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# Kyiv Post

26<sup>th</sup> year!

UKRAINE'S GLOBAL VOICE • SINCE 1995

Oleg Petrusiuk



# Cold Summer Ahead?

People are reflected in a puddle as they walk on Kyiv's Independence Square on June 5, 2021. This already topsy-turvy summer of unusually cool and wet weather so far promises to bring some other jarring events for Ukraine. The nation will be on the outside looking in as G7 members, NATO members and U.S. President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin meet later in June. Meanwhile, Ukraine is drumming up political support for its August Crimean Platform in hopes of regaining control of the peninsula stolen by Russia in 2014. And, come Aug. 24, 2021, Ukraine will see who shows up for its 30th Independence Day festivities.

See story on page 8

## It's not the weather, but geopolitical cold shoulders that challenge Ukraine

June 11-13

Meeting of the leaders of G7 member states and representatives of the European Union.

Carbis Bay, UK

June 14

Meeting of NATO heads of state and government.

Brussels

June 16

U.S. President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin will meet.

Geneva

Aug. 23

The first meeting of participants of the Crimean Platform, an initiative to end Russia's occupation of the Ukrainian peninsula.

Kyiv

Aug. 24

Ukraine celebrates 30 years of national independence.

Kyiv



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# Belarus –Ukraine relationship breaks down, trade war begins

By Oleksiy Sorokin  
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After Belarus dictator Alexander Lukashenko hijacked a passenger plane to seize an opposition journalist, the Ukrainian leadership joined the Western world in condemning Lukashenko.

This worsened Ukraine's already strained relationship with its authoritarian neighbor, sending it into uncharted territory.

Belarus went into attack mode, starting a trade war with Ukraine that experts say the northern neighbor of nearly 10 million people can't win.

Starting on June 5, Ukrainian producers of agricultural machinery, foodstuffs, paper-based material, ceramics, bricks, furniture and packaging will require special individual licenses to have access to the Belarusian market.

Furthermore, Belarus began unofficially restricting exports of oil products produced by its Mozyr refinery. Belarusian authorities cite plant modernization as the primary reason for the decrease in exports to Ukraine, but most people believe it was a political decision.

Belarus' attack on bilateral trade comes days after Ukraine closed its airspace to Belarus planes and banned imports of electricity from the neighboring country.

The decision came as a response to the hijacking of a Ryanair plane by Belarus authorities and the abduction of opposition journalist Roman Protasevich who was onboard.

The trade war will take a heavier toll on Belarus' Soviet-style economy, with a gross domestic product of about \$63 billion.

Ukraine may experience a shortage of oil products in the near future, says Serhiy Kuyun, the head of oil and gas consultancy A-95. But the damage will be worse for Belarus.

"Belarus is much more dependent on Ukraine than we are on them," Kuyun said. "Belarus' whole oil refinery industry was focused on exports to Ukraine."

Belarus' economy is expected to lose billions of dollars in revenue if



An activist and member of the Belarusian diaspora in Ukraine is seen through flags with the historical emblem of Belarus and Ukraine during a rally at Independence Square in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv on May 30, 2021, to support Belarusian anti-government movements and arrested opposition journalist.

the country breaks ties with Ukraine, one of its main trading partners.

Yet, the confrontation appears unavoidable because of vastly diverging political interests. Ukraine is heading West while Belarus, or at least its leadership, is content to stay in Russia's orbit.

Ukraine is set to move forward with personal sanctions against Belarus' top government officials, while Belarus has been testing the possibility of recognizing Kremlin-occupied Crimea as part of Russia, Minsk's patron and one of its only allies in the world.

## Interdependency

Ukraine and Belarus have always held strong economic ties.

Despite Lukashenko's long authoritarian rule of Belarus, Ukraine didn't question his legitimacy prior to the fraudulent presidential election on Aug. 9, 2020, in which Kyiv didn't recognize Lukashenko's declared victory.

An interconnected system of pipe-

lines and electricity cables between the two countries has largely benefited Ukraine, covering its energy shortages by way of Belarus. At the same time, Belarusian businesses generated vast profits in the Ukrainian market.

Ukraine is one of its neighbor's top trading partners, accounting for 11% of Belarus's exports and 4% of its imports. In the first quarter of 2021, Ukraine exported \$306 million worth of goods to Belarus and received \$864 million worth of goods in return.

More than half of Ukraine's imports from Belarus were oil products, generating \$511 million for Belarus. Ukraine has been dependent on Belarusian oil products, receiving 35% of diesel and 50% of bitumen from its northern neighbor.

According to Encorr, a news outlet focusing on the energy sector, Belarus stopped gasoline imports to Ukraine in June. The export of bitumen has decreased sixfold.

In the short term, Ukraine might experience shortages of bitumen, the main component of asphalt, and gasoline and diesel, which fuel cars.

The decrease in bitumen imports will hurt President Volodymyr Zelensky's most cherished project, "The Big Construction," which has been set to promote the president through nationwide construction projects.

Under this project, in 2020, Ukraine constructed 4,200 kilometers of interregional roads. Out of all bitumen used for these projects 540,000 tons, or 45% of the total, came from Belarus.

In 2021, Ukraine was expected to build an additional 4,500 kilometers of roads.

"It's hard to get so much bitumen, yet possible," said Kuyun.

Ukraine's only major oil refinery is situated in Kremenchuk and is owned by billionaire oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky. The plant can cover Ukraine's needs in gasoline but not

its needs of bitumen and diesel, making Ukraine rely on imports.

Ukraine's only option now is to ship bitumen from Turkey and Greece via Ukrainian ports.

Deputy Head of Ukraine's Presidential Office Kyrylo Tymoshenko on June 2 said that Ukraine may invest in the construction of a new oil refinery to cover Ukraine's needs in bitumen.

"These are large investments," he said.

Kuyun says it could cost \$5–7 billion and is unfeasible. The same goes for diesel.

Despite a strong dependency on imports from Belarus, in the long run, Ukraine can diversify procurement. In May, Ukraine increased imports of diesel from Lithuania, Hungary and Turkey.

"We can survive without Belarus," says Kuyun.

## Soviet theme park

The situation looks much worse for Belarus.

The country's main exports are oil products, fertilizers, chemicals and vehicles. All of them are expected to fall under sanctions, pushing Belarus to the brink of default.

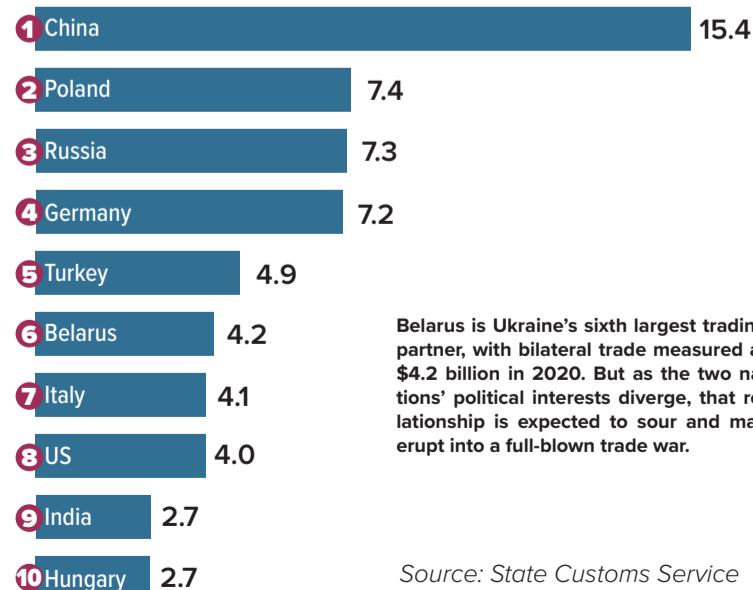
Losing Ukraine as a reliable trade partner, and over \$3 billion that comes with it, will only accelerate the economic decline.

After Lukashenko falsified presidential elections in August and began cracking down on peaceful protests, Lithuania and Latvia banned imports of electricity from Belarus.

Unsurprisingly, Lukashenko decided to push Belarus deeper into an economic crisis by moving the country's export shipping routes from the nearby Lithuanian port of Klaipeda to the northern Russian port of Ust-Luga.

