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Mali and Niger cut diplomatic ties with Kyiv over alleged support of anti-Wagner Tuareg rebels

by Roman Tymotsko

TRIESTE, Italy – Mali and Niger officially severed diplomatic relations with Ukraine, accusing Kyiv of involvement in a Tuareg rebels' deadly attack on Malian forces and mercenaries of the Russian private military company (PMC) Wagner. The move, announced on August 5, followed comments by a high-ranking Ukrainian official that hinted at Ukraine's role in providing information to the rebels.

The severance of diplomatic relations with Ukraine was announced in a communiqué issued by the transitional government of Mali on August 5. The statement emphasized that the government "took note with a deep surprise of the subversive statements" by the representative of Ukraine's Main Directorate of Intelligence (HUR), Andriy Yusov, who "recognized Ukraine's involvement" in the attack by "armed terrorist groups" that led to the deaths of members of the Malian army.

Earlier, Mr. Yusov hinted during a national telethon at Ukraine's involvement in the killing of pro-Russian militants in the area. Mr. Yusov said that the rebels in Mali had received "the necessary information" to carry out the attacks. Later, Mr. Yusov clarified that he did not claim that Ukraine's military intelligence was involved in the incident.

The rebels received the necessary information and not only the information that

allowed them to conduct a successful military operation against Russian war criminals. We will certainly not talk about the details now, but it will continue," Mr. Yusov said during a national television broadcast, adding that Russia and the Wagner mercenaries have been active in Africa.

Several Ukrainian media outlets, citing HUR sources, published photos of Tuareg rebels with the flag of Ukraine allegedly right after the operation that led to the deaths of Wagner fighters. There was no official confirmation of the flag's origin.

On August 6, the African country of Niger announced the severance of diplomatic relations with Ukraine due to statements by officials allegedly indicating Ukraine's support for groups involved in hostilities in neighboring Mali.

In a statement on Nigerian television, Col. Maj. Amadou Abdramane, a spokesman for the military government, condemned Kyiv's "characteristic acts of aggression," which he said was synonymous with "support for international terrorism."

The Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned Ukraine's Ambassador Yuriy Pyvovarov over a post on the embassy's Facebook page in which the Ukrainian diplomat allegedly expressed support for Tuareg rebels in Mali after they destroyed

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Kyiv invades Russia, captures more land than Moscow did all summer

State of emergency declared in two Russian regions as Ukraine captures 'hundreds' of POWs



Public domain

A Ukrainian soldier removes a Russian flag from a government administrative building in the Kursk regional town of Sudzha earlier this week.

by Mark Raczkiewycz

CHICAGO – Besides being the first major invasion of Russian territory since World War II, the trajectory of the Russo-Ukrainian war is changing amid Kyiv's ongoing invasion of at least two bordering regions in what has become a battle of wills.

Whereas Ukraine makes gains mostly in the Kursk region, Moscow's forces continue making inroads in the easternmost region of Donetsk, namely toward the towns of Pokrovsk, Toretsk and Chasiv Yar.

The outcome of this phase of the war "will be determined by who blinks first and decides that focusing on the losses they are sustaining is more important than the gains they are making elsewhere," said Mick Ryan, an Australian senior fellow for military studies at the Lowy Institute.

Kyiv's forces have penetrated 22 miles into Russian territory as of August 15 in an invasion that has entered its second week, Ukrainian military commander-in-chief Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi said at a staff meeting of security officials the same day that was chaired by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Overall, 82 Russian population centers are under Kyiv's control, he said, and military command has been established in Sudzha, Russia, to provide administrative services and safety to civilians.

Leading the task is Maj. Gen. Eduard Moskalov, his superior, Gen. Syrskyi said.

"To maintain law and order and address the primary needs of the population in the controlled areas, a military command has been established," he said.

Some 444 square miles of terrain is under Ukraine's control, the general said.

In turn, Russia has elevated states of emergencies to the federal level in the Kursk and Belgorod regions. That move empowers authorities to limit the move-

Former Ukrainian National Association president and community leader Stefan Kaczaraj dies

by Andrew Nynka

KERHONKSON, N.Y. – Stefan Kaczaraj, a former Ukrainian National Association (UNA) president and longtime Ukrainian-American community leader dedicated to his community and his family, died on August 10. He was 83.

Mr. Kaczaraj, who was elected president of the UNA at its 35th Regular Convention in 2002, was remembered by many for his legacy of service, leadership and generosity. He served as the UNA's president with distinction until his retirement in 2022. Under his leadership, the UNA flourished, and his tenure was marked by a commitment to the preservation and promotion of Ukrainian culture and community in the United States.

Mr. Kaczaraj served as a director of the Self Reliance New York Federal Credit Union for more than 30 years, including a period as chairman of the Board of



Former Ukrainian National Foundation President Stefan Kaczaraj and his wife, Swiatoslawa (Siania), are pictured in 2016.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Crimea may be Ukraine's trump card against Russia

by Andrii Ryzhenko
Eurasia Daily Monitor

On August 2, residents of occupied Crimea said that they heard explosions and reported an alleged strike on a shipyard used to repair ships of the Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) positioned off the Bay of Sevastopol (The Kyiv Independent, August 2). The Telegram channel "Crimean Wind" also shared footage of burning debris in Sevastopol and claimed that smoke was rising from the BSF's 13th Ship Repair Plant in Kilen Bay (T.me/Crimeanwind, August 1). Earlier this year, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that in 2024 Crimea and the related battle in the Black Sea would become the war's center of gravity. According to Mr. Zelenskyy, the isolation of occupied Crimea and the weakening of the Russian military potential in the region "is extremely important for us because it is a way to reduce the number of attacks from this region."

A successful operation would be an "example for the world" and would have a significant effect inside Russia. The loss of a central element of Kremlin propaganda would show that "thousands of Russian officers died only because of [Russian President Vladimir] Putin's ambitions" (Ukrainska Pravda, January 1; Kuzio, "Crimea: Where Russia's War Started and Where Ukraine Will Win," July 8). This year, strikes from Ukrainian defense forces on military units and facilities in Crimea have become more frequent, both on land and at sea. With new tactics and weapons, these attacks have become more difficult for the Russian military to counter. As a result, Russia's military losses in Crimea have increased. Ukraine's focus on Crimea demonstrates its resilience and dedication to

reclaiming the occupied territories and how it is gaining the initiative at sea (Eurasia Daily Monitor, August 13).

The BSF's basing in Crimea became risky in the summer of 2022 when Ukraine first received cruise missiles and kamikaze drones. Already after the first drone attacks on Sevastopol, the Russian High Command canceled the Navy Day parade in July 2022 and introduced an increased "yellow" threat level for the population (Defence.ua, July 31, 2022). Moscow additionally began checking the readiness of Sevastopol's bomb shelters, which was never done, even during the Cold War (VKontakte, August 22, 2022). Mobile concrete shelters have even appeared on the streets of Crimean cities. The attack on the Kerch Strait Bridge on October 8, 2022, demonstrated Russia's growing vulnerability in Crimea (24TV, October 8, 2023).

After successive Ukrainian strikes, the BSF leadership decided to relocate the fleet's newest ships, submarines and part of the headquarters to Novorossiysk. By the beginning of 2023, a few ships and submarines built after 2014 were relocated to Novorossiysk: two Project 1135.6 frigates, three Project 21631 Buyan-class corvettes, four Project 22160 patrol ships, three Project 636.3 submarines and a large Project 11711 Ivan Gren-class landing ship. At least two-thirds of the fleet continued to be based in Sevastopol, mainly due to the large number of auxiliary fleet vessels (Focus, October 24, 2023). Russian command also considered more distant basing points for the withdrawal of its forces. Thus, the Ochamchira naval base appeared on the territory of the breakaway Republic of Abkhazia in Georgia (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, October 11, 2023, January 17).

(Continued on page 18)

Innovative Ukrainian naval tactics largely nullify Russia's Black Sea superiority

by John C. K. Daly
Eurasia Daily Monitor

On August 2, the Ukrainian General Staff reported that it had again attacked and, this time, destroyed the Rostov-na-Donu Kilo-class attack submarine in Sevastopol, one of the Russian Black Sea Fleet's (BSF) four Kilo-class submarines capable of launching Kalibr cruise missiles (Ukrainska Pravda, August 3). The submarine's destruction leaves the BSF with only the B-265 Krasnodar, B-268 Velikii Novgorod and K-271 Kolpino as submarines capable of carrying Kalibr cruise missiles, torpedoes and naval mines. As the Kremlin's war against Ukraine rages on, Russia is still considered to have the world's third-most powerful navy after the United States and China. While the ground war has turned attritional, the maritime situation is different. In the three years since Russian President Vladimir Putin began his war, Ukraine has damaged, destroyed or sunk at least 15 BSF warships and auxiliaries (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, September 26, November 15, 2023, January 17, March 11, 26). Ukrainian unmanned naval drones have proven to be an elusive and persistent threat, reaching Russian targets hundreds of nautical miles from Ukrainian-controlled shores. By developing innovative weaponry

allied to guerrilla naval tactics to contest Russia's "command of the sea," the Ukrainian Navy has managed several unexpected successes, highlighting the increasingly important role of unmanned systems in modern naval warfare.

Ukraine's first major blow to the Russian Navy came two months after Putin began his full-scale invasion on February 21, 2022. Ukraine sank the BSF flagship Moskva on April 13, 2022, with two R-360 Neptune anti-ship missiles (Ukrainska Pravda, December 13, 2022). Five months later, on September 13, Ukraine used unmanned naval drones to severely damage a Ropucha-class landing ship in Sevastopol, the first time in the history of naval warfare that a "sea drone" had struck and heavily damaged an enemy vessel (Bagnet, September 13, 2023). The attack also severely damaged the Rostov-na-Donu Kilo-class attack submarine in drydock (Ukrainska Pravda, September 18, 2023).

These successes are all the more remarkable given the Ukrainian Navy's parlous state as the war began. Less than a week after it started, the navy's flagship, the elderly Soviet-era Hetman Sahaidachnyi frigate, was scuttled to prevent it from falling into Russian hands (Ukrainska Pravda,

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NEWSBRIEFS

Kyiv gets 4.2 billion euros from E.U.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said on August 13 that his country had received another 4.2 billion euros (\$4.6 billion) from the European Union's Ukraine Facility program. Mr. Shmyhal stressed that the money will be spent to support Ukraine's social and humanitarian sectors as part of the country's efforts to resist Russia's ongoing invasion launched in February 2022. The prime minister added that his cabinet expects to get one more tranche from the E.U.'s four-year program by the end of 2024. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Senior U.S. diplomat holds talks in Kyiv

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James O'Brien met in Kyiv on August 14 with Ukrainian presidential administration head Andriy Yermak, the office of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. Mr. O'Brien arrived in the Ukrainian capital on August 13 and met with Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Minister Dmytro Kuleba and with representatives of Ukrainian civil society. "His presence here in Ukraine sends a strong message: U.S. support for Ukraine does not waiver," U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink wrote on the X social-media site. (RFE/RL)

Ukraine's deputy energy minister dismissed

Taras Melnychuk, the Ukrainian government's envoy in the Verkhovna Rada, announced on August 12 that the cabinet had removed Deputy Energy Minister Oleksandr Kheylo. The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) said earlier that investigators had revealed "a large-scale corruption scheme" organized by an unnamed deputy energy minister, who was accused of accepting a \$500,000 bribe for allowing state-owned coal-producing entities to obtain equipment from coal mines in the country's eastern region of Donetsk, where Ukrainian forces are fighting invading Russian troops. The Ukrainska Pravda agency identified the alleged perpetrator as Oleksandr Kheylo at the time. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Fire at Ukrainian nuclear plant extinguished

A fire at the Russian-occupied Zapo-

rizhia Nuclear Power Plant in southern Ukraine has been "completely extinguished," a Moscow-installed official said on August 12. It was not clear what caused the fire, which started at a cooling tower of the plant at around 8 p.m. on August 11. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy accused Russia of lighting the fire, while Russian officials, including the Foreign Affairs Ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, accused Kyiv of deliberately trying to destroy the plant and sow "nuclear terror." The International Atomic Energy Agency, which has a presence at the facility, said there had been no reported impact on nuclear safety at the site. (RFE/RL's Current Time)

Ukrainian forces attack gas platform

Ukrainian naval and military intelligence forces have attacked and damaged a former offshore gas platform used by Russian forces in the Black Sea, the navy's spokesman said on August 10. Dmytro Pletenchuk said Russian forces used the platform for GPS spoofing to make civilian navigation dangerous. "We cannot allow this," Mr. Pletenchuk said on Facebook. A half a day before the attack Russian forces "threw equipment and military personnel onto the platform," he said, adding that there were no civilians on it. Mr. Pletenchuk said the attack on the platform "was an operation of the Naval Forces of Ukraine and the Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Defense Ministry." The information could not be independently verified. There was no immediate comment from Moscow. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Belarus summons Ukraine envoy

The Belarusian Foreign Affairs Ministry on August 10 summoned the Ukrainian charge d'affaires over alleged airspace violations after authoritarian leader Alyaksandr Lukashenka claimed Ukrainian drones had flown over the country's border with Ukraine. "The Belarusian side demanded that comprehensive measures be taken to rule out any such future incidents in the future which could lead to further escalation of the situation in the

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Zelenskyy urges West to lift restrictions on weapons use as Kursk offensive continues

RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service

KYIV – Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned Moscow's latest deadly attack on civilian areas of Kyiv and urged his Western allies to lift restrictions on the use of weapons deep inside Russia, even as he for the first time indirectly acknowledged his forces' cross-border offensive in Russia's Kursk region.

"The Russians have no geographical restrictions on the use of such weapons – since the first days of the full-scale war, the entire territory of our state has been under constant threat of attack," Mr. Zelenskyy wrote on X on August 11.

"Ukrainians are deeply grateful to all our partners who provide us with air defense systems and combat aircraft. However, to truly stop Russian terror, we need ... strong decisions from our partners – decisions that will lift restrictions on our defensive actions," Mr. Zelenskyy said.

