian uniform and demonstrating to the world the strong resilience of the Ukrainian people has come true and is all the motivation she needed to enter the climbing competition.

Kazbekova earned her Olympic license by finishing sixth overall after surviving the Olympic Qualifier Series in Shanghai and Budapest, Hungary, in June.

She is proud to represent her native Ukraine in front of the world on sport's biggest stage, reminding people that her country still needs more help and support in their ongoing struggle in a fight that truly matters.

(Based on reporting by BBC Sport.)

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

Ukrainian athletes...

(Continued from page 12)

als from European, Diamond League and World Championship competitions.

Nicola Olyslagers also cleared 2 meters, but the Australian took three attempts to do it, while Mahuchikh went over the bar on her first try. Olyslagers settled for the silver medal.

Both Gerashchenko and Patterson cleared 1.95 meters, but failed to clear on their three attempts at 1.98 meters. It was Gerashchenko's first Olympic medal and her third time representing Ukraine at the Summer Games.

Mahuchikh and Gerashchenko celebrated their medal wins by running down the track at Stade de France waving Ukrainian flags, prompting a standing ovation from the crowd.

Gymnast Kovtun captures silver medal

Ukrainian gymnast Illia Kovtun won a silver medal in the men's parallel bars final at the Summer Games on August 5. After finishing fourth in both the all-around final and men's floor exercise final earlier where he was less than one point from a bronze medal win, the 20-year-old scored 15.500 points on the parallel bars, good for second place and a silver medal. He was 0.7 points behind gold medalist Zou Jingyuan from China who had a score of 16.200 points.

It was Kovtun's first Olympic medal and his second time representing Ukraine at the Summer Olympics having finished 11th in the men's individual all-around in Tokyo 2021.

Kulish wins silver medal in shooting

Ukrainian Serhiy Kulish won Ukraine's second medal at the 2024 Paris Summer Games on August 1, when his 461.3 points in the 50-meter rifle three positions event

earned him second place and the silver medal. He was a mere 2.3 points behind China's gold medalist Yukun Liu who totaled 463.6 points.

Kulish was in the running for a medal at the 2021 Tokyo Games only to accidentally shoot an opponent's target instead of his own due to a button becoming undone on his jacket causing a momentary lapse in concentration.

This is the fourth Olympics for the 31-year-old Kulish and his second Olympic medal victory having won a silver medal in 10-meter air rifle shooting at the 2016 Rio Games.

Kokhan earns bronze medal in hammer throw

Ukrainian Mykhailo Kokhan won a bronze medal in the men's hammer throw competition at the Paris Olympics with a throw of 79.39 meters. Canada's Ethan Katzberg won gold with his throw of 84.12 meters, while Hungary's Bence Halasz took silver with a throw of 79.97 meters.

It was Kokhan's first Olympic medal victory, having finished in fourth place at the 2021 Tokyo Games. This was Ukraine's second-ever medal in the hammer throw with Oleksandr Krykun having also won bronze at the 1996 Games in Atlanta.

Fencer Kharlan wins Ukraine's first medal in Paris

In what has been described as one of the more remarkable moments of the early Paris Games, Kharlan won a bronze medal in the women's individual saber event, becoming Ukraine's first medalist at the 2024 Summer Olympics. Kharlan breezed through the first three rounds of competition before being stymied by France's Sara Balzer in the semifinals 15-7. She proceeded to win the bronze medal bout by a score of 15-14 over Korea's Sebin Choi. The Ukrainian staged an amazing comeback after trailing nearly the entire bout. She was behind by six touches twice (10-4 and

12-6), but ultimately defeated her opponent by one touch thanks to a final 10-3 run.

It was the 33-year-old's fifth Olympic medal and third bronze individual medal. She dedicated her bronze medal to the Ukrainian Armed Forces and to all Ukrainian athletes who could not compete at the Olympics because they were called to military duty in the war with Russia.