Without Russian financial assistance, Belarusian exports through

## Single nation trading partners, turnover in 2020, in billion \$



Belarus is Ukraine's sixth largest trading partner, with bilateral trade measured at \$4.2 billion in 2020. But as the two nations' political interests diverge, that relationship is expected to sour and may erupt into a full-blown trade war.

Source: State Customs Service

# Conference's clear goal: End corruption in Ukraine

By Oleg Sukhov  
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Ukraine's civil society will host a non-oligarchic international forum to discuss democracy, corruption and human rights.

The event, Democracy in Action: Zero Corruption, will be held in Kyiv on June 7–8. It will cover a broad range of issues, including democratic transition, sanctions, de-oligarchization, anti-corruption efforts, and countering fake news and propaganda.

The forum was created as an alternative to the Yalta European Strategy, an annual conference founded by oligarch Victor Pinchuk.

The organizers include the Anti-Corruption Action Center, the Institute of Mass Information, election watchdog Opora, media watchdog Detector Media, Columbia University's Harriman Institute and others. Speakers will participate both online and offline.

The conference was initially supposed to be held in 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hanna Hopko, one of the conference's organizers and former head of the Verkhovna Rada's foreign affairs committee, told the Kyiv Post.

Hopko said that the conference was intended to be a "high-level international platform not controlled by oligarchs."

She argued that the platform would help Ukraine become a trendsetter for post-Soviet countries, shape the political agenda and seek solutions for the problem of democratic transition.

Another key theme of the conference is Ukraine's ability to fend off attacks on its democracy, including the use of fake news and disinformation, Hopko said.

## High-profile speakers

A panel called "Leadership in Times of Restoring A Power of Democracy" will feature many top speakers. These are expected to include President Volodymyr Zelensky, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Moldovan President Maia Sandu, Slovak President Zuzana Caputova, Latvian Prime Minister Arturs Karins, European Commission vice president Vera Jourova, NATO deputy secretary Mircea Geoana, and the International Monetary Fund's managing director Kristalina Georgieva.

Samantha Power, head of the U.S. Agency for International Development and former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, will deliver the keynote speech.

## Oligarch panel

Brian Bonner, chief editor of the Kyiv Post and one of the conference's media partners, will moderate a panel discussing oligarchs and de-oligarchization. The panel will also feature Daria Kaleniuk, executive director of the Anti-Corruption Action Center.

A panel called "Lawfare & Judiciary in Transitional Democracies" will be devoted to the state of the judiciary



President Volodymyr Zelensky



Slovak President Zuzana Caputova



Latvian Prime Minister Arturs Karins



NATO deputy secretary Mircea Geoana



European Commission vice president Vera Jourova



Moldovan President Maia Sandu



Samantha Power, head of the U.S. Agency for International Development



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken

and judicial reform.

"Lawfare," a portmanteau of law and warfare, refers to the use of the legal system by repressive regimes against their opponents and civil society. The discussion will feature Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council; Gianni Buquicchio, president of the European Commission for Democracy through Law, or Venice Commission; and Halyna Chyzhyk, a judicial expert at the Anti-Corruption Action Center.

## Judicial reform

Another panel on judicial reform, "Fair Justice in Transitional Democracies: Bold Solutions to Modern Threats," will include Justice Minister Denys Maluska and Hanna Suchocka, honorary president of the Venice Commission.

The conference will also address "anti-democracy propaganda narratives in Ukraine" — a reference to fake news spread by the Kremlin, oligarchs and other actors. A panel called "International response to disinformation" will feature Peter Pomerantsev, a senior fellow at John Hopkins University, and Kateryna Kruk, Facebook's public policy manager for Ukraine.

The speakers at the "Joint response to weaponization of corruption" panel will include Artem Sytnyk, head of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine; Oleksandr Novikov, head of the National Agency for Preventing Corruption, and Drew Sullivan, publisher of the Organized Crime and

Corruption Reporting Project, a Kyiv Post partner.

Another anti-corruption panel, called "Strong legislative response

Dates: June 7–8, 2021  
Venue: D12 art gallery, 12 Desyatynna St., Kyiv  
The conference can be watched on <https://zerocc.org>

to strategic corruption as a hybrid threat to democracy and security globally", will feature U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and Anastasia Radina, head of the Ukrainian parliament's anti-corruption committee.

## Protecting elections

A panel called "Democratic resilience through elections" will be devoted to the role of civil society and the international community in elections.

The speakers will include Olha Aivazovska, head of Ukrainian election watchdog Opora, and Alexander Shlik, a representative of Belarusian opposition politician Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, who ran against Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko in the 2020 presidential election. While Tikhanovskaya got more votes, Lukashenko rigged the results, declared victory and actively suppressed protesters —

Tikhanovskaya is now in exile.

One of the panels will cover the democratic transition of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova as models for other post-Soviet countries. The speakers will include Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and Michael Carpenter, managing director of the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement.

## NATO membership

A panel covering NATO integration will feature Olha Stefanishyna, Ukraine's deputy prime minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine, and Laura Cooper, deputy assistant secretary of Defense.

Another panel will discuss personal sanctions and other ways to respond to human rights violations and corruption. It will be attended, among others, by Bill Browder, a British financier who has campaigned for justice in the case of Russian tax advisor Sergei Magnitsky,

who died while being held in pre-trial detention in Moscow in 2009.

Magnitsky had uncovered a \$230 million corruption scheme by Russian high-ranking officials. Investigators imprisoned him on the same charges he leveled against authorities. An independent investigation into Magnitsky's death found that he was killed by abuse and deliberate negligence from prison officials. His death prompted a diplomatic scandal between Russia and the United States, with the U.S. government imposing sanctions against all Russian officials implicated in the case.

A panel called "Local Communities' Response to Global Hybrid Threats: the Role of Small and Big Cities" is expected to feature Kyiv Mayor Vitaly Klitschko and Mykolayiv Mayor Oleksandr Senkevych.

The final panel will be devoted to preventing the construction of Russia's Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline. 🇺🇸

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EDITORIALS

# NATO's snub

NATO is meeting in part to discuss Russia, Belarus and Ukraine on June 14 and Ukraine is not invited.

In early May, the alliance decided that only member states would attend because, as Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said, it will be a short summit. Expected meetings to consider Ukraine's and Georgia's paths towards membership have been scrapped.

The decision disappointed those who expected this to be the year when Ukraine receives a membership action plan, or MAP. But the snub should have been expected. Even though numerous NATO allies publicly speak in support of Ukraine, a membership plan is unlikely to come soon, if at all.

The top reason cited by the allies is that Ukraine hasn't done enough to reform itself. They have a point.

Judicial and military reforms are especially problematic. The office of the prosecutor general is still ineffectual and judges still do whatever they want. Meanwhile, Ukraine's first and only civilian defense minister was recently fired and replaced with a Soviet-era general, reneging on a major NATO expectation that the military has to be in civilian hands.

Ukraine obviously needs to knuckle down and finish these reforms. But it's not as if it's been standing still. Out of the 219 NATO standards that were supposed to be elaborated in 2018–2020, Ukraine has adopted more than 90%, according to the Reanimation Package of Reforms, a coalition of Ukrainian anti-corruption watchdogs. The organization noted that Ukraine has adopted more standards than Montenegro did, which became a NATO member in 2017.

"Unfulfilled reforms" is a convenient reason for NATO allies. Some of the 30 member nations would be reluctant to admit Ukraine even if it fulfilled 100% of everything that's been asked of it.

Let's face it, Ukraine's membership is a geopolitical issue that is still too hot for many nations. Some in NATO are outright Kremlin apologists and appeasers.

But in the main, the alliance is reluctant to admit a country that's under attack by Russia, because then NATO would actually be forced to defend it as a NATO member. No one wants to actually fight against Russia, which is more determined, better equipped and significantly crazier than many Western powers.

Russia is quite aware of all the divisions. For the Kremlin, keeping the war in the eastern Donbas going indefinitely helps further the aim of destroying Ukraine's chances of NATO membership.

The Kremlin has positioned itself as a defender against NATO's aggressive expansionism. Of course, that propaganda is hokey since the alliance is a defensive one that, sadly, has gone too far in placating and accommodating Vladimir Putin's violent, imperial rule -- like the rest of the West.