"When Ukraine's long-range capabilities have no limits, this war will definitely have a limit – we will truly bring its just end closer," he wrote.

Late on August 10, Mr. Zelenskyy indirectly confirmed what Russian military bloggers and Western news agencies had reported on Ukrainian forces' advances inside Russia's Kursk region.

"Today, I received several reports from Commander-in-Chief [Oleksandr] Syrskiy regarding the front lines, our actions and the push to drive the war onto the aggressor's territory," Mr. Zelenskyy said.

Ukraine continued its advance into the Kursk region, taking control of several smaller settlements, but it remained unclear if Kyiv's forces would attempt to take Kursk city, the regional capital of 415,000 people.

It also remains unclear how many Ukrainian troops are involved in the drive, with estimates ranging from 1,100 to "several thousand."

Russian officials have acknowledged the breach of the border and ordered the evacuation of tens of thousands of civilians in the area, but have referred to Kyiv's troops



in the region as "Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups."

Ukraine's surprise cross-border incursion in Kursk on August 6 has been described as the biggest attack on Russian soil since Moscow launched its unprovoked, full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Russia on August 10 announced that it had imposed what it called anti-terror measures in the Kursk, Bryansk and Belgorod regions.

The National Anti-Terrorism Committee said in a statement that the measures included the possible evacuation of residents, limits on transport, beefed-up security around sensitive sites and wire taps.

As tensions rose on August 11, Russian ally Belarus said it had begun transferring tanks to its border area with Ukraine after it claimed it had shot down several Ukrainian military drones over its airspace.

Belarus's authoritarian ruler, Alyaksandr

Lukashenka, ordered reinforcements to be sent to the border areas to respond to any "provocations" from Ukraine.

Russian forces launched missile attacks overnight on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, killing at least two people, Ukrainian authorities said on August 11.

The State Emergency Service said a 35-year-old man and his 4-year-old son were found dead in the rubble of a building during search-and-rescue operations. Three others, including a 13-year-old child, were seriously wounded in the attack, it added.

Fragments of a missile fell on residential buildings in the Brovary district, neighboring the capital. Kyiv's military administration said the city's air defense systems had been activated.

Five other regions were being attacked by Russian drones, according to Ukraine's air force.

Cities across Ukraine have been hit regu-

larly by Russian air strikes from missiles and drones. There has been growing concern among many Ukrainians in recent days that Moscow might intensify its air raids in response to Kyiv's recent incursion into Russian territory.

In Russia, Kursk regional Gov. Aleksei Smirnov said that 13 people had been injured by debris from a downed Ukrainian missile that fell on a residential building during the night. Two of the injured were in serious condition, Mr. Smirnov said on August 11.

Residents of the nine-story building were to be evacuated to temporary accommodations, according to Igor Kutsak, mayor of the regional capital of Kursk city.

The whole city was under an air-raid alert, the official said on Telegram. He posted a photo that showed an apartment building with blown out windows and damaged balconies.

In the neighboring Voronezh region, Russian authorities claimed that debris from a downed Ukraine-launched drone damaged an administrative building and a utility facility in the provincial capital of the same name. There were no injuries, they added.

Russia's Defense Ministry said on August 11 that its air-defense units destroyed 16 Ukrainian-launched drones over the Voronezh region, while 14 drones and four Tochka-U tactical ballistic missiles were downed over the Kursk region.

Three drones were downed over the Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine, and one drone each was destroyed over the Bryansk and Orlov regions, the ministry said on Telegram.

The claims cannot be independently verified.

(With reporting by Reuters, AFP and AP)

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In Russia's Kursk region, tales of a frustrated, frantic rush to escape Ukraine's advances

RFE/RL's North Realities

KURSK, Russia – One Russian man refused to leave his border-region home until it was hit with an explosive, and then he and his wife jumped into a neighbor's car to escape.

Another gave up on being evacuated and crawled into a forest, spending two days avoiding land mines and aerial drones before hitching a ride to the city of Kursk. Another woman cried as she waited at a humanitarian aid point in Kursk itself.

"I'm quite honestly very surprised by what's happening. It seems like we don't abandon our own and all that, but here are several thousand [Russian] soldiers in captivity now and now Russian territory is occupied," said Misha, a 35-year-old mechanic who was standing outside a humanitarian aid distribution center. "This is not what I expected when the war began."

Eight days into their stunning invasion – the largest incursion into Russian territory since World War II – Ukrainian forces continue to expand their operations in the southwestern region of Kursk, which shares more than 93 miles of border with Ukraine.

Nearly 386 square miles were believed to be under control of Ukrainian troops as



At a distribution center for humanitarian aid in the southern Russian city of Kursk, workers load and unload supplies for people who have fled ahead of Ukraine's incursion into the region.

of August 14, as Russia's military and security forces scrambled to contain the advances.

Civilian authorities, meanwhile, have struggled to handle the flood of people evacuated, or fleeing, from their homes. As many as 120,000 people were reported to have fled the Ukrainian advances; many have ended up in Kursk, the regional administrative center, whose prewar popu-

lation was about 440,000.

And a growing number of those said they were frustrated with how officials – all the way up to President Vladimir Putin – have responded to the growing crisis.

'We left under fire'

At a distribution center for humanitarian aid in Kursk on August 9, groups of people – many of them evacuees – milled about,

along with riot police trying to keep order as some tried to grab at supplies being unloaded and distributed by volunteers.

"We left under fire, at the last moment," said one woman who gave only her first name, Natasha, and said she was from the village of Korenevo. "My husband didn't want to leave, he kept saying, 'This is my home, I am a man, I will protect it.' We heard tanks and went outside to look at them. A second later, there was nothing left to protect: Either a missile or drones hit the house."

Natasha said she and her husband jumped into a neighbor's car and sped away from Korenevo, located about 17 miles from the border.

"The whole sky was buzzing already, we were flying at some crazy speed. I closed my eyes, grabbed the [door] handle and we got here just like that," she told RFE/RL.

She nodded toward a neighbor who had fled in the same car and was standing nearby, crying.

"Everyone is on edge," Natasha said, adding that the other woman had missed out on a piece of humanitarian aid and was also upset by television reports downplaying the severity of the situation.

"I have two children, I was given three

(Continued on page 7)

Bakery chain Lviv Croissants debuts in U.S., opening first franchise in Atlanta suburb

by Mark Raczkiewycz

CHICAGO – The Atlanta suburb of Roswell marked the first entry into the U.S. market of the popular Ukrainian bakery chain Lviv Croissants.

Its savory French-inspired bakery held a grand opening on August 10 with long lines pictured on the company's social media platforms, as the chain approaches its 200th franchise opening across Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia and now in North America.

U.S. entrepreneur Brett Larrabee – the chief executive of Lviv Croissants USA – and Lviv Croissants corporate co-owner Andrii Halytskyi are the majority owners



The Lviv Croissant bakery in Roswell, Ga., is filled at its grand opening in the Atlanta suburb of Roswell on August 10.

of the eatery.

The franchisee and minority stake holder is Ukrainian pastor Petro Dudnyk, who also co-owns the namesake bakery in the Donetsk regional town of Kramatorsk.

Mr. Dudnyk was attending his son's wedding in the U.S. when Russia's full-blown invasion of Ukraine started in 2022. Mr. Dudnyk, who has remained in the U.S., sourced financing for the venture through a microloan program for refugees and immigrants run by Thrive Community Lending.

"Not only does Lviv Croissants bring a taste of Ukraine to Roswell, but it also brings awareness to important causes," said the non-profit group *Inspiritus*, which funds the community lending project.

"Guests can learn more about United for Ukrainian [U4U] Kids, a program connecting Ukrainian orphans with host families in America, through a QR code on their [Lviv Croissants'] cups," the group said.

The majority partners forged ahead after Mr. Larrabee had noticed long lines outside the bakery's outlets while visiting Ukraine, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

The outlet offers plain croissants, as well as sandwiches that are sweet – filled with peaches – or resemble deli sandwiches that include selections of salami, prosciutto, capicola, ham and chicken.

Other fillings include a variety of cheeses, vegetables and garlic sauce.

Additional sweet offerings include croissants baked with strawberries and Italian-inspired mascarpone cheese and fillings of



Courtesy of Lviv Croissants

A line builds outside the Lviv Croissant bakery at its U.S. grand opening in Roswell, Ga., on August 10.

pistachio cream.

Breakfast sandwiches of the French-inspired buttery crescent-shaped roll come with hunter's sausage, also known as kabanosy, Swiss cheese, egg, as well as lox and cream cheese.

Freshly ground coffee is offered, as are salads, soups and other beverages.

Lviv Croissants is not the only Ukrainian company to break ground in the U.S. The Volyn-based Multi Cook, which produces semi-prefabricated frozen foods, opened its second U.S. franchise in a Chicago suburb in February.

Also expanding is the Nova Poshta cou-

rier chain, which provides express, small parcel delivery faster than Ukraine's state-run Ukrposhta postal service.

Its international expansion is branded as Nova Global and it has shipping units in 11 European countries: Moldova, Poland, Lithuania, Czechia, Romania, Germany, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary and Italy.

And Brands for Ukraine operates as a hub through which consumers can purchase goods whose partial proceeds go either directly to Ukrainians in need or the Armed Forces' needs. They can be found online at <https://www.buyforukraine.com/>.

Kremlin-aligned Russian media minimize Ukraine's Kursk incursion, attempt to check panic

by Robert Coalson

RFE/RL

Russian President Vladimir Putin has described Ukraine's unprecedented incursion into the Kursk region as a "provocation," an "attempt to destabilize" border regions and an act of terrorism. He has avoided using a more eye-catching description: the first invasion of Russia by foreign troops since World War II.

And he has cast it as something that Russia will deal with effectively, even if it has not found a way to do so nearly a week into Kyiv's cross-border offensive.

The state-run, state-controlled and state-influenced outlets that dominate Russian media have largely followed that line, often seemingly seeking to downplay the incursion and assure the domestic audience that it's no big deal – and that, rather than a blow to Russia's war aims and an embarrassment for the Kremlin, it is bound to end up being a bad mistake on Ukraine's part.

"The border area of the territory of the Kursk region is littered with the corpses of Ukrainian fighters and has been transformed into a graveyard of burned-out enemy equipment," an August 12 article in the popular tabloid *Argumenty i Fakty* said, adding that an "enormous number" of Ukrainian attackers had been killed "in just the last few hours."

The paper claimed that Ukraine had lost "nearly 2,000" soldiers during the operation, a number that is higher than some estimates of the size of Kyiv's force in the area. "And that is only according to officially documented kills," it added. "Who knows how many are still littering the forests, ravines and roadside ditches?"

Argumenty i Fakty's take on Ukraine's surprise August 6 incursion into Russia's Kursk region echoed other reports in the

state-owned or Kremlin-controlled media in Russia, where independent reporting has been stifled – even more than it had been previously – since Russia launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

An adequate response'

Reports have focused on the purported failures of Ukraine's military, claiming broadly that Kyiv has invested enormous resources for minimal results. Some have suggested that the incursion will backfire, driving Russia to amplify its war aims.

Both the Kremlin and media outlets that take their cues from the Kremlin appeared uncertain about what to say about the incursion at first, but more recently seem to have settled on a message meant to portray calm and confidence.

"The enemy will, for sure, receive an adequate response, and all the goals we outlined will, no doubt, be reached," Putin said on August 12, adding that the "provocation" had not affected Russia's military operations inside Ukraine.

"It is impossible to destabilize us or sow panic," prominent and avidly anti-Ukrainian presenter Olga Skabeyeva said on Rossia-1, one of the main state television channels. "On the contrary, they have enraged Russians, and everyone now is ready to take up a weapon and make it clear that you cannot deal with Russia in this way."

At the same time, some news reports are laced with notes of concern. Describing the military situation in the Kursk region, Ms. Skabeyeva used a word that can mean "complicated" or "difficult."

Some reports point to a search for scapegoats, with suggestions of blame often landing on a Chechen force in the region and on the chief of the military General Staff, Gen. Valery Gerasimov, who

many accuse of badly mismanaging the war against Ukraine.

The daily *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* reported on August 12 that National Guard forces had repulsed "Ukrainian counterattacks" in the Kursk region. It also found something to like in foreign coverage of the incursion, citing the Associated Press as saying it would be difficult for Ukrainian forces to establish a foothold inside Russia because "their supply lines would be vulnerable to Russian fire."

The popular newspaper *Moskovsky Komsomolets* (MK), controlled by the Moscow mayor's office, claimed the Ukrainian operation was so chaotic that it was difficult to say what Kyiv's forces are trying to achieve.

"Many of their actions seem senseless, as if the Ukrainians themselves do not understand their goals," the paper wrote.

MK's own message was mixed: "On the whole, the situation remains extremely difficult, but under control," it added.

An article in the newspaper *Vzglyad* on August 12 focused not on the battlefield but on the "information space," claiming without evidence that the Ukrainian security agencies had unleashed "numerous fake reports" in order "to sow panic among the people of the region."

One such "fake," the paper claimed, was a photograph purporting to show a "Ukrainian nationalist" standing next to a sign indicating he was just 6 miles from the city of Kursk, the regional capital. The paper said the photograph was taken at the border between the two countries and that a second "0" had been photoshopped out of it. Other "fakes" purportedly were trying to take advantage of "a certain lack of faith the population has toward officials – a weak point of Russian society," according to an academic expert quoted by the paper.

West-blaming

In an August 8 report citing unnamed industry sources, *Meduza*, an independent outlet now based outside Russia, said that the Kremlin had "instructed" state-run and pro-Kremlin media not to describe the incursion as a "new front" in the war or to mention the proximity of the fighting to the nuclear power plant in the Kursk region city of Kurchatov. Rather than focusing on the fighting, media were told to highlight human interest stories such as "blood-donation drives and campaigns to provide shelter to" displaced people, *Meduza* reported.

For example, the country's best-selling tabloid, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, published the dramatic story of a Kursk region monastery that supposedly came under Ukrainian fire in the initial phase of the operation under the headline "The Tanks Were Firing, But They Did Not Interrupt The Liturgy." The monastery's head managed to evacuate its "miracle-working icon" to the city of Kursk.