She shared an embrace with International Olympic Committee (IOC) President

Thomas Bach at the end of the match, a most curious sight after Bach intervened to grant Kharlan a wild card entry into the Games following her controversial disqualification from last year's World Championship for not shaking the hand of a Russian opponent whom she had defeated.

(Based on reporting by Yahoo! Sport via AFP, The Kyiv Independent, Toronto Star and ESPN.)

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

NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 11)

while, reported that its air-defense systems shot down all 24 drones launched by Russia early on August 5 at seven Ukrainian regions – Kyiv, Vinnytsya, Kirovohrad, Kharkiv, Sumy, Poltava and Dnipropetrovsk. In the northeastern Kharkiv region, infrastructure was damaged by falling debris, Gov. Oleh Synyehubov said on Telegram. On August 4, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy officially confirmed the arrival of the long-awaited F-16 fighter jets he has said are crucial to the defense of his country against invading Russian forces. "Now this is really a reality, a reality in our skies, F-16s in Ukraine," Mr. Zelenskyy said during ceremonies marking Air Force of Armed Forces Day in Ukraine, standing on the tarmac in front of the U.S.-made warplanes marked with Ukrainian symbols. Mr. Zelenskyy did not specify how many F-16s were currently in Ukraine but said the air force "has already begun to use them for our country." (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Sentence for attempt to kill Mariupol official

A Russian military court sentenced Ukrainian citizen Mykola Zabirko on August 8 to 6 1/2 years in a high-security prison for an alleged assassination attempt on

Kostyantyn Ivashchenko, Mariupol's former Russia-installed mayor. Mr. Zabirko was accused of attempted terrorism and illegally possessing explosives. Prosecutors alleged that Mr. Zabirko was tasked by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) with monitoring Mr. Ivashchenko and bombing his vehicle. Explosives and a grenade were reportedly found in Mr. Zabirko's possession. The attempted attack on Mr. Ivashchenko occurred in August 2022, but Ukraine has not commented on the incident. (RFE/RL's Current Time)

Hugo Boss exits Russia

Hugo Boss has completed the sale of its Russian business, the German luxury fashion brand has announced, the latest Western company to exit Russia over its unprovoked war in Ukraine. The buyer is wholesale company Stockmann, which acquired Boss's Russian operation for an undisclosed amount. Stockmann operates in Russia separately from its former Finnish owner. Moscow requires that Western firms sell Russian assets at a mandatory discount of 50 percent. Hugo Boss closed its stores in Russia, suspended online sales on the Russian market and stopped advertising in the country shortly after the start of the Kremlin's unprovoked invasion in February 2022. (RFE/RL's Russian Service)

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

Labor Day Swimming Competition



Saturday, August 31st, 2024

Soyuzivka Heritage Center, 216 Foordmore Rd., Kerhonkson, NY 12446

Warm Up 9:00 AM

Meet Begins 9:30 AM Sharp

MEET ENTRY FORM

Name: _____

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Organization Swimmer Represents _____

AGE GROUP

8 & Under _____ 9-10 _____ 11-12 _____ 13-14 _____ 15 & Over _____

Male _____ Female _____

EVENTS (Indicate event numbers using Key Code from opposite page)

Individual Events:

1: _____ 2: _____ 3: _____ 4: _____ 5: _____

Relay: Yes _____ No _____ (teams will be assigned day of event)