In the meantime, Ukraine will continue to face down Russia all by itself as its hopes for membership slowly die, along with its soldiers.

# Generals-in-mayhem

Ukraine's defense sector is concussed by a fierce, months-long power struggle between its top two leaders -- Defense Minister Andriy Taran and top military general Ruslan Khomchak.

Few government officials acknowledge the conflict but the relationship between the two men is increasingly hostile. They avoid meeting face to face and wage endless legal battles to challenge each other's authority. And they vie for influence at the President's Office to have a stronger say over key decisions.

Last week, Taran's latest move became public. On May 28, the Cabinet of Ministers filed a draft decree that would give the defense minister exclusive authority to regulate reforms and other aspects of the armed forces.

This could effectively stop Khomchak from making decisions about the 250,000 people under his command.

Ordinarily, the defense minister would have to work with Khomchak and issue joint resolutions. But with the new amendment, Taran (who is also a retired general), wants to assume complete control over all key aspects of the military.

This standoff has derailed cooperation between the Defense Ministry and the Armed Forces and thrown the defense sector into a chaos it's not seen in years. Many crucial programs, such as military personnel housing, have been bogged down with red tape. Efforts to ensure maintenance, nutrition, munitions, procurement, and corruption prevention, have suffered as well.

The Khomchak-Taran feud is the talk of the defense community but President Volodymyr Zelensky has done almost nothing to restore order. His chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, reportedly backs Taran and the president prefers to listen to him instead of opening his eyes.

A fight at the top level of the military cannot be tolerated while Russia occupies Crimea, wages war in the Donbas and concentrates 100,000 forces on our borders.

Behind this mess is a leadership crisis caused by the incomplete, half-hearted defense reform program that Zelensky has neglected. The duties and authorities of the Defense Ministry and the military command are loosely articulated, poorly segregated and often contradictory. This leads to power struggles and malpractice.

Yet, the Zelensky administration is not even thinking about getting defense legislation into shape.

What we desperately need now is to get back to the reform's core idea: to install a Western-style Defense Ministry ruled by a civilian official and not another old post-Soviet apparatchik like Taran.

The goal of reform was to have civilians in charge of strategic decisions and resource management and the military to concentrate on what it was trained for: Putting strategy into practice and pursuing the art of war.

What we have now is two power-greedy generals fighting over who gets to be the army's big daddy.

### NEWS ITEM:

Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko said that he asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to help Belarusian vacationers get to Crimea smoothly through Russia. Following Lukashenko's hijacking of a passenger plane on May 23, Ukraine and EU countries closed their airspace for Belarusian flights.

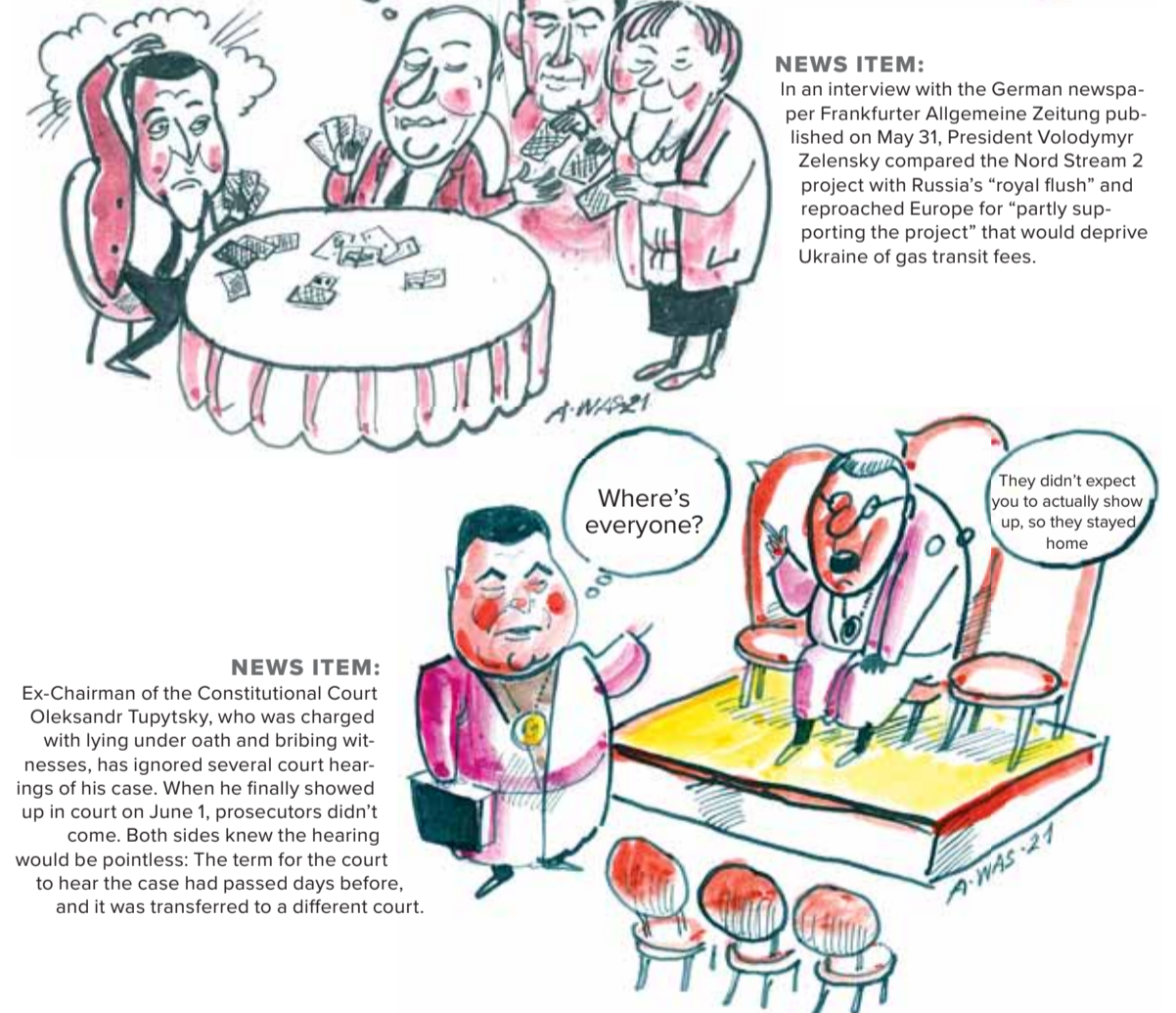


### NEWS ITEM:

Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko came under criticism when he said he would allow Russia's proxy militants that occupy territories in eastern Ukraine to question an opposition journalist detained in Belarus. Russian media accused the journalist, who reported from the front lines in eastern Ukraine, of fighting in the war on the side of Ukraine. By inviting the militants to question the journalist, Lukashenko came close to recognizing their legitimacy.

### NEWS ITEM:

In an interview with the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung published on May 31, President Volodymyr Zelensky compared the Nord Stream 2 project with Russia's "royal flush" and reproached Europe for "partly supporting the project" that would deprive Ukraine of gas transit fees.



### NEWS ITEM:

Ex-Chairman of the Constitutional Court Oleksandr Tupytsky, who was charged with lying under oath and bribing witnesses, has ignored several court hearings of his case. When he finally showed up in court on June 1, prosecutors didn't come. Both sides knew the hearing would be pointless: The term for the court to hear the case had passed days before, and it was transferred to a different court.

See these features online at [kyivpost.com](http://kyivpost.com)

### Ukraine's Friend & Foe Of The Week



Friend

#### Clemens Wergin, Die Welt journalist

The German newspaper's chief foreign affairs reporter calls things as they are: official Berlin embraces a twisted, weird pacifism. Instead of helping Ukraine defend itself from Russia's war, it eagerly appeases the Kremlin and in fact helps Vladimir Putin intimidate Kyiv.



Foe

#### Heiko Maas, Germany's foreign minister

Meanwhile, official Berlin persists in its foolishness. Maas again says Germany will never provide Ukraine with defensive weapons. It calls for "a political settlement" in Donbas as it gets ready to complete the Nord Stream 2 pipeline with Russians.

### Feel strongly about an issue? Agree or disagree with editorial positions in this newspaper?

The Kyiv Post welcomes letters to the editors and opinion pieces, usually 800 to 1,000 words in length. Please email all correspondence to chief editor Brian Bonner, at [bonner@kyivpost.com](mailto:bonner@kyivpost.com). All correspondence must include an email address and contact phone number for verification.