As there has been throughout Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there was a dose of West-blaming, with reports stating or implying that Western countries were goading or aiding Ukraine in its Kursk incursion. Commentator Aleksandr Kazakov told state-run Channel 1 television that "this is a London story."

"London is our worst enemy," Mr. Kazakov claimed. "They want the hostilities to continue until the last Ukrainian is dead."

Without citing evidence, Ms. Skabeyeva claimed that Ukraine was operating on Russian territory "with the full approval and coordination of the U.S. government and the American president."

Meanwhile, in an August 9 article billed as an "exclusive" look at the "Kremlin's battle plan," *Moskovsky Komsomolets* seemed

(Continued on page 5)

New York University arts student takes top honor at UNA's yearly Miss Soyuzivka competition

by Mark Raczkiewycz

CHICAGO – Philadelphian Sophia Zalipsky, 19, became the latest winner of the Miss Soyuzivka pageant held on August 10 at the Ukrainian National Foundation's Soyuzivka Heritage Center.

Steeped in a tradition that goes back to the first event held in 1956, the pageant is known colloquially as "Miss Suzy Q."

Kalyna Woloszyn, who is currently a counselor with Ms. Zalipsky at the Roma Pryma Bohachevsky Ukrainian Dance Camp, was named runner-up.

The pageant winner did not initially intend to take part in the competition.

Though she has wanted to compete since she was 16, Ms. Zalipsky said she had wavered at the opportunity.

"I was nervous," Ms. Zalipsky said. "It was the last minute, then my sister convinced me and I got the courage to apply."

Applicants were judged by their past achievements, hobbies, as well as goals to help the Soyuzivka resort.

During a 15-minute interview, the Philadelphian said one of the other criteria of judgment was "mental beauty, how you handle yourself, your poise ... and when you win, you are expected to help fundraise and volunteer" at the resort.

She wasn't nervous in front of the panel of three judges because she had "applied at the last minute," Ms. Zalipsky said. "I was calm and collected."



Courtesy of Lisa McDonald

Philadelphian and New York University student Sophia Zalipsky (left), 19, was named Miss Soyuzivka 2024 while Kalyna Woloszyn of Forest Hills, N.Y., was named runner-up at a yearly pageant held at the Ukrainian National Foundation's Soyuzivka Heritage Center on August 10.

Pageant winners receive \$300 from the Ukrainian National Association (UNA) and runners-up receive \$200 from the UNA.

The pageant winner plans to use the \$300 cash prize to erect a memorial for the victims of Russia's war crimes committed against both Ukrainian civilians and military personnel.

Ms. Zalipsky said that she had acted from age five to 17. During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, she pivoted to making movies "to create important stories."

One of her works, a three-minute film on Russia's war crimes, is now part of the curriculum at her high school alma mater.

"I'm a giving person," Ms. Zalipsky said. "Along this path, people have helped along the way ... that's also how the UNA helped me."

The budding cinematographer also plans to "explore fundraising opportunities" for the resort and film another documentary and promotional video about Soyuzivka.

"I want to congratulate [runner up] Kalyna and all the wonderful, talented former and current members of the UNA," Ms. Zalipsky added.

Her "Ukrainian spirit was set on fire" when she first visited Ukraine in 2013 and followed the Euro-Maidan revolution events of 2014," her mother, Christina Zalipsky said. "Soyuzivka for her is a magical, beautiful and inspiring place where she plans to contribute something special."

Kremlin-aligned...

(Continued from page 4)

determined to assure readers that, even if they don't see a very powerful Russian response to the incursion yet, Putin knows

what he's doing and will hit back hard when the time is right.

"Putin refuses to play by the rules set by his 'partners' in Ukraine," MK author Mikhail Rostovsky wrote. "Putin is being pushed to make immediate, dramatic statements and actions. Actions will be taken,

but they will come at a moment that is convenient and beneficial to Russia and to the president, and not at the moment that suits the enemy."

"Pushing the Ukrainian military out of the Kursk region will be only part of his adequate response," the article concluded.

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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

Punching Putin in the nose

In a war where the tides have shifted unpredictably, Ukraine's recent incursion into Russia's Kursk region marks a bold escalation in the ongoing war. Since the start of Moscow's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine has repeatedly crossed into Russian territory, conducting clandestine operations, launching drone strikes and staging raids with unofficial militia groups. However, the latest operation is different. This time, it involves hundreds of uniformed Ukrainian troops, backed by armored vehicles and heavy equipment, seizing control of hundreds of square miles of Russian territory.

This head-snapping incursion, the largest by Ukrainian forces since the war began, is a stark reminder that Ukraine, even as it faces mounting pressure on multiple fronts, is still capable of surprising the world – and its adversary. But as Ukraine takes the fight to Russia, the question arises: Is this a masterstroke of military strategy, or a desperate gamble in a war that has already exacted a heavy toll on both sides?

The Ukrainian advance into Russia's Kursk region comes at a critical juncture in the war. To the southeast of the logistical hub of Pokrovsk, Ukrainian forces are under severe strain. Russian troops are closing in on a major highway, the T-0504, which serves as a vital supply line for Ukrainian forces. If Russia captures this road, it could severely disrupt Ukrainian logistics, making it difficult to sustain operations along the 684-mile front line.

In this context, Ukraine's decision to launch an offensive into Russian territory can be seen as a feint – a move designed to force Russia to divert attention and resources away from its advances in the Donbas region. By creating a new front in the Kursk region, Ukraine may be hoping to alleviate some of the pressure on its beleaguered forces in the south. The incursion also serves as a powerful psychological blow to the Kremlin and Russian tyrant Vladimir Putin, demonstrating that Russia is not invulnerable within its own borders.

However, this incursion is not without significant risks. Diverting a battle-hardened battalion from the front lines to stage an incursion into Russia is a gamble, especially when Ukrainian forces are already stretched thin. The success of this operation is far from guaranteed. Analysts suggest that while Ukraine may have seized a substantial amount of territory, holding it is another matter entirely. Russian forces, once they recover from the initial shock, are likely to mount a fierce counteroffensive to reclaim the lost ground.

The broader context of the war is one of attrition. Both Ukraine and Russia have suffered heavy casualties, and the front lines have become increasingly static. Ukrainian forces, exhausted and facing numerical inferiority, have nonetheless managed to hold their positions through sheer determination. But the strain is showing. Reports indicate that Ukrainian units are running low on manpower and ammunition, and the recent mobilization efforts may not bear fruit until later in the year.

In this war of attrition, Ukraine's ability to sustain its defenses and mount counteroffensives is increasingly in doubt. The recent incursion into Kursk, while a daring move, may not be enough to turn the tide. As the war drags on, the question becomes whether Ukraine can continue to surprise its adversary and the world – or whether the grinding reality of attrition will force it into a more defensive posture.

As the war enters its 900th day, one thing is clear: Ukraine is not backing down. Whether this latest move will prove to be a strategic masterstroke or a desperate gamble will be revealed in the days and weeks to come. But one thing remains abundantly clear. The U.S. must lift any and all restrictions it has placed on Ukraine with regard to using Western weapons to strike inside Russia. The time is now. Ukraine has proven its desire, determination and ability to end this war. It simply must be allowed to take the figurative boxing gloves off and punch its opponent directly and squarely in the nose.

Aug.
24
2021

Turning the pages back...

Three years ago, on the 30th anniversary of Ukraine's renewed independence on August 24, 2021, The Ukrainian Weekly in its independence day issue provided readers with a timeline of events that led to the proclamation of Ukraine's independence on August 24, 1991, and its affirmation by a nationwide referendum on December 1, 1991.

The timeline began with the election of writer Ivan Drach to head Rukh, the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Perebudova (Reconstruction), at its founding congress in Kyiv on September 8-10, 1989.

The timeline also noted that, on December 17, 1989, approximately 30,000 people attended a public meeting hosted by Rukh in Kyiv, dedicated to the memory of Dr. Andrei Sakharov, a human rights campaigner and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

Rukh organized a 300-mile human chain, with hundreds of thousands of people who joined hands linking the cities of Kyiv, Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk on January 21, 1990. The event also commemorated Ukraine's proclamation of independence in 1918 and the reunification of Ukrainian lands in 1919.

The timeline then noted that Soviet Ukraine held national elections on March 4, 1990. Candidates from the Democratic Bloc won landslide victories in western Ukrainian regions. A majority of the seats in parliament were forced into run-off elections on March 18, 1990, and the Democratic Bloc held 90 seats in the new parliament.

Parliament overwhelmingly approved the Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine on July 16, 1990, with 355 members voting in favor and four voting against. National deputies voted 395-5 to proclaim July 16 a national holiday.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on September 30, 1990, proposed a new union treaty, which sparked massive protests in Kyiv that attracted nearly 100,000 demonstrators. The following day, Ukraine's parliament called for the resignation of its chairman, Leonid

(Continued on page 23)

Putin's war myths crumble as Ukraine advances in Kursk Oblast

by Ksenia Kirillova
Eurasia Daily Monitor

On August 6, Ukrainian forces entered Russia's Kursk region, and the situation on the border remains tense (Kyiv Independent, August 8). According to official Russian reports, 28 villages were under the control of Ukrainian forces as of August 12 (RTVI.com, August 13). However, Ukrainian sources reported on August 13 that the Ukrainian army controls 74 settlements (The Kyiv Independent, August 13). Additionally, on the morning of August 12, the Ukrainian Armed Forces launched an attack on the Kolotilovka checkpoint in Krasnoyarsk district of Belgorod Oblast (News.ru, August 12). Residents lament that Sudzha and other populated areas have been "turned to dust" as a result of the shelling (BBC-Russian Service, August 8). According to independent journalists, the Russian General Staff led by Gen. Valery Gerasimov and the Kremlin ignored intelligence reports about the concentration of Ukrainian forces near the border.

The intelligence apparently warned about the possible preparation of an offensive two weeks before Ukrainian troops entered Russia. The General Staff, however, decided not to inform Russian President Vladimir Putin about the threat. Along with Ukraine's impressive operational security, this resulted in the Russian army being caught off guard and Ukrainian troops entering the country against weak resistance (Istories.media, August 8). Russia's reluctance to upset Putin and the need to maintain its image relies on myths of Russian greatness, which will only last so long as the Russian people are not personally affected by the war (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, December 21, 2023, July 29). Eventually, Putin's myths will be revealed for the falsehoods they are, likely leading to widespread discontent and creating enemies both inside and outside Russia.

Moscow's lack of preparation for a Ukrainian breach is not surprising given that practically all of modern Russia's foreign and, in large part, domestic policies are built on myths that diverge from the actual state of affairs. In addition to the purely pragmatic goal of holding onto power, the pseudo-historical myths about the impossibility of Ukraine's existence as an independent state formed the basis for Putin's aggression against Ukraine, which the Russian leader then parroted during his interview with U.S. television personality Tucker Carlson in February (Kremlin.ru, July 12, 2021, February 9; Kuzio, "Crimea: Where Russia's War Started and Where Ukraine Will Win," July 8).

At the beginning of the full-scale invasion, U.S. intelligence reported that those close to Putin were not providing him with accurate information on what was really happening at the front (BBC-Russian Service, March 31, 2022). Russian analytical centers and think tanks assigned to develop foreign policy strategy, while taking into account the actual international situation, only promote and rationalize Putin's myths about the leading role of Moscow in the coming technological cycle and the unification of the "global majority" around Russia with the goal of upending the current world order (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, June 26). Additionally, Russia's own mythology is being created on the battlefield, while real intelligence is not allowed to reach the troops. A recent and persistent propaganda narrative has been the illusion of a quick and predetermined

Russian victory in which "defeatist sentiments" are not allowed (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 10). These myths can only go so far before their falsehoods are revealed.

Russian propaganda myths long ago became not only a means of fooling the population but also a vector that defined the work of the most important areas of government activity: foreign policy analysis, intelligence, the military and even the fight against terrorism (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, March 28). In all these spheres, Russian officials and security forces strive to achieve the Kremlin's desired results.

A similar mythological consciousness is beginning to permeate all levels of Russian society. A recent journalistic investigation shows that Russian officials enjoy fantasy role-playing games. For many of them, these games have become the primary motivator for participation in the war, as users have decided to "use their combat experience." According to one of these officials, Russian politics is "heavily gamed," and the players strive for maximum realism. "What could be more believable than real-life battles?" he said (Verstka.media, August 9). Notably, the main culprit of Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine in 2014, Igor Girkin (Strelkov), was also fond of military games and historical reconstruction (Dzen.ru, July 22, 2023).

The primary beneficiaries of such views are corrupt officials who, by demonstrating fake results, can steal state funds with relative impunity. This was one of the reasons for the Ukrainian incursion into the Kursk region. Russian generals and military correspondents have expressed their outrage over the billions of stolen rubles that should have been spent on minefields, anti-tank ditches and other defense elements (Tsargrad.tv, August 12). According to conscripts caught off guard by the Ukrainian offensive, they had neither adequate weapons nor instructions from their commanders (Verstka.media, August 12). Russian media also reported that fresh conscripts are now being thrown into the combat zone to repel the attack (TSN.ua, August 11).

Concurrently, Russian propaganda is constructing a new myth intended to justify the failure in the Kursk region in the eyes of the public. The most important aspect of this new propaganda is references to the "Kursk Bulge," inspired by one of the main battles of World War II (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, August 15, 2023; Business-gazeta.ru, August 9). Propaganda efforts have also focused on mixing news from the border regions with news from the front, thereby turning them into the standard "military reports" that most Russians are already accustomed to and may ignore. For example, military analysts argue that Ukraine's taking of Sudzha in the Kursk region cannot be compared to the importance of Pokrovsk in the Donbas, which has been the main thrust of the current Russian offensive (Topwar.ru, August 9). Reports from Russian border territories are presented under the rubric of "News from the SVO [special military operation]," no different from reports from Ukraine's Donbas (News.ru, August 12).