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LIST OF EVENTS				
EVENT #	AGE	INDIVIDUAL	AGE	EVENT #
BOYS				GIRLS
1	13 / 14	100m IM	13 / 14	2
3	15 & OVER	100m IM	15 & OVER	4
5	9 - 10	25m Free	9 - 10	6
7	8 & UNDER	25m Free	8 & UNDER	8
9	11 – 12	25m Free	11 – 12	10
11	13 – 14	50m Free	13 – 14	12
13	15 & OVER	50m Free	15 & OVER	14
15	9 - 10	50m Free	9 - 10	16
17	11 – 12	50m Free	11 – 12	18
19	13 – 14	50m Back	13 – 14	20
21	15 & OVER	50m Back	15 & OVER	22
23	8 & UNDER	25m Back	8 & UNDER	24
25	9 - 10	25m Back	9 - 10	26
27	11 – 12	25m Back	11 – 12	28
29	13 – 14	50m Breast	13 – 14	30
31	15 & OVER	50m Breast	15 & OVER	32
33	8 & UNDER	25m Breast	8 & UNDER	34
35	9 - 10	25m Breast	9 - 10	36
37	11 – 12	25m Breast	11 – 12	38
39	13 – 14	100m Free	13 – 14	40
41	15 & OVER	100m Free	15 & OVER	42
43	8 & UNDER	25m Fly	8 & UNDER	44
45	9 - 10	25m Fly	9 - 10	46
47	11 – 12	25m Fly	11 – 12	48
49	13 – 14	50m Fly	13 – 14	50
51	15 & OVER	50m Fly	15 & OVER	52
RELAYS				
53	8 & UNDER	4x25m Free	8 & UNDER	54
55	9 - 10	4x25m Free	9 - 10	56
57	11 – 12	4x25m Free	11 – 12	58
59	13 – 14	4x50m Free	13 – 14	60
61	15 & OVER	4x50m Medley	15 & OVER	62

As F-16s soar...

(Continued from page 1)

"We have held hundreds of meetings and negotiations to strengthen the capabilities of our aviation, our air defense and our defense forces. We often heard the word 'impossible' in response, but we made possible what was our ambition, our defense need, and now it is a reality, a reality in our skies. F-16s in Ukraine. We have ensured it," Mr. Zelenskyy said.

"Ukraine has been asking our partners to close the skies or provide aircraft since the first day of the full-scale Russian invasion. We knew it was possible, that the world has the power to do so. For this purpose, we combined political, diplomatic, and military work. Gradually, step by step, we managed to achieve the result," Mr. Zelenskyy said in a video released on August 8.

While thanking Ukraine's Western partners for providing the jets, the president emphasized that Ukraine will need many more F-16s and trained pilots to counter Russia's presence over Ukraine's skies. He also noted that work should be done to ensure neighboring countries can do more to shoot down Russian missiles flying through Ukrainian airspace in their direction.

"We really need such a coalition today. It is a great responsibility for one neighboring country to help us shoot down missiles. However, I believe this should have been done long ago. I think there is another tool – for NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] countries to discuss with Ukraine the possibility of such a small coalition of neighboring countries that will shoot down enemy missiles," the president said.

Mr. Zelenskyy also noted that he instructed Ukrainian diplomats to prepare a meeting with NATO in the format of the NATO-Ukraine Council to discuss the issue.

Military experts, examining footage from the August 4 ceremony, have drawn initial conclusions about the weaponry carried by the F-16s delivered to Ukraine and they have begun discussing the impact the jets may have on the war.

According to The Economist, Ukraine has received 10 of the promised 79 aircraft, and by the end of 2024 the Ukrainian air force will likely be able to use 20 F-16s. The New York Times reported that Ukraine will be able to use no more than 10 F-16s in combat this year.

The F-16, the world's most common fixed-wing fourth-generation aircraft in service with 25 countries, was originally developed by General Dynamics for the United States Air Force. Since 1976, more than 4,600 F-16s have been produced, making it the most mass-produced combat aircraft in the world. There are more than 10 modifications of the aircraft.

One F-16 Fighting Falcon costs about \$24.8 million. The aircraft can reach a maximum speed of 1,497 mph and has a flight range of 2,622 miles with a practical ceiling of 11.2 miles and a combat radius of 342 miles.

The F-16 fighters handed over to Ukraine can perform any mission if equipped with the right weapons. Maintaining and flying a small number of aircraft will not be a problem for Ukraine, said Anatoliy Khrapchynsky, an aviation expert and deputy director of a Ukrainian company producing electronic warfare systems.