# Ukraine must take charge of its future more than ever



George Woloshyn

NATO membership or, even a membership action plan (known as MAP) to the 30-nation military alliance, has never been a plausible option for Ukraine in the near term.

Not because Ukraine is unworthy of NATO membership, but because a number of current NATO members are unworthy of Ukraine.

Whereas Ukraine is prepared to stand up for “European values” to a tyrannical, repressive regime, some NATO members are more interested in profiting from that regime.

Let me emphatically restate my belief that membership in NATO is not, and has never been, in the cards, and – even if Ukraine were offered a MAP, it would be at least a decade before Ukraine could meet all requirements.

But then section 3 of MAP’s introductory article would kick in as NATO’s “catch 22” in further deferring Ukraine’s membership; to whit: “... MAP does not imply any timeframe ... nor any guarantee of eventual membership. The program cannot be considered as a list of criteria for membership.”

## Macedonia’s example

If further proof is needed of how NATO’s MAP works, consider tiny, peaceful, Macedonia – a Slavic country with serious corruption problems. It had a MAP for 20 years, but has only recently been admitted into NATO. Why 20 years? Greece refused its entry unless it changed its name from Republic of Macedonia to Republic of North Macedonia so that Greece could continue the fiction of claiming Alexander the Great as its own.

Although NATO members wanted Macedonia in NATO to stabilize its ever-turbulent, soft Balkan underbelly, just one country’s vanity sidetracked its entry for 20 years. How many European countries (starting with Germany and France) would sidetrack Ukraine’s entry if for no other reason than “good relations” (read: good business) with Russia?

Recent news from the Joe Biden administration (as reflected in President Volodymyr Zelensky’s critical comments) has also been bleak for Ukraine. Despite Biden’s campaign pledges, and despite the strong bilateral support Ukraine maintains in the U.S. Congress, and despite U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s recent reenactment in Kyiv of Biden’s “we have your back” performance as vice president, Ukraine’s interests seem to have been placed on the administration’s back burner.

So what position should Ukraine take on NATO, MAP, and its national security?

I propose a 3-pronged solution.

**1 Keep trying for NATO**  
Ukraine should retain NATO membership as the lodestone

of its ultimate integration into the European security system, and establish a “virtual” MAP program of reform. NATO’s standards are sound and successful and Ukraine will profit greatly by adopting those requirements and standards as its own. It should continue its “partnership” relationship with NATO to include joint exercises, training, peacekeeping missions, conferences, and a permanent diplomatic presence. Whether in or outside of NATO, the adoption of NATO standards and close working relationships with its principals may result in a de facto (if not de jure) “acceptance,” though without commitments by either side. Ukraine has nothing to lose and much to gain. And if the occasion for admission should arise, Ukraine will be ready.

## 2 Work with neighbors

Ukraine should greatly elevate its bilateral and multilateral military relations with those “frontline” states that share Ukraine’s trepidation about Russian aggression. These would include the three Baltic states, Poland, Romania, Georgia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and perhaps one or two others. These relations may take the form of joint production or funding of advanced weaponry (e.g. Turkish drones), exercises, mutual support agreements, secret protocols on coordination and sanctuaries for homeland defense, combined naval patrols, etc. Although NATO – as an entity – may resist enhanced integration with Ukraine, the “frontline” states do recognize Ukraine’s importance as the strongest buttress of their outer defense perimeter and would want to strengthen those ties. Ukraine’s “NATO-lite” support network may serve as further deterrence to Russia. [Remember, every NATO member knows that NATO’s famous “Article 5” is merely a deterrence... it does not “guarantee” any greater support or intervention than other members are singly willing to provide (or not)].

## 3 US, UK & Canada

Lastly, Ukraine must greatly enlarge and upgrade its influence in the three countries that have been the bedrock of Ukraine’s support and stability these last three decades: the U.S., U.K., and Canada. It has been much too easy for the Biden administration to walk away from its promises to Ukraine without suffering meaningful political or electoral consequences. Just as ex-President Donald J. Trump (regardless of his wishes) was compelled by Congress to provide Ukraine with lethal weapons and national security funding, so must the Ukrainian government assure that continuing support is not dependent on the whims or vacillations of a weak or impru-



Ukrainian soldier with the 10th Mechanized Infantry Brigade holds a position near the Donbas war front town of Zhovanka on April 28, 2021.

Volodymyr Petrov

dent president. Consider the case of Taiwan and Israel as case studies.

## Diplomatic pressure

Ukrainian officials, in coordination with its diaspora, must ramp up diplomatic and political pressure and influence, and vigorously engage in “public diplomacy” so that the citizens of those three countries and their opinion and decision makers fully understand and support Ukraine’s position. Perhaps Ukraine should start with a substantial increase of its diplomatic missions to all three states, staffed with articulate, English-speaking post-Soviet experts. The Diaspora has a surfeit of talented writers, lawyers, public

speakers, historians, etc. whose volunteer services must be engaged in this effort.

Most importantly, all three parts of the “Trident” solution must have as their end goal the acquisition and deployment of technologically advanced defensive weapons that would transform Ukraine into a “porcupine” state – one bristling with enough weapons and capability to destroy much of Russia’s invading air, sea, and land forces so that the prize would not be worth the price. Stingers, harpoons, javelins, drones; “Neptune” cruise missiles (capable of collapsing Russia’s bridge over Kerch and sinking most of its Black Sea fleet); mobile directed energy

systems... Ukraine’s considerable scientific, engineering, and IT talent should be “mobilized” in ensuring that Ukraine need no longer rely on NATO and the dubious pledges of its member states. Mobilization is a nation’s response to war. Ukraine is in a state of war.

*George Woloshyn is a retired senior executive and Senate-confirmed presidential appointee in the administration of President Ronald Reagan. He had served as head of government-wide civilian personnel security, national security emergency preparedness, and as inspector general of a regulatory agency. He has also been active in philanthropic programs involving Ukraine.*

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# Visiting US senators want to block Nord Stream 2

By Anastasiia Lapatina  
lapatina@kyivpost.com

A bipartisan congressional delegation from the United States visited Kyiv on June 1–2 to support Ukraine's fight against corruption and Russia's war – and to oppose the completion of the Russian-German Nord Stream 2 pipeline that will bypass Ukraine's gas transit network.

Senators Jeanne Shaheen, Rob Portman and Chris Murphy met with President Volodymyr Zelensky, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and Defense Minister Andriy Taran, as well as some lawmakers and civil society and media representatives.

"We are here to express bipartisan support for the people of Ukraine, for the independence and progress Ukraine has made on reforms," said Shaheen, the Democratic senator from New Hampshire, at a briefing on June 2.

## Nord Stream 2

The senators reaffirmed their opposition to Nord Stream 2. The pipeline is 100 kilometers from completion, Russia says. When it becomes operational, the \$11 billion project will double the capacity of the existing pipeline under the Baltic Sea – enabling 110 billion cubic meters of natural gas to be transported directly from Russia to Germany. It bypasses Ukraine, which has only a five-year contract ending in 2014 for Russia to transport at least 40 billion cubic meters of gas for transit fees of

at least \$7 billion.

But with Nord Stream 2, Ukraine fears that Russia will stop using Ukraine's pipelines, making it an easier target for a deeper Russian military invasion. Many in Europe are also worried that the pipeline will increase the Kremlin's influence on the continent's energy sector.

The project faces strong opposition in Congress and most of Europe, but the Biden administration announced it will waive sanctions against the company building the pipeline to "rebuild relationships" with its European partners. Germany, Biden's highly-valued ally in Europe, will benefit the most from the Nord Stream 2, along with the Kremlin.

"Nord Stream 2 has serious implications for Ukraine, as well as for the future of energy security in Europe," said Shaheen. "It gives Russia a weapon that could be used against Europe."

Zelensky also sounded the alarm when meeting with the senators.

"We will have nothing to pay for the Ukrainian army," Zelensky said in meeting the delegation. "Europe asks how you can protect yourself from Russia. The answer is very simple – do not give weapons to the enemy."

The senators said they will continue looking for ways to stop the imminent completion of Nord Stream 2 and try to prevent the pipeline from becoming operational.