In the third year of war, most Russians have become accustomed to reports of shelling and deaths. Moreover, thanks to propaganda, the concept of "Russian lands" has become extremely vague and is often used to refer to Ukrainian territory. Due to this, many Russians have not felt the psychological effect of the war coming to their

(Continued on page 10)

Kyiv invades...

(Continued from page 1)

ment of civilians near areas of hostilities.

More than 200,000 civilians have been evacuated from the border regions since August 6 when the invasion started, Russian authorities said on August 15, according to Reuters, which cited Kursk acting Gov. Alexei Smirnov.

West Point's Modern War Institute wrote this week that "Ukraine raises the likelihood that Kursk will be remembered with decidedly less pride in this newest chapter of Russian political and military history."



Public domain

A Ukrainian soldier stands outside a convenience store in the Russian regional town of Sudzha in the Kursk region earlier in the week.

"Hundreds" of mostly young Russian conscripts have been taken prisoner in Ukraine's incursion with some experts saying that up to 2,000 are being held captive in anticipation of a swift prisoner exchange to free Ukrainian troops and civilians who have been detained for one to two years in dismal conditions under often torturous conditions. Those who have been returned home are often found to be malnourished.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's General Staff of the Armed Forces reported more success in conducting drone strikes at four airfields inside Russia over the week in the Voronezh, Nizhniy-Novgorod and Kursk regions.

Ukraine's air force also reported shooting down a Su-34 Fullback multi-role strike aircraft this week as well.

"The war being brought to Russian doorsteps – beyond the missile and drone attacks that Ukraine prosecuted earlier this year in the Belgorod region – changes the stakes of the war, invites new contemplations on its possible outcome, and weakens [Kremlin leader Vladimir] Putin's image as the capable political leader and strong military commander Russians need to ensure their security," the Modern War Institute wrote.

Putin is considering a second wave of troop call-ups as a result of the invasion, Bloomberg reported on August 13. The first mobilization spurred an exodus of mostly middle-class, educated Russians who fled to Kazakhstan, Georgia or European Union states.

New Russian military recruits are now being paid a bonus of \$4,000 if they enlist, according to Putin's decree of July 31.

U.S. President Joe Biden also for the first time commented on Ukraine's daring incursion.

"It's creating a real dilemma for Putin, and we've been in direct contact, constant contact, with the Ukrainians. That's all I'm going to say about it while it's active," Mr. Biden told reporters in New Orleans on



Official X page of Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (head of the table) chairs a staff meeting on the front-line situation and the invasion of Russian territories with security officials, including Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi who participates virtually (on screen) on August 15.

August 13.

His White House spokesperson, John Kirby, said that "this is Putin's war against Russia. And if he doesn't like it, if it's making him a little uncomfortable, then there's an easy solution: He can just get the hell out of Ukraine and call it a day."

Kozak historical march on Moscow

The invasion comes some 400 years after a group of kozaks, the freedom-loving steppe warriors who roamed most of what is modern-day Ukraine, also launched an attack on the Russians

Led by Hetman Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny, a kozak campaign was waged against then-Moskovy in the early 17th century that led to the siege of Moscow in 1617-1618.

It was during what Russian historians

call the "Times of Trouble" and was halted when the heads of several Eastern rite Christian churches in other countries urged the Ukrainian leader to not enter Moscow.

Ukrainian historian Volodymyr Serhiychuk told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that the final advance was also called off because a contingent of kozaks refused to fight against fellow Orthodox Christian believers.

During their campaign, the kozaks took a route through Rylsk, a town that is currently in the war zone of the Kursk region. They then passed through Ryazan along what is known as the "Golden Circle" around Moscow.

Konashevych-Sahaidachny died in Kyiv of wounds he sustained fighting in Khotyn in 1622 in what is now the Chernivtsi region of Ukraine.

In Russia's...

(Continued from page 3)

pillows, and there weren't enough for her," she said. "Then in the evening, she saw on television how it turns out that everything is fine here, we are 'keeping our spirits up,' 'holding on,' and 'feeling the support of the whole country and the president.'"

"The support of the country is more than enough, we don't need the support of the president," Natasha said of Putin. Asked to explain, she said: "What's he to us? It's too bad that 'one shouldn't vote for him' became clear [only] when they started shooting at us."

Standing not far away, Misha, a mechanic from Bolshoye Soldatskoye, a village 19 miles from the border, described how days earlier he had requested help in evacuating but gave up after getting no response and went into a nearby forest to hide.

"I realized there would be no evacuation. Maybe the evacuation trucks had already been destroyed," said Misha, who did not want his last name published. In the forest, he saw drones overhead and worried he would be targeted.

"There were mines in the forest. Dark green and brown petals. I had to walk very slowly. If you step on one, you're out a foot, then you have to crawl," he said. "On the first day, I was hoping to find something to eat, but there was nothing. On the second day, I thought I'll eat frogs; it had just rained, there were a lot of them."

After at least two days, he said, he heard cars honking on a road, and he flagged down a ride to Kursk.

He said he was frustrated because early on after the launch of the all-out invasion in February 2022 Russian authorities had

said the operation would be over quickly and that Russian forces would "liberate" Ukraine's Donbas region – a reference to Kremlin propaganda that falsely asserted the Donbas was being illegally occupied by Ukraine's government.

At the beginning, he said, "I thought we would quickly liberate the Donbas, incorporate it into Russia, and that would be that. But then there was more, it turned out.

"Some people talk about Kherson, some talk about Odesa," he said, referring to other regions of Ukraine that Russian forces have targeted. "But 'salvation' has now reached the stage where we need to save the Kursk region. My house needs to be liberated now."

Why is everything happening so ineptly?

Olga, a 50-year-old woman who lives in St. Petersburg, said her mother, Lyudmila, does not want to leave her home in Kursk, even though city services are slowly shutting down.

"My mother says today almost all buses and trolleybuses stopped running, and trams – only taxis [remain]. There are water shortages again," Olga told RFE/RL by telephone from St. Petersburg.

"My mother thinks nothing terrible is happening," she said, adding that her mother thinks the situation closer to the border – such as in the town of Sudzha, which Ukrainian commanders have claimed – is not as bad as it is being portrayed.

"She thinks everything is too exaggerated about Sudzha," Olga said. "She says: 'This is deliberately being whipped up on the internet to scare us.'"

Natasha, the woman from Korenevo, said that for many of those who have been evacuated, there is palpable frustration

with how the humanitarian situation has evolved, not to mention the entire war.

"I understand everything. ... Why is everything happening so ineptly?" she complained.

She pointed to a spate of high-profile corruption investigations in recent months that have targeted top Defense Ministry officials, as well as past reports that Russian soldiers had looted Ukrainian homes of toilets in the early months of the invasion.

"Generals are being jailed. There's no end in sight to the war. It turns out that there are only thieves there, in our army,"

she said. "Maybe the theft of toilets isn't fake, either?"

NOTE: This story is based in part on reporting by a correspondent from RFE/RL's North Realities on the ground in Russia. The name is being withheld for their protection.

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Former...

(Continued from page 1)

deep appreciation for freedom and hard work, values he would pass on to his children and grandchildren. In 1966, he graduated from City College with a bachelor's degree in business administration, which set the stage for a long and successful career.

After completing his education, Mr. Kaczaraj joined the U.S. Army, where he served with distinction as a specialist fifth class in the Office of the Executive for Requirements in Washington, D.C. His time in the military was marked by his commendable performance, reflecting the discipline and commitment that would define his professional and personal life. He was honorably discharged in 1968, returning to New York where he would soon meet his future wife, Swiatoslawa (Siania), at a Ukrainian dance hosted by the Ukrainian Chorus Dumka. The two married in 1970 and spent the next 54 years together.

Mr. Kaczaraj began his professional

career at the accounting firm of David Berdon & Co. in 1968 where he worked as a public accountant. His deep connection to his Ukrainian heritage led him to the in 1993, where he served for nearly 30 years, including over 25 years as an executive officer.

When not engaged in community activities, Mr. Kaczaraj enjoyed spending time at the Soyuzivka Heritage Center and being with his beloved family. He is survived by his wife, Siania, his daughters Adriana (Hal) and Talia (Barry), his grandchildren Alexa, Gregory and Ella, and his sister Maria (Michael). He was preceded in death by his parents, Anna (née Seniw) and Mykhailo.

Funeral services were to be held at St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church in Whippany, N.J., on August 17, followed by burial at Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery in Campbell Hall, N.Y.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made in Mr. Kaczaraj's honor to the Ukrainian Catholic University, the Ukrainian National Foundation, Inc. (Ukrainian Weekly/Svoboda Press Fund), or the Ukrainian Museum.



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Mali and Niger...

(Continued from page 1)

the Wagner unit.

The ministry said that Senegal adheres to the position of "constructive neutrality" in Russia's war on Ukraine and constantly calls on the warring parties to "give preference to peaceful means of settlement."

"Senegal cannot tolerate any attempts to transfer media propaganda conducted in this conflict to its territory. Likewise, our country, which rejects terrorism in all its forms, cannot accept comments and gestures in favor of terrorism on its territory, especially when the latter is aimed at destabilizing a brotherly country like Mali," the Senegalese Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a statement.

The Facebook page of the Ukrainian Embassy in Senegal does not include posts about Wagner's defeat in Mali.

According to the African news agency APA, the embassy's social media page featured a video with a representative of Ukrainian intelligence, who said that the Tuareg rebels had received all the necessary information during their clashes with the Malian army and the Wagner unit. The video was allegedly accompanied by a comment from the Ukrainian ambassador, which the Senegalese authorities considered inappropriate.

The Tuareg are an ethnic group that lives in the Sahara Desert, inhabiting part of northern Mali. The group rebelled against the government of the Malian junta in 2012 and is trying to create an independent state, Azawad, in the north of Mali. In 2015, Tuareg signed a peace agreement with Mali. In January 2024, the Malian military leadership withdrew from that treaty.

On July 28, Tuareg rebels in Mali announced that dozens of Wagner mercenaries had been killed and wounded in two days of fighting near the Algerian border.

Subsequently, a post allegedly from the Malian rebel movement CSP-PSD appeared on the social networking site X with a proposal to hand over captured Wagnerites to Ukraine.

Commenting on the alleged proposal of Malian rebels to hand over the captured Wagner mercenaries to Ukraine, Mr. Yusov noted that this is sensitive information but said that everything Ukraine does is within the framework of international law.

The African media outlet AES Info, which covers news from Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, wrote that "Ukrainian drone operators were on the side of the terrorists." Rebel spokesman Mohamed Elmauloud Ramadan published a post in which Ukrainians allegedly congratulated Tuareg on their victory with an inscription on a shell attached to a drone. It was not possible to verify the claim.

Wagner supports local political leaders in Africa and provides security for areas rich with natural resources, among them gold, uranium and lithium.

After the death of Yevgeny Prigozhin in a plane crash last August, some of the Wagnerites in Africa came under the leadership of the Russian Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces. Since the beginning of 2024, Wagner has resumed recruiting in African countries.

The Wagner group operates in Mali, Libya, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mozambique and the Central African Republic. In the Central African Republic, according to the BBC, Wagner members are now led by Yevgeny Prigozhin's son, Pavel.

According to The Economist, the Wagnerites have been active in several other African countries: Cameroon, Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

On January 26, 2023, the United States recognized Wagner as a transnational criminal organization.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine issued a statement regarding the decision by Mali and Niger to break off diplomatic relations with Ukraine. On August 13, Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Heorhii Tykhyi elaborated on the topic during a briefing with the press.

"Ukraine has expressed its position on these decisions of Mali and Niger. We have strongly rejected all accusations of allegedly 'supporting international terrorism,' as these countries have said. This, by the way, is part of the Russian narrative, Russian propaganda, creating this image of Ukraine's involvement in some kind of terrorism," Mr. Tykhyi said.

"We are very sorry that these two countries made their decisions hastily, short-sightedly, and without providing any evidence, without studying the causes of the incident in northern Mali, and without providing any substantial grounds for such a step. Mali was the first, and Niger was the second to follow this Russian position. We are well aware that these countries have ties with Russia and that they are dependent on Russia. Therefore, we understand that these decisions were not made by these countries alone," Mr. Tykhyi said.

"I want to emphasize that these two decisions will not have a significant impact on the development of Ukraine's relations with African countries. This is a separate block of countries, a few countries that have acted as they have decided to act. Despite this, Ukraine is actively implementing the African Strategy. Even the minister's African tour shows that these decisions that were made during the tour did not affect the negotiations with the countries we visited, the signing of agreements with them, or the joint positive statements we made with them," he said.

"Despite these decisions, which we consider short-sighted and hasty, Ukraine will continue to develop relations with African countries," Mr. Tykhyi said.

Putin's war...

(Continued from page 6)

country's territory – at least, until it affects them personally (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, October 25, November 13, 2023).

Independent observers note, however, that those Russians who were prepared to go to war as volunteers have already joined the army. Therefore, attacks in the border areas will likely not lead to an increase in those wishing to go to the front (Youtube.com, August 11). The remaining Russians are prepared to accept any propaganda myth so long as it does not conflict with the reality of their own lives. This may be seen

if Moscow finally announces a new mobilization, especially if that new wave pulls from Russia's city centers (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, April 30, July 10). Under such circumstances, public sentiments related to the war are likely to change completely.

The Kremlin is digging its own grave by perpetuating these myths. When reality does break this skewed perception of the world, Putin will have to face a population of disenchanted and discontent people.

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New research shows impact of Holodomor on contemporary cases of type 2 diabetes

by Oleh Wolowyna and L.H. Lumey

NEW YORK – A article recently published in *Science*, the leading journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, on fetal exposure during the Ukraine famine of 1932-1933, known as the Holodomor, and adult type 2 diabetes mellitus (adult-onset diabetes) documents one of the long-term health consequences of the Holodomor. A number of studies have already suggested that exposure to extreme famine during pregnancy could increase the chance for the child to develop type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) later in life. The article shows that, among all man-made famines where this relationship was tested, survivors of the Holodomor had the highest risk of T2DM. The authors of the article include two epidemiologists based in the United States, a diabetes specialist, (Ukrainian) and two demographers (one American and one Ukrainian). A companion article in the same issue of the journal *Science* provides additional comments on the article.