"The aircraft can perform any tasks that will depend on the tasks assigned to the Air Force. These planes can perform both airspace protection and, for example, repelling Russian air raids on the border regions of Sumy and Chernihiv. They can also perform work on the frontline zone and air defense facilities located in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine," Mr. Khrapchynsky said during a television interview.

Mr. Khrapchynsky said that a small number of F-16s can have an impact on the war.

"Even four planes can accomplish a rather difficult task of destroying air defenses and striking important targets. It should be understood that the weapons on these aircraft are important," Mr. Khrapchynsky said.

Though it took almost a year and a half for Ukraine to get the F-16s, several experts noted they could still make a "significant change" at this point in the war.

According to media reports, Ukraine is expected to receive six F-16s by the end of the summer and 20 planes by the end of the year. The agreement to supply Kyiv with Western military aircraft became public in the spring of 2023. Training of Ukrainian pilots began in the late summer of 2023.

In late August of that year, Mr. Zelenskyy's tour of the Netherlands and Denmark ended with a promise from the leaders of these countries to provide the Ukrainian Armed Forces with dozens of F-16 fighter jets.

The Ukrainian president said the Netherlands would provide 42 planes and Denmark would supply 19. At the same time, he also noted that the Armed Forces of Ukraine need at least 128 Western aircraft to counter Russia's air force, which has used about 300 aircraft to attack Ukraine.

Mr. Zelenskyy called the allies' agreement to provide Western fighter jets a "breakthrough" as they could strengthen air defenses and help in a future counteroffensive. U.S. officials have not been as optimistic, as they have said that the F-16s are unlikely to change the situation on the battlefield.

The Telegraph reported that the Ukrainian Armed Forces have already used the F-16s for air defense missions in Ukraine.

Former Russian president and Secretary of the Security Council Dmitry Medvedev said that the provision of "powerful Western weapons" to Ukraine increases the risk of a "nuclear apocalypse."

Russian President Vladimir Putin called Western fighter jets a "legitimate target" for the Russian army, even if they take off from third-country airfields rather than from locations inside Ukraine. He noted that F-16s can also carry nuclear weapons, which Russia will take into account when "organizing combat operations."

Some of Ukraine's F-16s will be deployed from foreign air bases to protect them from Russian strikes, Gen. Serhiy Holubtsov, chief of aviation of the Air Force Command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

Four countries have confirmed their readiness to transfer more of the aircraft, and additional aircraft will gradually be donated to Ukraine as allies upgrade their fleets with fifth generation F-35 fighter jets.

"That's why there will be more of these airplanes. And they will probably be offered to Ukraine as well. As for the 30 planes, 40 planes, it should be understood that not all the aircraft that will be transferred to Ukraine will immediately come to Ukraine. Some will remain in the centers where our pilots and aviation personnel are trained. These will be Ukrainian aircraft that will be used to train our own pilots," Mr. Holubtsov said.

"There is a figure that will come to Ukraine. A certain number of planes will be stored at safe airbases, not in Ukraine, so they are not targets here. If necessary, this will be our reserve to replace faulty aircraft during routine maintenance. That is, we can constantly have a certain number of aircraft in the operational fleet that will correspond to the number of pilots we will have. If there are more pilots, there will be more aircraft in Ukraine," he said.