"As you know, there is a licensing process before (the pipeline)



From left, U.S. senators Rob Portman (Republican-Ohio), Chris Murphy (Democrat-Connecticut) and Jeanne Shaheen (Democrat-New Hampshire) speak with journalists in Kyiv during their June 2, 2021, visit to Ukraine.

will begin operation, and during that time there will be elections in Germany, and in other countries that are affected, so we think there are further developments that will affect (the pipeline's) completion," Shaheen told journalists.

## Russia's war

The senators also voiced America's support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, assuring that military and economic assistance to fight off the Kremlin will continue.

The delegation visited the Wall of Remembrance at St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery in the heart of Kyiv. The memorial is composed of portraits of fallen soldiers, killed in Russian aggression in Donbas and Crimea.

"We grieve for them and all of those families who have lost their loved ones," Shaheen said.

The senators said they got a "virtual tour" of the front line of Russia's war in Donbas and talked to the commanders in the field.

Taran briefed the visitors about the security situation around Ukraine's borders and the prospects for the region's further development,

according to the Defense Ministry's press service. He also spoke about strengthening the capability of Ukraine's Armed Forces.

"We got a very clear picture of the challenges that (Ukraine's) troops and all those on the frontlines face," Shaheen said.

"We see your freedom connected to our freedom," Murphy said, after reminiscing about his first visit to Kyiv in 2014 during the Revolution of Dignity, which toppled the pro-Russian president Victor Yanukovich and forced him and his cronies to flee Ukraine.

Back then, Murphy, along with the U.S. Senator John McCain and former Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland, all visited Kyiv in solidarity with the ongoing protests.

"It is so heartwarming to see how much progress has been made," Murphy added.

## Reforms

The senators emphasized that more progress in making economic and political reforms is essential to continue receiving American aid.

In particular, the delegation told

Zelensky they expect to see reforms of the Security Service of Ukraine, known as the SBU, as well as the guaranteed independence of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, known as NABU, an institution that enjoys substantial trust from the West.

Zelensky assured them that SBU will be reformed to reduce some of its considerable powers, and the relevant bill has already been approved in the first reading in the parliament.

"Ukraine must be embraced by the West, and a part of that, in my view, is for the NATO accession process to proceed," said Portman.

The senator said Ukraine should be brought closer to the European and North Atlantic community because the war against Russia in Eastern Ukraine affects democracies in those regions as well.

"Our ties with Ukraine are deep and abiding," said Portman. "We will be there, standing by with a country that is continuing to march for democracy and embracing the West. And the West must embrace Ukraine." 🇺🇸

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# 'The Gray Lady Winked' takes on failings of New York Times

By Max Hunder  
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Walter Duranty's shameful misreporting of the 1932–33 famine in Soviet Ukraine is just one of many large-scale failures in journalism committed by the New York Times, according to *The Gray Lady Winked*, a new book by Israel-based American author Ashley Rindsberg.

The book is a study of the biggest reporting failures of what many consider to be the United States' paper of record. It invokes episodes ranging from the Gray Lady's soft coverage of the Nazi regime in Germany to their fabricated interviews with families of soldiers who died in the Iraq War.

Chapter 2, serving as one of the book's main attacks on the high credibility often ascribed to the New York Times, covers the paper's aiding and abetting of Duranty, their Moscow correspondent from 1922 to 1936. Duranty is infamous for having consistently denied the existence of the famine in Ukraine in 1932 and 1933.

## Duranty's Pulitzer

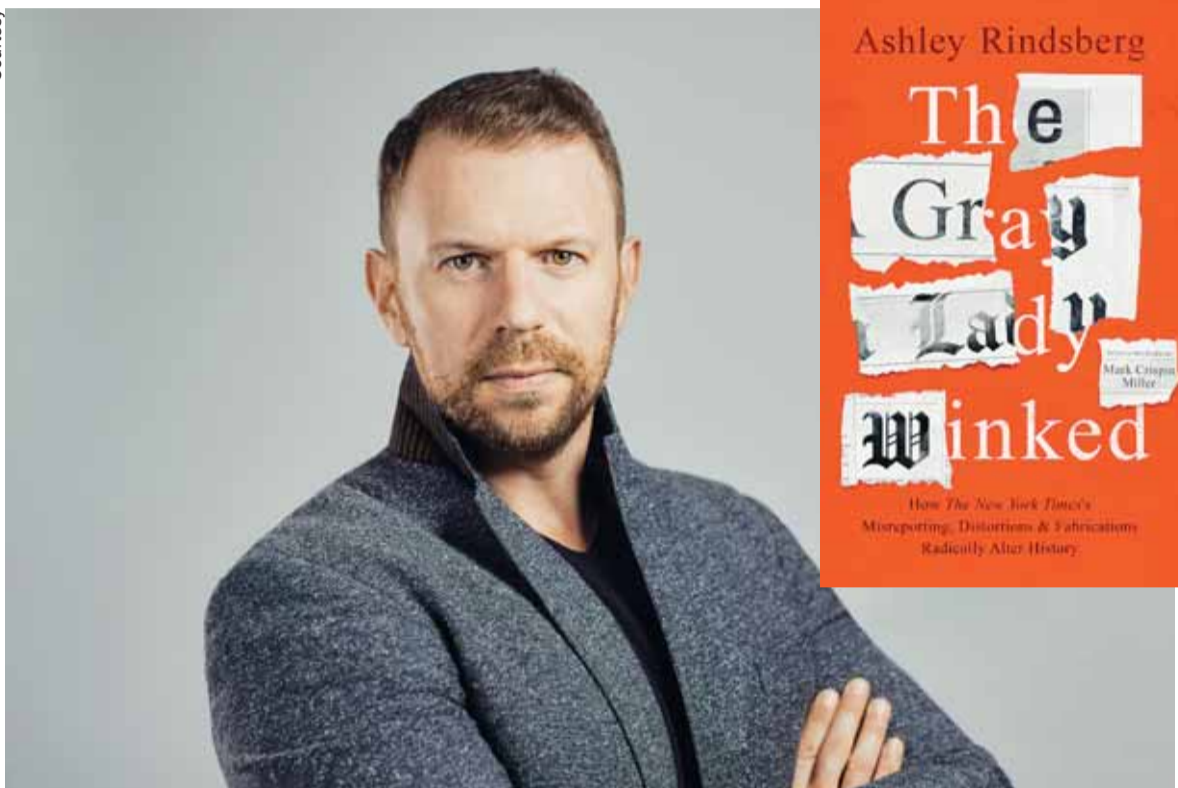
He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1932 for 13 articles he wrote in 1931. While the pieces under consideration did not cover the famine, the Pulitzer Prize Board in a 2003 review of Duranty's award said the following: "Mr. Duranty's 1931 work, measured by today's standards for foreign reporting, falls seriously short."

Ukrainian organizations in the United States and Canada have consistently lobbied for the revocation of Duranty's Pulitzer. In 2003, the New York Times hired Mark von Hagen, a Soviet History professor at Columbia University, to recommend whether the paper should return Duranty's Pulitzer. He concluded that "for the sake of The New York Times' honor, they (the Pulitzer board) should take the prize away."

However, ultimately the Pulitzer committee chose not to revoke the award, and the New York Times chose not to return it. The paper's then-publisher, Arthur Sulzberger Jr., first claimed that the paper did not physically have the prize, a gold coin, and therefore could not return it. He then asserted that returning the Pulitzer would amount to a "Stalinist practice to airbrush purged figures out of official records and histories," a statement which Rindsberg describes as "appalling."

The line held by the New York Times is that Duranty was a rogue reporter who was guilty of "slovenly" reporting. However, Rindsberg believes that this is an attempt to cover up the paper's wider involve-

Courtesy



Israel-based American author Ashley Rindsberg is sure to please and disappoint Ukrainian readers with his new book "The Gray Lady Winked: How The New York Times' Misreporting, Distortions & Fabrications Radically Alter History." He will gain favor for his focus on Walter Duranty's cover-up of the Ukrainian Holodomor, but the book's preface was written by someone who considers the EuroMaidan Revolution to be a "U.S. coup."

ment in the failure to report the story.