Around 2020, one of the authors saw an article published in 2015 in the *Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology* medical journal titled "Association between type 2 diabetes and prenatal exposure to the Ukrainian famine of 1932-1933: a retrospective cohort study." The authors of the article were, in addition to one of the authors of this story, a professor in the epidemiology department at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. That author, Dr. Mykola D. Khalangot, a diabetes specialist at the Komisarenko Institute of Endocrinology and Metabolism in Ukraine, and Dr. Alexander M. Vaiserman, a researcher at the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine.

The article provided evidence that persons born in 1934 in oblasts of Ukraine experiencing extreme famine had a 50 percent chance increase in T2DM, and persons born in oblasts with severe famine had a 30 percent increase. Compared with similar studies of other man-made famines these were impressive results. However, the authors pointed out that the study had several limitations. First, estimates of famine intensity used in the study were problematic due to the limited data available when these estimates were made. Second, the population at risk of T2DM was defined by persons in the 2001 census of Ukraine; these data have survival and migration problems. Third, census data were available for only seven of the 17 oblasts of Soviet Ukraine in 1933 and two of the seven oblasts of Western Ukraine. These nine oblasts were not a representative sample of Ukraine's population.

Considerable progress has been made in Holodomor research since the article's publication. Working with a group of demographers at the Institute of Demography and Social Studies in Kyiv and using very detailed data and more sophisticated analysis methods, one of the authors of this story estimated Holodomor losses not only for Ukraine but also for oblasts by age and sex and for urban and rural areas. The team also made detailed analyses of the monthly surge in rural Holodomor losses in 1933, a unique characteristic of the Holodomor. Most of this research has been published in Canadian and American scholarly peer-reviewed journals.

Dr. Oleh Wolowyna is a Fellow at the Center for Slavic, Eurasian and E. European Studies, Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. L. H. Lumey is a professor in the epidemiology department at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. He is an expert on early life shocks and their impact on adult health, with many publications on the topic.

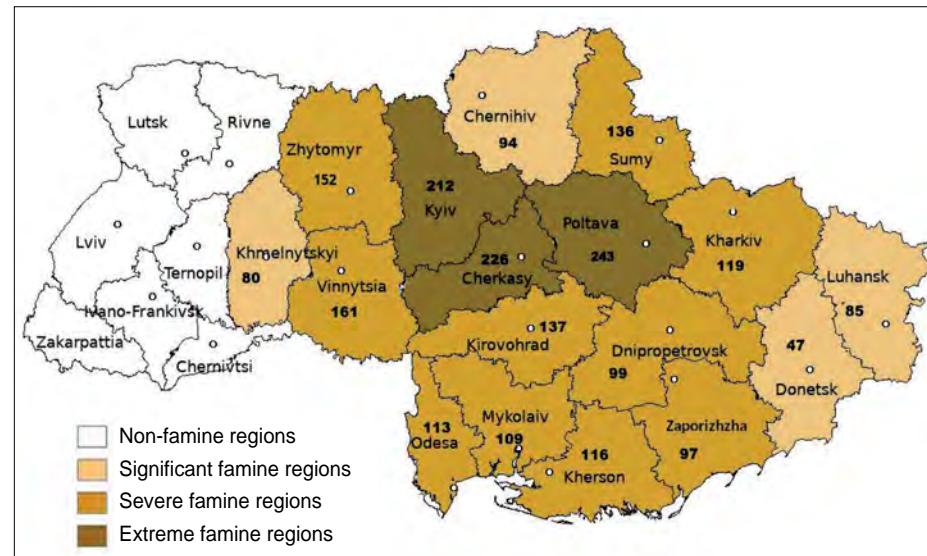


Figure 1. Regional distribution of 1923-1934 famine losses (per 1,000 population) by level of famine: significant (47 to 94), severe (97 to 161) and extreme (212 to 243).

Dr. Oleh Wolowyna contacted Dr. L.H. Lumey around 2020 and showed him the results of the team's demographic research. He explained how these new results and available demographic tools could be used to address some unresolved problems of the *Lancet* study. He suggested that it might be worth trying to update the original study and presented this idea to his colleagues at the Institute of Demography. The team also met with the Ukrainian collaborators on the *Lancet* study. It was decided to start work on the new project with the original team, expanded by two demographers, Dr. Nataliia Levchuk and Dr. Wolowyna.

The project had several challenges: it needed to use more accurate estimates of famine intensity for the 17 oblasts comprising the Soviet Union during the Holodomor; it needed to develop a better population at risk for T2DM; and it needed to obtain census data for the missing oblasts.

Better estimates of famine intensity – number of excess deaths divided by 1,000 – for the 17 oblasts, with excess deaths defined as the difference between the number of deaths during the Holodomor years and deaths had there been no famine during the same period, were already available. The census population at risk was replaced by cohorts of births by oblast and sex; and a representative five percent sample of the 2001 census was constructed to generate the missing data and do more detailed analyses of migration.

Estimates of excess deaths and birth cohorts are based on a method of population reconstruction. The method estimates the actual population dynamics between the 1926 and 1939 censuses: yearly populations, births, deaths and net migrants. All the data were evaluated and relevant corrections made before they were used in the reconstruction. For example, the 1939 cen-

sus population of Ukraine was deliberately increased by 800,000 by the Soviets to hide to some degree the population losses caused by the Holodomor. A major problem was the estimation of under-registration of births and deaths, especially in 1933.

According to our estimates, about 30 percent of births and more than half of deaths were not registered that year.

The population reconstruction provides all the data needed to estimate excess deaths and famine intensity – yearly total numbers of deaths, populations and number of deaths had there been no famine – and the annual births needed as population at risk for T2DM for the 17 oblasts. Births for the seven oblasts of Western Ukraine were estimated by analyzing data from Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia, as Western Ukraine was divided among these countries at that time.

Oblast were grouped into four categories, according to the level of famine intensity of the oblast: no famine (Western Ukraine), severe famine, very severe famine and extreme famine.

As shown in the map, there was significant variation in famine intensity among the 17 oblasts affected by the Holodomor, from 47 excess deaths per 1,000 population in Donetsk Oblast to 243 in Poltava Oblast.

Yearly births and deaths were disaggregated by month to pinpoint more precisely the timing of famine intensity, the beginning of the pregnancy and the birth nine months later. A database of nine years of births and diabetes cases was constructed by oblast, famine intensity and months aggregated by semester and sex. Linking the demographic data with diabetes data, we obtained 128,000 cases of T2DM, registered by the Ukrainian National Registry of Diabetes during 2000-2008. They were survivors of the more than 10.2 million persons born between 1930 and 1938 who

developed T2DM later in life.

The period 1930-1938 was chosen to examine the relationship between births and T2DM before, during and after the famine. Only births during the first semester of 1934 had increased risk of T2DM. The risk of diabetes was dependent on the famine intensity. Compared to unexposed controls, births in oblasts with extreme and very severe famine intensity had a 2.4-fold increase in developing T2DM later in life, while the rise for births in severe oblasts was increased 1.9-fold. No significant increased risk of developing T2DM was found for births in any of the other periods between 1930 and 1938. The results were similar for men and women.

The study produced three results. First, survivors of the Holodomor had the highest risk of developing T2DM later in life among all man-made famines where this risk was analyzed.

Second, this risk is directly related to famine intensity, and this result indirectly supports the accuracy of our estimates of excess deaths. Third, the increased risk of T2DM was found only after famine exposure in the early stages of the pregnancy. This is an important result for further research on the mechanisms of the effect of famine on T2DM.

One study of a famine in Austria also showed a two-fold increase in developing T2DM. This study had some uncertainties, however, about famine severity and people's exposure to it. The *Science* study had a very large number of cases and more detailed and precise data. Dr. Peter Klimek, the author of the commentary of the *Science* article (and one of the authors of the Austrian study) described the *Science* study as having "unprecedented scope and precision" and said, "I haven't seen anything where this has been done more comprehensively."

What accounts for such drastic consequences of the Holodomor? A specific characteristic of the Holodomor is that most losses are concentrated in a short period. Three and a half million of the 3.9 million 1932-1934 excess deaths happened in 1933, and 84 percent of the 1933 excess deaths occurred during the year's first seven months.

During most of 1932, the famine in Ukraine was part of a more generalized famine in several regions of the Soviet Union. The leading causes of the famine were the collectivization of farms, excessive grain procurement quotas, mismanagement of the collectivization process, and active resistance to these policies. The character and intensity of the Holodomor changed drastically toward the end of 1932. Stalin implemented a set of measures in Ukraine that transformed the famine into a tool of terror and caused an explosion of mortality during the first half of 1933.

Holodomor losses experienced an extraordinary increase during the first six months of 1933. The number of excess deaths increased in Soviet Ukraine almost 10 times, from 88,000 in January to 841,000 in June. At the famine's peak in June 1933, there were, on average, 28,000 Holodomor-related deaths per day.

Births during the first half of 1934 were exposed to extraordinary levels of famine during gestation in the first half of 1933. Survivors of these births with T2DM, captured in the national diabetes registry, provide the evidence of the effect of the Holodomor on T2DM later in life.

Besides its important contribution to the medical field, this study has broader implications.

Regrettably, the Holodomor is still not widely known outside Ukraine and the

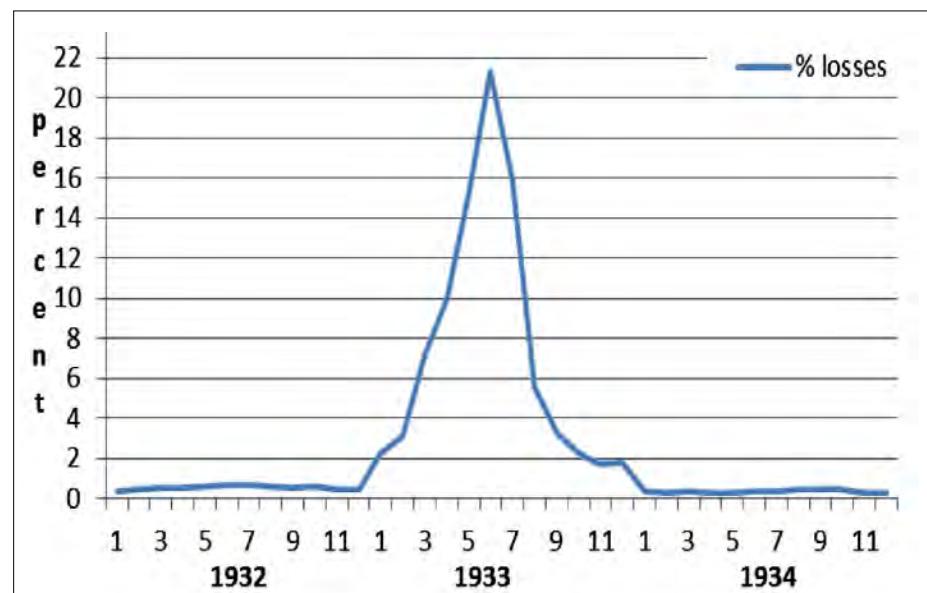


Figure 2. Percent monthly distribution of Holodomor losses: 1932 - 1934

(Continued on page 18)

NTSh of Canada announces 2024 research scholarship and academic publication grant winners

by Ulana Plawuszczak Pidzamecky

The Shevchenko Scientific Society of Canada (NTSh) announced two important awards in 2024. The first is an annual scholarship of up to \$5,000 for researching and writing a scholarly article (in Ukrainian, English or French) on a Ukrainian-Canadian topic. This year, priority was given to research on cultural issues, especially in the visual arts and music. Preference was given to research on the contribution of Ukrainian artists to world cultural heritage and the contribution of Ukrainians to the formation and development of Canadian culture.

The laureate of this year's scholarship is Dr. Lada Tsymbala, a member of NTSh in Ukraine. During her temporary stay in Edmonton from September 2022 to July 2023, she was actively involved in the work of NTSh in Edmonton. From 1999 to the present, Dr. Tsymbala is an associate professor of the Department of History and Theory of Arts of the Lviv National Academy of Arts.

In 2003, Dr. Tsymbala earned a doctoral degree in art studies at the Lviv National Academy of Arts, specializing in decorative and applied arts. The title of her dissertation was "Gold-weaving in Galicia from the 18th to the first third of the 20th centuries: History, typology, and characteristics of art and style." Dr. Tsymbala is the author of numerous scholarly monographs and journal articles, and has been invited to give lectures, conference and other presentations.

Dr. Tsymbala was awarded the scholarship for researching and writing an academic article on the topic "Wadym Dobrolige: The artist's work in Canadian socio-cultural discourse." As she describes, Wadym Dobrolige was a unique multifaceted Ukrainian artist who received his professional art education at the famous Kyiv Art Institute in the 1930s, and after coming to Canada in the 1950s and 1960s contributed to the formation of a holistic model of



Dr. Lada Tsymbala

Ukrainian sacred art in Alberta (he designed the interiors of more than 50 churches) who proved himself a successful set designer, a decorator for many Edmonton theatre performances, and who designed a number of hotels, restaurant complexes and public space interiors. He also organized a number of artistic events in the Ukrainian community of the city, creating a unique artistic image of the city of Edmonton.

As Dr. Tsymbala explains, the work of the academically trained painter (who became known during World War II for the painted portraits he created in his studio in the Heidenau displaced persons camp, near Hamburg, Germany) changed significantly after moving to Canada. In a society of great creature comforts, whose post-war period was characterized by grandiose urban development, the growth of an urban entertainment infrastructure and consumer culture, the need for an artist with an academic worldview was obliged to metamorphose into a need for an artist-decorator, a designer of city holiday scenes, shop windows and department store dis-



Wadym Dobrolige

plays and fashion shows. Despite the artist's numerous initiated and implemented projects and the creation of the posthumous (1973) Wadym Dobrolige Foundation, his artistic legacy remains minimally researched to this day. Dr. Tsymbala's research addresses the problem of correlation between fine (sacred) art in Dobrolige's body of work and his design projects, the conditioning of the artistic features of the artist's works by fashion trends and consumer tastes in the diaspora, as well as the artist's contribution to the historical and cultural heritage of Canada.