OUT & ABOUT

- August 12
Bolton Landing, NY Film screening, "Veselka: The Rainbow on the Corner at the Center of the World," The Sembrich, www.thesembrich.org/festival/2024/vreselka
- August 12-16
Somerset, NJ Passport Through Ukraine, summer camp, Ukrainian History and Education Center, <https://ukrhec.org>
- August 15-18
Rochester, NY St. Josaphat Ukrainian Festival, St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Church, <https://rochesterukrainianfestival.com>
- August 17
Jewett, NY Concert with violinist Filip Podady and pianist Pavlo Gintov, Grazhda Music and Art Center of Greene County, <https://grazhdamusicandart.org>
- August 17-18
Lehigh, PA Ukrainian Festival, Ukrainian Homestead, www.ukrhomestead.com or 610-377-4621
- August 17-18
Chicago Uktoberfest, St. Joseph the Betrothed Ukrainian Catholic Church, www.facebook.com/chicagouktoberfest
- August 23
Philadelphia Flag-raising ceremony marking Ukraine's Independence Day, Philadelphia City Hall, 215-686-1776
- August 23
Binghamton, NY Ukrainian Independence Day celebration and flag-raising ceremony, Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (Binghamton, N.Y., Branch), Binghamton City Hall, LMZobniw@aol.com or 607-772-7001
- August 24
Toronto Ukrainian Independence Day Celebration, Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Centennial Park, www.ucctoronto.ca
- August 24
Ottawa Ukrainian Independence Day Picnic, Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Vincent Massey Park (Area H), www.facebook.com/share/VPLden2bnrDeKdVi
- August 24
New York Vyshyvanka Run, marking Ukrainian Independence Day, Ukrainian Running Club New York, Warsaw Ghetto Memorial - Riverside Park, <https://runsignup.com/race/ny/newyork/vyshyvankarunnyc>

- August 24
Jewett, NY Concert with Julian Kytasty and Teryn Kuzma, "Bandura's Journey," Grazhda Music and Art Center of Greene County, <https://grazhdamusicandart.org>
- August 24
Chicago Ukrainian Independence Day commemoration, "Victory for Ukraine, Victory for Democracy," Ukrainian Cultural Center, www.uccaillinois.org
- August 25
Horsham, PA Ukrainian Folk Festival, Ukrainian American Sports Center - Tryzub, www.tryzub.org
- August 25
Trenton, NJ Ukrainian Independence Day celebration, Ukrainian National Home, www.ukrainianhome.com
- August 25
Newtown, CT Ukrainian Festival, Holy Protection of the Blessed Mary Virgin Ukrainian Catholic Church, Paproski Castle Hill Farm, 203-269-5909
- August 31
Wilmington, DE Benefit, "An Evening to Support Wounded Ukrainian Soldiers," Revived Soldiers Ukraine, Chambers Memorial Hall of Millcreek Fire Company, 215-962-7236

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.



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Celebrating the 33rd Anniversary of Ukraine's Independence

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UKRAINIAN-AMERICAN SPORT CENTER - "TRYZUB"

County Line & Lower State Roads, Horsham, PA

info@tryzub.org ~ www.tryzub.org ~ (267) 664-3857



Starting at 12:00 Noon

Live Music & Song

Traditional Ukrainian Ethnic
Foods & Desserts

Ukrainian Folk Arts & Crafts
Market and Displays

Drinks and Cool Refreshments
BBQ & Picnic Foods

1:30 to 4:30 PM

Outdoor Summer Concert in the Tryzub Park

Dynamic program of Ukrainian Music, Song & Dance

Collaboratively arranged and choreographed by the performing artists

Voloshky Ukrainian Dance Ensemble

Violinist Innesa Tymochko Dekajlo

Singer Iryna Lonchyna

Vox Ethnika Ensemble

Desna Ukrainian Dance Co. of Toronto

Exhibits of Ukrainian Kozak History

4:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Live Music: Vox Ethnika Band

Sponsor:



ADMISSION: \$15 ~ KIDS under 15 FREE ~ FREE PARKING

\$2 of each paid admission donated to Humanitarian Relief in Ukraine

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The Ukrainian Weekly,
founded in 1933, is published by
the Ukrainian National Association.



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*APY – Annual Percentage Yield based on a 4.25% rate, subject to change without prior notice, dividend must remain on deposit. Rates effective as of 8/6/2024.



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