## Covering up genocide

"The New York Times absolutely covered up a genocide. When it's not entered into the historical record in that way, by the most powerful newspaper in the world claiming it didn't happen, you miss something forever. You don't have that same kind of energy behind those events," Rindsberg explained in an interview with the Kyiv Post.

"The big lie behind Duranty is that he acted on his own. The real story is that nobody has asked the question of why Duranty would do this, and when you ask the question you come to the answer that he had no reason to do it. In fact, he only had reason to cover the story (properly), and then you say: why did it happen?"

For Rindsberg, the answer is that Duranty was likely pressured by those managing his newspaper: "You come to the answer that the New York Times instructed him to do it. They had much bigger interests at play, and part of those interests was getting the US government to recognize the Soviet Union."

Rindsberg's evidence for this, presented in the book, is an admission which Duranty made to a US Embassy official in Berlin in 1931: "In agreement with the New York Times and the Soviet authorities' his official dispatches always reflect the official opinion of the Soviet government and not his own."

This is a damning statement, for

which the New York Times has been held fully accountable. Rindsberg concedes that there is a chance that Duranty, a skilled and prolific fibster, could have been lying to the official. However, he then points out that not only did his reporting on the famine very closely resemble the official Soviet position but that the New York Times also ran articles by writers who later turned out to be Soviet agents, such as Ella Winter.

## Socialist policies?

In an interview, Rindsberg's criticism of the Gray Lady is extremely strident, occasionally verging on polemical. Some of his assertions require a sizeable leap of faith. He maintains that the current iteration

of the newspaper wants to propagate "socialist policies," yet he cannot identify a smoking gun which would demonstrate why this is the case.

Nevertheless, the main body of his book is factual and well-researched and can be read as a reasonable case for the prosecution against the journalistic mistakes of one of the best-known newspapers in the world.

However, as is frequently the case with outsiders who take on bastions of the establishment, he has allowed himself to be dragged down by association.

The preface of *The Gray Lady Winked* is written by Mark Crispin Miller, a New York University media studies professor known for his wild

conspiracy theories about 9/11, the Parkland school shooting, and the Covid-19 vaccine.

## Credibility shortcomings

When it comes to Ukraine, Miller has described the 2014 EuroMaidan Revolution that ended Viktor Yanukovich's presidency in 2014 as a "US coup," stated that Vladimir Putin "didn't seize Crimea," and claimed that the post-EuroMaidan Arseniy Yatseniuk government contained "a number of unapologetic neo-Nazis."

Ukraine-watchers will be familiar with all of the above attack lines, which are regularly pushed by the Kremlin, along with their witting and unwitting helpers on the fringes of Western media. All of the claims made by Miller about Ukraine had been thoroughly debunked long before he shared them.

When the Kyiv Post put Miller's statements before Rindsberg, he conceded that he knew there was "some stuff out there" about the controversial professor, but that he "hadn't done a full dive into all the allegations about him." Rindsberg says that he disagrees with Miller on the Ukraine issue, as well as "about 10–20 others."

He nevertheless defends the decision to have Miller write the preface: "I think that's a part of this: being able to have this discourse with someone like Mark, and others who are involved with this project, who I disagree with on certain things."

"The book is not about Russia and Ukraine per se, but is about media narratives, so that's why I included the foreword."

He also stated that part of the reason he enlisted Miller's help was the lack of mainstream figures willing to criticize the Gray Lady: "At the end of the day, I wanted a dissenting voice on the New York Times, and it's a difficult thing to find." ❄️

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# Geopolitical season heats up with major events all summer

By Oleksiy Sorokin  
sorokin@kyivpost.com

Entering his third summer as Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky faces an uphill battle on the international stage.

Zelensky has promised to find a peaceful solution to Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine and reintegrate the eastern parts of Donbas currently occupied by Russia.

He has also sought to revive the question of Kremlin-occupied Crimea through the newly created Crimean Platform and improve Ukraine's global standing through an elaborate celebration of 30 years of independence in August.

The president has also been seeking to receive a NATO Membership Action Plan and halt the construction of Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Now Zelensky's desires are running into harsh reality.

Russia isn't prepared to halt its war against Ukraine, NATO snubbed Ukraine prior to the upcoming June 14 summit, while U.S. President Joe Biden has de facto greenlit the construction of Russia's gas pipeline in the run-up to his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

As Zelensky puts internation-



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg (R) and Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba put on their protective face masks after giving a press conference following their meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels, on April 13, 2021.

al diplomacy at the center of his presidency, the upcoming summer months, packed with crucial meet-

ings and events, might shape the Ukrainian political agenda for years to come.

## US-Russia Summit

Without a doubt, Ukraine will be closely watching the upcoming meet-

ing between Biden and Putin set for June 16 in Geneva.

The agenda will include Russia's military buildup on Ukraine's borders and the ongoing occupation of Ukrainian territories.

According to Deputy Foreign Minister Yevhen Yenin, Ukraine is working to arrange a phone call between Zelensky and Biden before the latter meets Putin in Switzerland.

Up until now, Biden and Zelensky had a single phone conversation on April 2, while Russia amassed over 100,000 troops within striking distance of Ukraine's defensive lines, causing fears of all-out war.

Zelensky said he hoped the U.S. will not make any agreements behind Ukraine's back.

"Are there risks that they will raise some issues despite our previous agreements (with U.S.)? I am sure there are such risks," Zelensky said at a press conference on May 20.

Despite his publicly professed "unwavering support for Ukraine's territorial integrity," Biden backed down on strong action against Russia, while the U.S. distanced itself from supporting Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration.

The U.S. has held back from imposing strong sanctions on Russia,

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## Belarus, Ukraine ties near breaking point as Lukashenko stays put

page 2 →

Russia are unprofitable.

On April 19, the U.S. Treasury announced sanctions against nine Belarusian state-owned companies, including Naftan, the largest of Belarus's two oil refineries. All companies are banned from doing business with Naftan starting June 3.

According to Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the European Commission, the EU is working on sanctions against individuals involved in the hijacking, businesses that finance Lukashenko's regime and Belarus's aviation sector.

Belarus' Belavia Airlines has been banned by 21 countries out of the 30 countries it serviced. Belarus is also now expected to lose at least \$50-70 million in tariffs after turning into a European no-fly zone.

"Sectoral sanctions will probably take a bit longer, but the aim is to have it done before the EU summer break in August," wrote Rikard Jozwiak, an editor at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

### Politics before economy

Despite imminent economic consequences, Lukashenko is looking to raise the stakes.

In early June, Lukashenko began talking about direct flights between Minsk and occupied Crimea. He also proposed to hand over kidnapped Protasevich to Russian-led militants fighting in eastern Donbas.

"We didn't start this debacle, so it isn't on me," said Lukashenko referring to Ukraine's decision to ban flights to and from Belarus.

The curtailing of bilateral relations now seems imminent.

According to Deputy Foreign Minister Yevhen Yenin, Ukraine has prepared sanctions against Belarus' top officials and is ready to impose them as soon as the decision is approved by the National Security and Defense Council.

"If even one Belarusian plane ends up in occupied Crimea, sanctions will be inevitable with all the ensuing consequences," First Deputy Foreign Minister Emine Dzheppar told Interfax. ☪



# Ukraine strives to get on agenda as big powers meet without nation

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while Biden justified his decision to waive most sanctions against the Nord Stream 2 pipeline on May 25 by saying the project was nearly complete and sanctions could hurt ties with Europe.

Biden has also stated his desire to have "a stable and predictable" relationship with Russia, the country that tried to influence the U.S. presidential elections twice.

## Nord Stream 2

Ukraine's main concern has been the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

"The risk is very high that Russia will pressure the U.S. into lifting the Nord Stream 2 sanctions," said Zelensky on May 20.

"I think it will be a defeat for the United States and a personal defeat for President Biden. It will be a serious geopolitical win for Russia and will lead to a new redistribution of power and influence," he added.

On June 1, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said that Berlin is in talks with Washington to resolve the issues surrounding the pipeline.

Germany has been actively backing the completion of Russia's megaproject.

The project is 95% complete. According to Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, there are only 100 kilometers left to be built.

If completed, Nord Stream 2 would allow Russia to bypass Ukraine when transporting an annual 110 billion cubic meters of gas to European countries through Germany, depriving Ukraine of at least \$1.5 billion in transit fees per year.