The second NTSh Canada award, a publication grant in the sum of \$5,000, was given to the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) for the publication of an English-language translation of Pavlo Khristiuk's documentary history, *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917–1919: A Documentary Analysis*.

As CIUS describes, the English translation of this extremely important scholarly and documentary study of the early stages of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917–1921,



Courtesy of Ulana Plawuszczak Pidzamecky

Pavlo Khristiuk

originally published in Vienna in 1921–1922, is a unique first-person account of the events of the Ukrainian revolution that began in 1917 and of the Ukrainian state that was created as a result and which received international recognition by the Central Powers in February 1918 through the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. These two stories were almost unknown to historians of the October Revolution of 1917, which is conventionally regarded as the "Russian" revolution. This voluminous, more than 1,000-page book (most likely to be printed in two volumes) will be published in the English translation by Alan Rutkowski and will include an introduction by the late Prof. Mark von Hagen, as well as numerous scholarly footnotes and annotations. More about Pavlo Khristiuk can be found online at <https://www.encyclopediaukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=page%5CK%5CH%5CKhristiukPavlo.htm>; and https://chtyvo.org.ua/authors/Mark_von_Hagen/Pavlo_Khristiuk_History_and_the_Politics_of_Ukrainian_Anti-Colonialism_anhl.pdf.

Innovative...

(Continued from page 2)

March 4, 2022). With no significant surface fleet left, the Ukrainians began to innovate with a vengeance, concentrating on developing small and fast uncrewed surface vessels (USVs) with a low radar profile and significant explosive payload (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 25, 2022, June 13, 2023). Ukraine's development and use of naval drones began with a prototype tested in June 2022 after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy tasked the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) with finding a way to end Russian dominance of the Black Sea and create operationally favorable conditions for Ukraine's grain export corridor (Ukrainska Pravda, March 4, 2022; see Eurasia Daily Monitor, September 13, November 3, 2022).

Over two years later, on May 23, SBU head Vasyl Maliuk announced that the security services were the first to use "Sea Baby" surface drones in their special operations (Sluzhba Bezpeki Ukrainska, May 23). Ukraine's USVs have even been versatile enough to be used against terrestrial targets. In July 2023, during Ukraine's first attack on the Kerch Bridge, two Sea Baby drones hit the bridge, completely destroying one section of it and damaging the other (UNIAN, November 25, 2023).

The SBU now deploys three types of drones: Sea Baby, Kozak Mamai and the MAGURA V5, named after the goddess of war and victory in Slavic mythology. These

are smaller, faster and much more maneuverable than other similar drones. They are designed solely as "pure hunters" of warships, and SBU specialists constantly work to improve them in conjunction with the Ukrainian Navy (Suspil'nie Krim, March 4).

The BSF's response to the Ukrainian naval drones has been to shift warships eastward to Novorossiysk and northward into the Sea of Azov. Moscow hoped to lengthen the Ukrainian Navy's operational lines while providing more in-depth defense on harbors than operations in the open sea. By the spring of 2024, then-British Secretary of State for Defense Grant Shapps lauded the new drones' effectiveness and declared that Russia's BSF was now "functionally inactive" (Telegraph.co.uk, March 25). On July 15, the BSF's last corvette in Sevastopol sailed for Novorossiysk. Ukrainian Navy spokesperson Dmytro Pletenichuk noted the withdrawal, adding that while Russia kept several auxiliary vessels at Sevastopol, they did not carry offensive weaponry (Suspil'nie Krim, July 16).

On July 17, Mr. Zelenskyy signed Ukraine's new maritime strategy, "On the Maritime Security Strategy of Ukraine," into law (President of Ukraine, July 17). The strategy seeks "the transformation of Ukraine into a powerful sea and river state, development of naval potential sufficient to deter potential aggressors from sea and river directions, [and] restoration and development of sea and river potential of Ukraine." Most ominously for Russia, the

strategy seeks "the development of cooperation with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states, conducting exercises, maneuvers and other joint events, [and] ensuring the permanent presence of alliance forces in the Black Sea."

Ukraine's new maritime strategy provoked a tart response from Russia. On July 18, Russian presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov warned, "Of course, Russia will take all necessary measures to ensure its own security" (Gazeta.ru, July 18).

Twice in the past two years, Ukraine has bombed the land link between the Crimean Peninsula and mainland Russia (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, August 18, 2023). The two-track rail line is so shaky that the Russian Army has stopped using it to send trains loaded with heavy equipment, tanks and ammunition. To defend the 11-mile bridge from kamikaze sea drones, Russia has placed booms, barriers, barges and steel nets in the area. With U.S.-supplied tactical cruise missiles capable of reaching all of Crimea, this analyst believes that Ukraine simply is waiting for an auspicious date – perhaps Ukrainian Independence Day on August 24 – to finish off the \$3.7 billion bridge, a pet project of Putin.

The Ukrainian military has not forgotten about the Kerch Bridge. On August 2, during the broadcasting of the national telethon, Kyrylo Budanov, chief of the Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ukrainian Defense Ministry, said that the Ukrainian military remains focused on destroying the bridge. He told the audience, "Everyone is working. And they are working on long

shots, on this. All this requires a complex solution" (New Voice of Ukraine, August 2).

Even Putin has acknowledged the threat that Ukraine's naval drones represent. Addressing a meeting on June 26 about developing Russian shipbuilding, he noted, "To increase the combat stability of the fleet forces, it is necessary to pay special attention to the speedy introduction of systems for remote detection of threats, including from unmanned aerial vehicles. I am referring not only to the control of airspace by air defense systems but also to the improvement of surface and underwater surveillance systems for the fight against enemy naval robotic systems" (Kremlin.ru, June 24).

Unmanned systems are certain to play an important role in naval warfare in the future. In the Black Sea, both Ukraine and Russia are racing to improve their technology. The Ukrainians are routinely unveiling more modern and capable drones, while the Russians are continuously improving their defensive capabilities to counter this threat. Other countries are learning lessons from the Black Sea. Predicting the future is murky at best, but Ukrainian inventiveness has stymied a superior enemy's "command of the sea," an extraordinary development that all significant maritime powers, led by Putin's Russia, will be forced to consider as they refine their own naval doctrines.

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NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 2)

region," TASS quoted the ministry's press service as saying. Mr. Lukashenka ordered the country's borders with Ukraine to be beefed up after accusing Ukraine of flying drones into the country's airspace. Mr. Lukashenka claimed earlier that Belarusian air-defense forces had destroyed several targets over that country's territory. Cited by the Belarusian news agency Belta, Mr. Lukashenka, without providing evidence, claimed they were launched from Ukraine and that they were most likely drones. The Belarusian Foreign Affairs Ministry said the incident was a "dangerous attempt to expand the current conflict zone" in the region, according to the state-run BelTA news agency. Belarus is an ally of Russia in its war with Ukraine. Ukraine and Belarus share a nearly 684-mile border. Mr. Lukashenka's remarks come amid a Ukrainian incursion inside Russia. The cross-border action in Russia's Kursk region has been described as the biggest attack on Russian soil since Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his country's unprovoked, full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Ukraine has so

far not commented on Mr. Lukashenka's remarks. Mr. Lukashenka said "about a dozen" drones had violated Belarusian airspace in the eastern Mogilev region bordering Russia on August 9. Mr. Lukashenka said others were later destroyed near the Russian city of Yaroslavl. Earlier on August 10, the Russian Defense Ministry said Russian forces had intercepted six drones in the Yaroslavl region. Later, Viktor Khrenin, Belarus's defense minister, said that Mr. Lukashenka had ordered him to reinforce Belarus's border with Ukraine. "Considering the situation in Ukraine and in the Kursk region of Russia, the commander in chief of the armed forces has given orders to reinforce troops in the Gomel and Mazyr tactical areas in order to respond to such provocations," Mr. Khrenin said. "Special operations forces, ground troops and rocket forces, including Polonez and Iskander systems, have been tasked with deploying to the designated areas." He said Belarus regarded the violation of its airspace as a provocation and "was ready to respond." (RFE/RL's Belarus Service)

Ukraine raids on occupied Kinburn Spit

Ukrainian special forces conducted an amphibious raid on the Russian-occupied

Kinburn Spit in the Black Sea, killing about 30 Russian soldiers and destroying six armored vehicles, Ukraine's military intelligence said on August 9. Russian forces have occupied the Kinburn Spit, which juts into the Black Sea northwest of Crimea, since the start of Moscow's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Moscow's military vantage point on the spit is seen as one of the reasons why Ukraine cannot reopen its ports of Mykolayiv and Kherson and export goods from them via its Black Sea shipping corridor. "As a result of a raid on the Kinburn Spit occupied by the Russians, six units of enemy armored vehicles were destroyed and about three dozen invaders were eliminated," the Ukrainian Defense Ministry's Main Intelligence Directorate (HUR) said in a statement. The HUR noted that during the

operation Russian fortifications were attacked at the positions of the Kinburn fortress, sea terminal and Suvorov monument. A military intelligence flag was installed in the area of the latter, the statement said. The Russian Defense Ministry said the raid was repelled, Interfax reported. "Saboteurs numbering up to 16 militants on two high-speed boats, under the cover of two fire-support boats, attempted to land troops on the coast," the ministry said. The group suffered its first losses near the shore when they were blown up by mines, the ministry said, adding that the rest were destroyed by small-arms fire. The ministry said 12 Ukrainian troops were lost and both boats were destroyed by artillery fire and anti-tank guided missiles. (RFE/RL's Russian Service, with reporting by Reuters)

Crimea may...

(Continued from page 2)

The port holds potential for the Russian fleet, as it was recently modernized and can accommodate up to a dozen small mine-sweeper-class ships. Its location, however, is rather far from the BSF's current operational zone. The movement of ships there would essentially mean their withdrawal from participation in ongoing operations (Z.N.U.A., October 11, 2023).

The end of 2023 and the beginning of 2024 proved fatal for the Russian Black Sea Fleet. During this period, five Russian surface ships and one submarine were either destroyed or seriously damaged, primarily in Crimea (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, March 11, 26). The cause of these losses was asymmetric Ukrainian attacks with a combination of missiles and kamikaze drones on ships in the Crimean ports and at the roadstead nearby (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, September 26, 2023, June 27). Due to the extraordinary risk of further losses, the Russian Navy decided to withdraw Soviet missile ships from Sevastopol. Only two 40-year-old Project 1135 Krivak-class frigates and two 25-year-old Project 1239 Bora-class guided-missile corvettes were left in Sevastopol. To free up space for these large ships, some smaller class vessels were relocated from Novorossiysk to ports on the Sea of Azov.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian attacks on Crimea have continued. On August 3, the submarine Rostov-na-Donu, which had been under repair in Sevastopol Bay since September of last year, was hit by a Ukrainian missile strike (UNIAN, August 4). With this successful strike, a total of three Russian naval platforms carrying Kalibr missiles have now been destroyed or damaged, with a total salvo of 20 missiles

aboard. All of them, a submarine and two corvettes, were attacked by Ukrainians while docked at Crimean bases in Sevastopol and Kerch. Russia still poses a threat to Ukraine, however, from its operationally ready Kalibr missile ships and submarines in the eastern Black and Caspian seas with a potential salvo of 80-plus missiles.

Russia still keeps some of its surface fleet in Crimea, with at least three landing ships under repair, about 18 maneuverable anti-diversion boats, several small corvettes for sea control, minesweepers and reconnaissance vessels (RBC Ukraine, August 6). Nevertheless, almost all of the BSF is in a state of operational constraint, as tasks at sea are performed very rarely and with significant additional security. In recent months, however, there have often been no Russian ships at sea. Simultaneously, Russian naval aviation is operating very intensively, patrolling coastal areas in search of Ukrainian kamikaze drones.

Continued and increased Ukrainian strikes against the Russian surface fleet, air defense facilities, airfields, ammunition and fuel depots in Crimea could give Ukrainian forces a much stronger position for reclaiming control and sovereignty over Crimea and could trigger the de-occupation of the Sea of Azov region. The overall situation for Ukrainian forces could gain even more tempo with further surprise asymmetric actions aimed at isolating and weakening the Russian grouping in Crimea from the north. New opportunities are emerging in Ukraine for taking back the initiative, with efforts concentrated on areas where Russian forces are weakest and attacks would be least expected.

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New research...

(Continued from page 14)

Ukrainian diaspora. This may also be true for many readers of the Science journal, especially if European history is not their area of expertise. This article brings the Holodomor to their attention, and the historical summary in the supplementary materials section of the article offers a unique opportunity for them to find out about this tragic chapter in Ukraine's history.

An important topic is the connection of the Holodomor with the current war in Ukraine. As an example, the Science article mentions that the Russian siege of the city of Mariupol intended to starve the city's population into surrender.

In his commentary, Dr. Klimek expands on what was not included in our Science article for the lack of space. He writes, "The findings of Lumey et al. also point to potential long-term public health consequences of

the current Russia-Ukraine war." He points out that the United Nations World Food Program estimated 11 million Ukrainians at risk of hunger in 2023. Based on the number of children born in Ukraine in 2023 and our finding that extreme famine doubles the risk of T2DM, he estimates that the hunger conditions caused by the war could result in 13,000 to 19,000 additional cases of T2DM in Ukraine in the future.

Another consequence of the war is the disruption of agricultural production and of the export of key commodities like wheat, corn and sunflower oil to developing countries in Northern Africa and parts of Asia. "The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict and the resulting interruption of major food exports is estimated to have caused an additional 23 million people worldwide to go hungry ...," Dr. Klimek writes.

The Science article is not only important from a medical point of view but it also highlights the long-term impact of starvation when it is used as a tool of terror.

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Khyzhniak wins Ukraine's third gold medal

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Ukrainian boxer Oleksandr Khyzhniak was knocked out by Brazil's Hebert Conceicao in the final at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. He has not lost another bout since.