Russia and Ukraine have a five-year agreement through 2024 that guarantees Russia will transport no less than 40 billion cubic meters through Ukraine each year and must pay Ukraine at least \$7.2 billion over the course of the contract.

## NATO snub

Biden's weak stand on Russia and Germany's fight for Nord Stream 2 was followed by NATO's de facto rejection of Ukraine's aspirations to join the alliance.

Ukraine wasn't invited to take part in the upcoming NATO summit in Brussels scheduled for June 14. A Membership Action Plan that Ukraine has been promised for 13 years isn't on the table.

"We absolutely do not understand how it is possible to hold a closed NATO summit amidst Russian aggressive actions against Ukraine in the Black Sea region," said Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. "How can you not invite Ukraine, how can you not find a format to fit Ukraine's participation in the current summit?"

In early May, the New York Post reported that the White House edited an official transcript to erase White House Deputy Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre's statement that

the U.S. supports Ukraine's desire to join NATO.

Now, no breakthrough is expected on June 14.

## Parting with Belarus

Meanwhile, Ukraine enters the summer with one more problem on its border – Belarus.

After Belarus intercepted a passenger plane flying over its territory to seize an opposition journalist on May 23, Ukraine's relationship with its northern neighbor deteriorated.

Like the Western countries, Ukraine condemned Belarusian authorities and banned flights over Belarus, as well as electricity imports from Russia and Belarus.

Almost immediately, Belarus initiated a trade war with Ukraine and is now heading towards a complete freeze of bilateral relations. With Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko holding Belarus at his mercy, the relationship between the two neighbors is expected to only get worse.

Ukraine is set to move forward with personal sanctions against Belarus' top government officials, while Belarus has been testing the possibility of recognizing occupied Crimea as part of Russia, a political move much desired by Belarus' only ally – Russia.

In June-July, Ukraine may experience shortages of bitumen, gasoline and diesel which were mainly imported from Belarus.

However, experts say Belarus is much more dependent on Ukraine economically than vice versa and can lose \$3 billion per year from this trade war.

## Moving from Minsk

Lacking assistance from Germany and the U.S., Ukraine is also seeking new ways to reinvent the peace talks with Russia.

One of those attempts is to move the talks out of Minsk, changing the existing Minsk agreements in the process.

The Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine includes representatives of Ukraine, Russia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and was formed to find a peaceful solution to the war in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region after it was invaded by Russia in 2014.

In September 2014, members of the group signed the so-called Minsk Protocol, a twelve-point agreement meant to stop the war in the Donbas and reintegrate the occupied territories back into Ukraine.

Minsk II was signed in February 2015 after Russia reignited the war. The agreement signed under military pressure has been impossible to fulfill.

The Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine has been meeting regularly since June 2014 without much to show for it.



Kostyantyn Chernichkin

People hold the Crimean Tatar national flag during the National Flag of Crimea Day in Kyiv on June 26, 2020. Ukraine will launch the Crimean Platform, an international initiative to end the occupation of Crimea, on Aug. 23.

Now, with the relationship with Belarus tarnished, Ukraine is looking for another solution.

Moving the peace talks out of Minsk will most likely be followed by a change of format. Several Ukrainian diplomats have publicly mentioned Istanbul as a possible meeting place.

Zelensky said he wanted to add the U.S. as a mediator in the peace talks with Russia.

## Crimean Platform

Zelensky has also been moving forward with his desire to bring the de-occupation of Crimea back on the table.

Zelensky's biggest challenge will come on Aug. 23, when the first official meeting of the newly created Crimean Platform will take place, a day before Ukraine's 30th Independence Day.

"It's not a simple summit. Important documents will be signed there. Many foreign countries will be represented," said Zelensky, acknowl-

edging that Russia will try to derail the initiative. "Russia is reacting very sensitively to the Crimean Platform."

No official statements have yet been made on the content of the meeting, however, according to Kyiv Post sources, the Platform will include cultural and political events which would be concluded by a joint declaration that is still in the making.

In February, Ukraine's Ombudswoman Ludmyla Denisova said that 109 Ukrainian citizens were political prisoners of the Kremlin in Russia and occupied Crimea. Among them, 75 were Crimean Tatars.

Zelensky has been publicly and privately inviting foreign leaders to take part in the Crimean Platform and the celebration of Ukraine's Independence Day, to attract attention to the question of Crimea, largely neglected in the west.

## Donbas escalation

However, every Ukrainian initiative is met with a Russian threat to reignite the war in eastern Donbas.

Russia has amassed over 100,000 soldiers in occupied Crimea and along the Ukrainian border. Forty-four Ukrainian soldiers were killed in 2021 so far, despite an active ceasefire.

While Russia has publicly declared it will withdraw its troops from the Ukrainian border it didn't follow through on its promise.

"Russia is only declaring the withdrawal of troops and fulfillment of its obligations. Only about 10,000 troops were withdrawn," Zelensky said on June 2 during a meeting with a bipartisan group of U.S. senators.

Furthermore, Russia announced that it issued over 527,000 passports to residents of the occupied Donbas, cementing its presence in the region.

According to the president, the only way out of the conflict is to hold talks with the aggressor.

"I insist on a direct dialogue with Putin," said Zelensky.

Whether a meeting between the two is possible will become clear in the upcoming months. 🇺🇦

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# Zelensky's de-oligarchization bill may not do the job, critics say

By Oleg Sukhov  
sukhov@kyivpost.com

President Volodymyr Zelensky submitted a de-oligarchization bill to the Verkhovna Rada on June 2.

Figures who are officially recognized as oligarchs will be banned from donating directly or indirectly to political parties and taking part in the privatization of state assets, according to the bill.

Zelensky launched what he calls a "de-oligarchization campaign" in early 2021.

Associates of billionaire oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky have been charged in an embezzlement case, while Viktor Medvedchuk, a pro-Kremlin politician who is alleged to own a business empire, has been sanctioned and charged with high treason. In 2020 another oligarch, ex-President Petro Poroshenko, was charged in an abuse of power case.

Zelensky's critics say that the de-oligarchization campaign is not genuine. They argue that no law enforcement reforms have been carried out, which makes the fight against oligarchs meaningless.

The case against Poroshenko has stalled for a year without any results, and it is not clear whether the investigations into the \$5.5 billion embezzlement at PrivatBank, formerly owned by Kolomoisky, and Medvedchuk's alleged crimes can lead to verdicts.

## Criteria

The bill seeks to create an official legal definition for oligarchs.

Oligarchs are defined as persons meeting at least three of four criteria: involvement in political activities, considerable influence on mass media, being a beneficiary of monopolies recognized by anti-trust authorities and ownership of assets



Nationalist demonstrators rally against oligarchs on April 3, 2018 in Kyiv and hold a banner that reads "For a Ukrainian Future Without Oligarchs." Two years later, President Volodymyr Zelensky submitted a bill that seeks to limit the influence of oligarchs.

exceeding Hr 2.2 billion (\$81 million), excluding media assets.

"Considerable influence on mass media" can imply being a beneficiary of media outlets or controlling mass media indirectly without formally owning them, according to the bill.

If, after the law comes into effect, an oligarch sells a media outlet to an affiliated person or anyone who does not have an impeccable business reputation, they will still be considered an oligarch.

Involvement in political activities implies being a president, a member of parliament, a minister or deputy minister, the head of a state agency or a presidential advisory body, the head of the Security Service of Ukraine, the prosecutor general or the head of the National Bank of Ukraine, according to the bill. A person affiliated with people in these positions can also be classified as an oligarch.

Moreover, a person who has

financed political parties, political advertising or protests with political demands can also be defined as an oligarch, according to the legislation.

## Other aspects

All top government officials will be required to declare any contacts or meetings with oligarchs, except for public official meetings.

A person can be recognized as an oligarch by the National Defense and Security Council based

on requests by members of the council, the Cabinet of Ministers, the National Bank of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine or the Anti-Monopoly Committee.

The National Security and Defense Council will also keep a public register of officially recognized oligarchs.

If signed into law, the bill will formally come into effect on the following day and will be implemented

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# Critics: Zelensky is not tackling most important issues in his drive to take on the oligarchs

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within six months. The legislation will be in force for 10 years.