Khyzhniak blitzed his way to victory in the men's 80-kilogram boxing final on August 7 to win his second Olympic medal and Ukraine's third gold medal at the 2024 Paris Summer Games. Khyzhniak won a split points decision over Kazakhstan's Nurbek Oralbay.

The 29-year-old won four bouts to clinch gold including a points victory over Cuba's two-time gold medalist Arlen Lopez in the semifinal. The Ukrainian went at his Kazakh opponent aggressively from the opening bell and maintained his offensive attack for most of the contest. A decisive third and final round earned him the win.

Khyzhniak, who is from Poltava in central Ukraine, was born into a boxing family, as his father boxed for the Soviet Union. He dedicated his gold medal to Ukraine, his late grandmother and his old teacher, who motivated him at a young age to strive to achieve greatness.

Greco-Roman wrestlers grab two medals

Ukrainian Greco-Roman wrestlers Parviz Nasibov and Member of Parliament Zhan Beleniuk won medals in their decisive fights on August 8 in Paris. Nasibov earned a silver medal in the 67-kilogram category after losing to Iran's Saeid Esmaeili-Leives in the final. It was his second career Olympic silver medal. Beleniuk, a gold medalist in Tokyo 2021, secured the bronze medal in the 87-kilogram category by defeating Poland's Arkadiusz Kulynycz. It was Beleniuk's third Olympic medal after

winning silver in Rio 2016 and gold in Tokyo.

Beleniuk officially retired from wrestling after his match with Kulynycz, placing his shoes in the center of the mat to symbolize the end of his sports career. He said he will have many roles going forward – politician, citizen and friend among them. He intends to spend more time supporting other athletes. His friend and colleague Nasibov described Beleniuk's pursuit of wrestling as beautiful and expressed the hope that everyone could have such a magnificent end to their career.

Ukraine adds silver medal in canoe

The Ukrainian duo of Liudmyla Luzan and Anastasiia Rybachok won a silver medal in the women's 500-meter double sculls at the Paris Games. The pair finished third in their semifinal and advanced to the final.

In the final, the Ukrainians started slowly – they were sixth halfway through the event. The second 250 meters saw them gain momentum and with a strong finish the two secured a silver medal with a time of 1:54.30 seconds, edging out Canada by 0.06 seconds in a photo finish to determine the silver medalists. China won the gold medal.

It was Luzan's third Olympic medal. She won a silver medal in the double sculls 500-meter event and bronze medal in the C-1 200-meter event at the 2021 Tokyo Games. Rybachok claimed her second Olympic medal and second in the C-2 500-meter event with partner Luzan.

Koliadenko wins silver medal in women's boxing

Ukraine's Iryna Koliadenko won Ukraine's final medal at the 2024 Summer Olympics, a silver medal in the 62-kilogram division of women's freestyle boxing after

losing in the final to gold medalist Sakura Motoki of Japan by a score of 12-1. It was Koliadenko's second Olympic medal, having won a bronze medal in the same event at the Tokyo Games in 2021. The 25-year-old from Radomyshl, Ukraine, faced the boxer who ousted her in Tokyo, Kyrgyzstan's Aisuluu Tynybekova in the semifinal, and proceeded to gain sweet revenge by winning in commanding fashion by a score of 9-2.

Two silver medalists selected as flag bearers

Nasibov and Luzan were rewarded for their repeat silver medal-winning performances by being selected as Team Ukraine's flag bearers at the official closing ceremony of the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris. Nasibov was again victorious in the Greco-Roman wrestling 67-kilogram event while Luzan earned her second silver medal in canoeing's 500-meter double sculls.

Ukrainian Canadian wins silver medal in rowing

Ukrainian Canadian Kristen Kit became a two-time medalist when she won silver in the women's eights rowing competition. The Paris games were the second Olympics for Kit, who has the role of coxswain for her team that won gold in the same event at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics.

A native of St. Catharines, Ontario, Kit began rowing in 2002 after her advisor and grandfather established a rowing team at her high school when she was in the ninth grade.

The Canadian boat finished second in the final with a time of 5:58.84 seconds, four seconds behind the gold-medal winning boat from Romania.



National Olympic Committee of Ukraine

Liudmyla Luzan (left) and Parviz Nasibov served as Ukraine's flag bearers at the closing ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Luzan won a silver medal in women's doubles canoe sprint at the 2024 Paris Games, while Nasibov won a silver medal in Greco-Roman wrestling.

Ukrainian wrestler wins gold for Bulgaria

Greco-Roman wrestler Semen Novikov was born in Ukraine but he decided to represent Bulgaria in the 87-kilogram class as he was behind fellow wrestler Beleniuk in Ukraine's depth chart. Having hardly any opportunities to compete in major tournaments because of Beleniuk's success, Novikov began representing Bulgaria in competitions starting in 2023.

On August 8, Novikov defeated Iran's Alireza Mohamedpiani 7-0 in the final of

(Continued on page 23)



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Ukraine at the 2024 Summer Olympics: Outside the Games

by Ihor Stelmach

Zelenskyy speaks with Team Ukraine

In a July 25 video address to the nation, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy shared that he had a conversation with Ukraine's Olympians before the Paris Games opened.

"I spoke with our Olympic athletes, the Ukrainian team that will represent our country and the Ukrainian people at the Summer Games in Paris this week. This is already an achievement for Ukrainians – that in the midst of such a war and full-scale Russian terror, we have prepared, we are still participating in the Olympics. Our flag and the Ukrainian anthem will be in France on par with all nations that respect life and the principles of Olympism," Zelenskyy said.

The president expressed his gratitude to everyone who helps Ukraine preserve as many elements of normal life as possible.

"I thank everyone who protected the principles of Olympism from distortion and prevented flags from and the participation of a terrorist state in the Olympics. [Vladimir] Putin is making sure that the only Russian sport today is killing people. The world will never tolerate this. Russia must lose in war, lose in terror. Then life will win," Zelenskyy said.

Svitolina, Romanchuk chosen as Ukraine's flag bearers

Elina Svitolina has been symbolically fly-

ing the Ukrainian flag every time she steps on the tennis court, uplifting the Ukrainian people everywhere amid the country's ongoing adversity. Her role assumed a different meaning after she was selected as the nation's flag bearer along with swimmer Mykhailo Romanchuk for the opening ceremonies of the 2024 Paris Summer Olympic Games.

Ahead of the Games, Svitolina admitted that it was "a huge honor and a privilege to represent" Ukraine.

She has been one of Ukraine's loudest voices on the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Tour since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. She has worked tirelessly through her foundation and Zelenskyy's United 24 initiative to raise funds for Ukraine's Armed Forces and for humanitarian aid for those affected by Russia's war on Ukraine. She took over managing Ukraine's team at the Billie Jean King Cup and is a returning bronze medalist from the 2021 Tokyo Games. This was her third Olympics.

Romanchuk won a silver medal in the 1500-meter freestyle swimming event and a bronze medal in the 800-meter freestyle at the 2021 Tokyo Games. This was his second time representing Ukraine as an Olympian.



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Ukraine's men's rowing team (K-4) of (from left to right) Oleh Kykharyk, Dmytro Danylenko, Ihor Trunoviy and Ivan Semykin finished in fourth place in the men's K-4 500-meter canoe sprint. The team discussed their experience at the 2024 Olympic Games at Volia Space on August 10 in Paris.

Fallen athletes honored in London's Parliament Square

Two days before the opening ceremony of the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, a three-dimensional display was unveiled at Parliament Square in London honoring the lost lives within the Ukrainian sporting community and underlining the devastat-

ing consequences of Russia's war on Ukraine.

As of July 24, the war has claimed thousands of innocent Ukrainian lives, including some 487 athletes. More than 4,000 Ukrainian athletes are currently supporting the war effort, most as members of the

(Continued on page 22)

Ukraine's athletes excel in Paris despite war raging at home



Wikipedia

Serhiy Kulish won silver in men's 50-meter three-position rifle shooting (461.3 points) on August 1 at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

by Ihor N. Stelmach

While Russia's invading military forces were pressing forward in eastern Ukraine, carving a destructive path, Ukrainian athletes were utilizing the Summer Olympics in Paris to demonstrate their nation's toughness and resilience.

High-jump gold medalist Yaroslava Mahuchikh said, "It is all about winning medals for our country, for Ukraine, for our defenders." Thanks to those defenders, Ukraine's Olympians had the opportunity to be in Paris, to defend their country on the athletic field and to show their best.

One hundred forty Ukrainians competing in Paris won a total of 12 medals: three gold, five silver and four bronze medals, putting them at 22nd in the medal standings. Some have called the achievement amazing and astonishing given the brutal fighting going on at the frontlines and regular Russian missile attacks and bombings across most of Ukraine. At the Tokyo 2021

Games, Ukraine's 155 athletes won 19 medals: one gold, six silver and 12 bronze medals, putting them 44th in the medal table. In 2024, Ukrainian Olympians won fewer total medals but they earned two more gold medals than in 2021, thus improving their standing.

Hammer throw bronze medalist Mykhailo Kokhan referred to the night of August 4 as a great night for the Ukrainian people and Ukraine's Olympic team, all of whom enjoyed a brief moment of happiness while celebrating three Ukrainian Olympic medal victories.

Heading into the Games it was reported that nearly 500 Ukrainian athletes and coaches had been killed by Russian forces since the unprovoked, full-scale invasion began in 2022. Some 4,000 Ukrainian athletes were forced to give up sports to help the war effort. Ukraine's 140 athletes competing at this year's Olympics was its smallest representation ever in the Summer Games.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy played up Ukraine's medal wins as a breath of fresh air and good news amid the ongoing bloody conflict. "We are very proud," he said in a social media post, adding that, "Ukrainians know how to be strong and how to win."

Back home, Ukrainians were following the developments in Paris, with a large group of united sports fans viewing the athletics competitions on a big-screen broadcast in a park in Kyiv. Seeing Ukrainian flags on big screens was an emotional sight for many, as many Ukrainians reasoned that people from every corner of the globe were seeing a very strong Ukrainian nation competing on the world's greatest sports stage.

Meanwhile, Russian athletes had little or no presence in Paris. A few ethnic Russians won Olympic medals while representing other countries, and "neutral" competitors representing Russia and Belarus won medals in tennis, trampoline and rowing.

The Russian flag and anthem were banned from the Paris Games and Russian

athletes who supported the war against Ukraine or had an affiliation with the Russian military were denied eligibility by the International Olympic Committee.

It was likely a staggering humiliation for Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has traditionally made Russian involvement in the Olympics a national priority. In 2014, his government spent billions of dollars to host the Winter Olympics in Sochi.

Some Ukrainians said it was karma that Russians did not win many medals in Paris.

As Ukrainian athletes competed at the 2024 Olympics, their participation was not merely about athletic skill. It was also about demonstrating resilience in the face of unprecedented challenges, symbolizing the nation's perpetual spirit. Their achievements inspire unity and hope among Ukrainians, offering a powerful platform for the country to assert its identity on the global stage.

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



Illia Kovtun won silver in men's parallel bars on August 5 with a score of 15.500 points at the Paris Olympics.

Ukrainian pro sports update

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Ukraine wins junior diving championships

Ukraine finished first in the medal standings, earning six gold, nine silver and two bronze medals at the European Aquatics' Junior Diving Championships on July 8-14 in Rzeszow, Poland. Their 17 total medals also put them first overall in the medal standings, seven better than second-place Germany.

Ukrainian gold medalists included Diana Karnafel in Girls A 1-meter springboard, the duo of Alisa Mieshko and Diana Shevchenko in Girls A/B synchronized platform, the twosome of Danylo Avanesov and Marko Barsukov in Boys A/B synchronized platform, Kseniia Bochek in Girls B 1-meter springboard, Dmytro Stepanov in Boys B 3-meter springboard and Avanesov in Boys A platform.

Three Ukrainian junior divers each won three medals: Avanesov won two gold and one silver medal, while both Kyrylo Azarov and Karina Hlyzhina each won three silver medals.

Ukraine wins 19 medals in deaf athletics

Twenty Ukrainian hearing-impaired athletes won a total of 19 medals at the 2024 World Deaf Athletics Championships in Taipei, Taiwan, on July 14-23. Eighteen medals (seven gold, five silver and six bronze) were won in adult competitions and one silver medal was won in the junior event.

Ukrainian gold medalists included Kateryna Potapenko (women's combined events), Rymma Filimoshkina (hammer throw 4-kilogram), Solomiya Kuprych (400-meter run), Yuliia Matvievevska (triple jump and long jump), women's 4x100-meter relay (Matvievevska, Kuprych, Kristina Kiniaikina and Yuliia Shapoval), and mixed

4x400-meter relay (Danylo Rudenko, Kiniaikina, Serhii Drach and Kuprych).

Ukrainian cheerleaders qualify for World Games

The Ukrainian cheerleading team won five gold medals at the ICU European Championships in Norway on June 28-30. Gold medal victories came in senior pom doubles, junior hip hop doubles, junior pom doubles and junior jazz. In addition, by winning their gold medal, the youth pom cheerleading team qualified for the 2025 World Games. The duet consisted of Anastasia Maloshenko and Elizaveta Tymofeeva. It is Ukraine's first-ever license for the World Games.

Ukraine wins two medals at World Challenge Cup

Rhythmic gymnast Taisia Onofriichuk won a gold medal in the ribbon event at the World Challenge Cup in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, on July 14. Her score of 32.900 earned the 16-year-old Ukrainian top honors on the podium. She was a 2024 European hoop bronze medalist and represented Ukraine in Paris at the 2024 Summer Olympics.

Ukraine also won a bronze medal in the four-person team competition of three ribbons and two balls with a score of 33.850 points.

Usyk visits children's hospital in Ukraine

World heavyweight boxing champion Oleksandr Usyk returned to his war-torn Ukraine and visited the devastated city of Irpin on the outskirts of Kyiv. He had previously worked to rebuild a house on Lysenka Street, and, while he was there,



Ukrainians Danylo Avanesov (center) and Marko Barsukov (left) – joined by Simone Conte of Italy on the medal podium – won gold and silver, respectively, in the Boys A platform final at the European Aquatics Junior Diving Championships in Rzeszow, Poland, on July 8-14.

Usyk with a Ukrainian family that was able to return to their home.

The specific house caught Usyk's attention because the ground floor houses a gym in which an acquaintance, Oleksii Dzunkivskyi, used to teach children how to box. Dzunkivskyi was killed by Russian soldiers in Irpin.

Usyk visited the reconstructed gym and spent time with Dzunkivskyi's wife, Anastasia Dzunkivska, during a boxing session for children. The champ purchased needed sports equipment to set up a complete training center so Dzunkivskyi's work with youngsters could continue.

Usyk and his wife, Kateryna, then visited Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital in Kyiv, which was bombed by Russia on July 8. The Usyks met members of the hospital's staff

and children undergoing treatment. Usyk shared some boxing tips with some of the youngsters. Reports said that more than 300 people were injured during the attack on Okhmatdyt.

In his effort to raise awareness of the ongoing war in Ukraine, Usyk said, "The world needs to see the grief and massive destruction that Russia is causing to our country. But the world also needs to see the unity and solidarity of the Ukrainian people, which is inspiring."

Svitolina parts ways with coach

Elina Svitolina enjoyed a strong run into the quarterfinal round at Wimbledon and her quality play raised expectations for the

(Continued on page 23)

Zelenskyy speaks...

(Continued from page 21)

Ukrainian Armed Forces.

The 3-D display brings to life the agonizing "487" figure, although the true number is undoubtedly higher. All around the display was assorted sports equipment representing the various disciplines of some of the 487 fallen athletes. It provided a vivid reminder of the toll the war has taken on Ukraine and its athletes.

Ukraine sent only 140 individuals to compete in this year's Olympic Games, its smallest representation ever in the country's summer Olympic history.

Among the athletes killed by Russia was 11-year-old rhythmic gymnast Kateryna Diachenko, whose young life was cut short by a Russian attack on her hometown of Mariupol on March 12, 2022.

Current and former Olympic athletes and coaches worldwide united in solidarity with Ukraine, sharing their hopes for the country to receive the support it needs to win the war.

This list of supporters included former Ukrainian American Olympic figure skater Sasha Cohen, Ukrainian American Paralympic multi-medalist Oksana Masters, German Biathlete Jens Steinigen and former Ukrainian Olympic wrestler Oksana Rakhr.

Ukraine's Paris clubhouse offers taste of culture while seeking wartime support

In an effort to promote its rich culture and raise awareness about the ongoing war,

Ukraine opened a hospitality house on July 27 at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris. Ukraine's first such endeavor at any Games promised concerts from the country's most beloved artists and tastes of its traditional cuisine.

The house was named "Volia Space," after a unique Ukrainian word that means will. The slogan represents the Ukrainian nation's existential fight against Russian troops.

Some 100 members of the local populace were invited to the house's official opening with shouts of "Viva la France" and "Glory to Ukraine" heard in a show of support. The guests got the first look at an exhibit of war-torn sports infrastructure from a destroyed stadium in Kharkiv, Ukraine.

The facility was labeled Ukraine's headquarters in Paris during the Olympic Games by Ukraine's Minister for Youth and Sport Matvii Bidnyi.

Volia Space opened with the signing of the Ukrainian national anthem, a traditional moment of silence for Ukraine's fallen soldiers and a statement of gratitude for the French government.

France's Minister of Sports Amelie Oudea-Castera reiterated her support for Ukraine, saying, "We are going to celebrate your culture that someone is trying to destroy. Here you will be safe, you will be happy and celebrated."

Aside from concerts and discussions, the house also screened documentaries aimed at publicizing Ukraine's plight in the war. The Oscar-winning "20 Days in Mariupol" was among the featured documentaries.

Ukrainian National Olympic Committee President Vadym Gutzeit remembered how,

immediately after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, sports officials were not sure Ukraine would ever have a chance to participate in the next Summer Olympics.

On July 26, the world saw the Ukrainian team and the Ukrainian flag at the opening ceremony, yet another reminder that Ukraine lives and continues to fight.

Usyk supports Ukrainian athletes in Paris

Heavyweight boxing champion Oleksandr Usyk traveled to Paris to support Ukrainian athletes competing in the Summer Olympics amid the war at home. On July 29, he visited Ukraine's Volia Space, where he watched Olha Kharlan's bronze medal victory in women's individual saber.

Usyk emphasized that Ukraine's presence at the Games was significant considering the damaged sports infrastructure, Russian occupation of regions that were home to many Ukrainian athletes and the ongoing daily missile strikes destroying the country and claiming innocent lives.

Usyk sported tattoos of the Olympic rings on both of his arms. One is titled "London 2012" where he won the gold medal in the heavyweight boxing category.

Usyk was also following the progress of boxer Oleksandr Khyzhniak, who won a silver medal at the Tokyo Games and was back hoping to upgrade to gold in the men's 80-kilogram category.

Paris mayor honors Ukrainian athletes

In a special gesture of solidarity at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Paris Mayor Anne

Hidalgo awarded Ukrainian athletes the Grand Vermeil Medal, the French capital's highest distinction.

"I can imagine today both your sadness and your pride. The sadness of knowing your country is still being attacked and is at war and that many of your friends, your relatives are on the front lines fighting," Mayor Hidalgo said on August 1.

Ukrainian rower Anastasiia Kozhenkova and diver Oleksii Sereda received the medal on behalf of all Ukrainian athletes, both having concluded their Olympic events. The pair led a group of Ukrainian athletes attending the reception at Paris' City Hall.

The reception began with a moment of silence that honored those killed in the war with Russia. A screen hung above the stage showed photos of Ukrainian athletes and coaches killed in the past two-plus years. The montage was titled "Heaven's Team."

Mr. Bidnyi thanked the mayor for the support her country has provided to Ukrainian athletes.

Most of the athletes at the event had already finished their Olympic competitions and, although not having won any medals, considered their participation at the Games representing their war-torn nation a victory.

Mayor Hidalgo expressed joy at seeing the Parisian people celebrating the Ukrainian athletes as heroes during the opening ceremony.

(Based on reporting by Ukrinform, Tennis.com, GOV.UK and Toronto Star.)

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OUT & ABOUT

August 18 Cape May, NJ	Ukraine in Cape May, celebrating Ukraine's independence, Rotary Park and Elaine's Cape May, www.facebook.com/capemayshelters	August 25 Buffalo, NY	Ukrainian American Day Festival, Ukrainian Cultural Center Dnipro, 716-674-4916
August 23 Philadelphia	Flag-raising ceremony marking Ukraine's Independence Day, Philadelphia City Hall, 215-686-1776	August 25 Newtown, CT	Ukrainian Festival, Holy Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, Paproski Castle Hill Farm, 203-269-5909
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 30 through September 2 Emlenton, PA	Family Fest, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the U.S.A., All Saints Camp, www.allsaintscamp.org
August 24 Toronto	Ukrainian Independence Day Celebration, Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Centennial Park, www.ucctoronto.ca	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
August 24 Ottawa	Ukrainian Independence Day Picnic, Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Vincent Massey Park (Area H), www.facebook.com/share/VPLden2bnrDeKdVi	September 7 Toronto	Ukrainian Heritage Day, Ukrainian Museum of Canada (Ontario Branch), museum@umcontario.com or 416-923-9861
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	September 8 Stamford, CT	55th Connecticut State Ukrainian Day Festival, St. Basil Seminary, 203-269-5909
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/vyshyvankarun	September 13-15 Toronto	Bloor West Village Toronto Ukrainian Festival, https://ukrainianfestival.com
August 24 Chicago	Ukrainian Independence Day commemoration, "Victory for Ukraine, Victory for Democracy," Ukrainian Cultural Center, www.uccailinois.org	September 14 Jenkintown, PA	Ukrainian Flea Market, Ukrainian Educational and Cultural Center, www.ueccphila.org
August 25 Horsham, PA	Ukrainian Folk Festival, Ukrainian American Sports Center - Tryzub, www.tryzub.org	September 15 New York	Concert, "A Tribute to Virko Baley 85th Anniversary Celebration," Shevchenko Scientific Society, Ukrainian Institute of America, www.ukrainianinstitute.org
August 25 Trenton, NJ	Ukrainian Independence Day celebration, Ukrainian National Home, www.ukrainianhome.com		

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.

Turning...

(Continued from page 6)

Kravchuk, and Prime Minister Vitalii Masol, who were seen as leftovers of the Soviet regime. A tent city was then erected by students on Independence Square (then called October Revolution Square), where protests continued.

Ukraine's parliament voted on October 23, 1990, to delete Article 6 of the Constitution, which stripped the Communist Party of its "leading role." Rukh's second congress on October 25-28, 1990, voted to shift its principle goal from reconstruction (perebudova) to the "renewal of independent statehood for Ukraine."

Ukraine's electorate in a union-wide referendum on March 17, 1991, voted 70.2 percent in favor of preserving the USSR, but another referendum question in Ukraine gained 80.2 percent support for Ukraine to be "part of a union of Soviet sovereign states on the principles of the Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine." Also in March 1991, Cardinal Myroslav Lubachivsky returned to Ukraine after a 53-year

forced absence.

U.S. President George H. W. Bush addressed Ukraine's parliament on August 1, 1991, in what came to be known as the "Chicken Kiev" speech in which he cautioned against "suicidal nationalism."

A failed coup d'état on August 19-21, 1991, was launched by Communist hard-liners against Gorbachev. Drach called on Ukraine's organized peaceful resistance to the coup attempt through nationwide strikes.

An appeal to the people of Ukraine to participate in a citizens' protest and "abide by the constitution and laws of Ukraine," was issued on August 19, 1991, signed by the leadership of Rukh, the National Council, the Ukrainian Republican Party, the Ukrainian Democratic Party, the Party for the Rebirth of Ukraine, and representatives of other democratic organizations and political parties. On August 19, 1991, Rukh issued an appeal to the Presidium of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet to support Ukraine's sovereignty and resist all forms of control from Moscow over the territory of Ukraine. Ukraine's parliament on August 24, 1991, proclaimed Ukraine an indepen-

dent state, but noted that the matter was subject to a nationwide referendum. In the wake of the proclamation, talks were held in Kyiv between the Russian SFSR and the USSR Supreme Soviet to prevent "the uncontrolled disintegration of the union state" through the creation of "interim inter-state structures" for an undefined transitional period.

The timeline also noted that a huge statue of Lenin was dismantled on September 9, 1991, located at Kyiv's October Revolution Square, now renamed Independence Square. Also that day, Canada's Consulate General in Kyiv was opened. Ukraine's parliament voted on September 23, 1991, to dissolve the KGB and create the State Security Service of Ukraine. The U.S. Peace Corps program in Ukraine was launched on September 27, 1991, with Ukraine being the first former Soviet republic to benefit from the program.

Ukraine's referendum on December 1, 1991, approved the August 24, 1991, declaration of independence with 90.32 percent voting in favor. Leonid Kravchuk was then elected the first president of a newly independent Ukraine by 62 percent of the vote

(he was sworn in on December 5, 1991). Also on December 1, Poland became the first country to grant diplomatic recognition to independent Ukraine. On December 2, 1991, Canada became the first Western country to establish diplomatic relations with Ukraine.

On December 7, 1991, a Slavic summit was held in Minsk, with the leaders of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine in attendance. Following that summit, its participants announced the formation of a commonwealth of the three former Soviet republics. The move left the door open for other former Soviet republics to join the new group. Finally, the timeline noted that President Bush announced on December 25, 1991, the United States recognized Ukraine's independence. By December 29, 1991, independent Ukraine had been formally recognized by 25 countries.

Sources: "30th anniversary timeline," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, August 22, 2021; and "Ukraine Lives! In commemoration of the 10th anniversary of Ukraine's independence," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, the Ukrainian National Association, Parsippany, NJ. 2002.

Ukrainian pro...

(Continued from page 22)

rest of the season. The announcement that she parted ways with her coach, Raemon Sluiter, was a big surprise.

Sluiter took over as Svitolina's coach in March 2023 following her return from maternity leave. After being away from the sport, the two experienced much success together. Svitolina defeated Iga Swiatek of Poland on her way to the Wimbledon semifinal in 2023 after reaching the quarterfinal at the French Open, won the Internationaux de Strasbourg and was a finalist in Auckland at the start of 2024.

In her statement, Svitolina thanked Sluiter for helping to make her a better player and called him one of the best coaches on the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Tour. She expressed gratitude for what the duo had accomplished together through hard work and dedication.

No specific reason was given for the decision, though the 29-year-old Ukrainian offered kind words for Sluiter, and their separation seemed to be amicable. The move came just ahead of the Paris Olympics and the North American hard court portion of the WTA Tour schedule.

(Based on reporting by ESPN, talk sport, Last Word on Sports, Tennis World, Inside the Games and Cycling Weekly.)

Khyzhniak...

(Continued from page 19)

the 87-kilogram class to win the gold medal at the Paris Games. Ironically, Mohamed-piani defeated Beleniuk in the semifinals a day earlier.

It was Novikov's first Olympic medal and Bulgaria's first gold medal of the 2024 Olympics.

Artistic swimmers, canoeists, divers, rowers, shooter and wrestlers finish fifth in events

The men's K-4 500-meter sprint canoe foursome actually finished in fourth place

with their time of 1:21.01, missing out on a bronze medal by less than one second. Ukrainian fifth-place finishers in the last days of the competition included the Alekseyeva twins in artistic swimming duet, the men's 10-meter synchronized platform diving duo of Kirill Boluiuk/Oleksii Sereda, the women's quadruple sculls foursome, rapid fire pistol shooter Pavlo Korostylov and wrestlers Oksana Livach (50-kilogram) and Murazi Mchedlidze (97-kilogram).

(Based on reporting by Yahoo!sport, Ukrinform, Espresso, Giant FM and Inside the Games.)

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