According to the bill, certain officials must be fired if they violate the anti-oligarch legislation — for example, by failing to declare contacts with oligarchs. These include the head of the Security Service of Ukraine, the head of the National Bank of Ukraine, members of the Central Election Commission, the head of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine and their deputies, and members of the High Council of Justice, the judiciary's main governance body.

For most other officials, the bill envisages lighter punishment for violating the de-oligarchization law: so-called “disciplinary penalties,” which may include reprimands or warnings.

## Criticism

Zelensky's critics have dismissed the bill as a publicity stunt that aims to

compensate for the absence of genuine rule of law reforms.

“It's impossible to defeat oligarchs with a law on oligarchs,” columnist and investment banker Serhiy Fursa wrote on Facebook. “It's impossible to defeat oligarchs without the rule of law and functioning institutions.”

Kira Rudyk, head of the opposition party Voice, agreed with this assessment.

“The president's initiative was submitted to parliament only as a PR stunt,” Rudyk said in a statement. “Instead of reforming the judiciary and creating fair courts in the country, the president is submitting a populist bill that will not change anything fundamentally.”

She also argued that the anti-oligarch bill increased the powers of the presidentially controlled National Security and Defense Council and was part of efforts to replace the law enforcement system with the council's decisions. The legislation gives the National Security and Defense Council arbitrary authority to decide



Volodymyr Petrov

President Volodymyr Zelensky speaks at the press conference marking his second year in office at the Antonov plant in Kyiv on May 20, 2021. During the press conference, he spoke at length about the upcoming bill that seeks to limit the influence of oligarchs in Ukraine. He submitted the bill on June 2.

whether someone is an oligarch, she added.

Critics were also skeptical about the prospects of de-oligarchization after a bill targeting oligarch Rinat Akhmetov's interests was amended in his favor.

Initially, the bill was supposed to increase taxes on iron ore extraction, the bulk of which being controlled by Akhmetov's DTEK group. The initial plan that the government presented would see Akhmetov's enterprises pay an additional \$1 billion per year in taxes.

However, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and members of Zelensky's Servant of the People party on Feb.

2 submitted a bill that raises the tax by just \$500 million per year.

## Response

Mykhailo Podolyak, an aide to Zelensky's chief of staff Andriy Yermak, responded to the criticism of the bill by arguing that it was a genuine de-oligarchization drive.

“The bill radically changes the traditional system of secret relations between oligarchs and public officials,” Podolyak told the Kyiv Post. “...Before Volodymyr Zelensky nobody in Ukrainian politics tried to take such steps aimed at legally defining the (oligarch) phenomenon and later dismantling the oligarchic

system.”

However, failed de-oligarchization campaigns were announced by former presidents Viktor Yushchenko and Petro Poroshenko. Ousted former president Viktor Yanukovich also had scuffles with oligarchs over the redistribution of assets.

“Oligarchs and people affiliated with them have long held a special position in our politics and economics,” Podolyak said. “They did not obey the law, bought politicians, lawmakers and judges. They could blackmail the state through their mechanisms and seize public resources. Now all of this will be blocked.”

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# Lifestyle

Celebrate first summer weekend with jazz and charming sunset view at the rooftop of the TsUM department store (38 Khreshchatyk St.) at 7 p.m. on June 5, 6. Hr 350-550



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## Rethinking Ukrainian identity with new vyshyvanka symbols

### City Life

With Daria Shulzhenko  
shulzhenko@kyivpost.com

### New places to eat as Kyiv opens up and warms up

Since the spring lockdown was lifted over a month ago, dozens of new restaurants have emerged on Kyiv's gastronomic map, allowing local foodies not only to go back to their favorite joints, but also embark on a journey of discovering new tastes.

Mexican tacos, elaborate pastry, Korean sandwiches and Crimean Tatar chebureki are all available to please the Kyiv audience, wrapped up in the best local tradition of standout concepts and designs.

The Kyiv Post has picked out some of the most exceptional recent additions to the capital's vibrant restaurant scene.

#### Mates

There is nothing like starting a day with a cup of hot coffee and a luscious breakfast on a sunlit summer terrace. The recently-opened Mates café has it all.

It is located on the capital's quiet Hoholivska Street in historic center, not far from Zoloti Vorota metro station. It was founded by Olha and Anna Babentsova, the sister duo famous for running a popular bakery production. Mates attracts pedestrians with an ironic inscription on a window: "Another place with coffee and desserts, but (these are) from sisters Babentsovy."

Their well-known desserts are surely served here, but selection varies by the day. Other options include various pies, and sandwiches with chicken, tuna, salmon, mozzarella or tofu. The coffee menu includes all classics, filter coffee and ice coffee drinks. Mates also offers Japanese green tea matcha, kombucha fermented tea and freshly-squeezed juice.

On weekends, Mates holds pop-up breakfasts from 11 a.m. till 3 p.m. offering some enticing dishes like sugarless banana bread with strawberries and whipped cream or a crispy croissant with scrambled eggs, halumi cheese and pickles. The breakfast menu, however, is different every weekend and is announced on the café's Instagram page in advance.

Prices: coffee – Hr 35–80, sandwiches – Hr 95–115, pies – Hr 65  
25 Hoholivska St. Mon-Fri. 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. Sat-Sun. 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Oleg Petrasjuk

The founder of Ukrainian brand Etnodim Andriy Cherukha holds an embroidered vyshyvanka shirt, as he speaks with the Kyiv Post at his company's store in Kyiv on May 25, 2021. The piece is one of nine designs from the brand's recent collection, which rethinks Ukrainian identity with modern symbols.



By Agatha Gorski  
tagatagorski@gmail.com

Thousands of years ago, an unmarried Ukrainian woman had poppy flowers embroidered on her white vyshyvanka as a symbol of solitude. But for a woman in modern Ukraine, the ornament would hardly spark any associations with the single life — the logo of the Tinder dating app would do the job much better.

But nobody would actually embroider images as trivial as Tinder's flame on a linen piece. Or would they?

This bold move was one of the many experiments local vyshyvanka brand Etnodim went for in its recent collection, with an ambitious goal of rethinking the modern Ukrainian identity.

Released days before Vyshyvanka Day, on May 17, the capsule collection reinvents the traditional costume, using symbols to which the Ukrainians of today can relate.

Framed into a thoughtful campaign with a touching nostalgic video, the collection struck a chord with many Ukrainians. The pieces are now close to selling out, according to Etnodim's founder Andriy Cherukha, while the promo has attracted more than a million views.

"We made a big contribution to the perception and understanding

of the vyshyvanka. We showed that vyshyvanka is no longer about the traditional symbolism of black for sorrow and red for love," Cherukha told the Kyiv Post.

#### Business and brand

Etnodim emerged in 2008, just as the e-commerce business was taking off in Ukraine.

Back then, Cherukha was a student studying in Ostroh, a town in western Rivne Oblast. He noticed that though vyshyvkas were in high demand, there was little choice on the market. That's why his girlfriend used to bring embroidered pieces for her Ostroh friends from her hometown of Kolomyia, an area famous for folk crafts.

Seeing an opportunity for business, Cherukha founded Etnodim, first operating as an online retailer of those same artisanal vyshyvkas from Kolomyia. They were ordered from all across Ukraine, he says.

The sales grew steadily and a few years later, Cherukha set out to conquer the Ukrainian capital, moving to Kyiv and opening Etnodim's first physical store here.

Soon after that, the company decided to reach for a new height and design the first vyshyvkas of its own design, slightly more casual than their counterparts that are hand-crafted in western Ukraine.

"We wanted to create something that people would wear every day," Cherukha says.

The decision could not be timelier. Ukraine was on the verge of a new wave of patriotism. The 2013–2014 EuroMaidan Revolution that unseated President Viktor Yanukovich was about to unfold and start the revival of all things Ukrainian. Many started to use their wardrobe as an opportunity for a pro-Ukrainian statement, and Etnodim's pieces fit the idea perfectly.

The company produced high-quality linen garments for women, men and children, digging into the folklore and using the traditional embroidery ornaments of plants, flowers and animals.

The pieces proved to be a hit, pushing Etnodim to grow to a team of nearly 45 people and move to a spacier store and office in the Podil district.

Though the company was widely known for its products, it never had a recognizable brand, identity or even logo. So in 2020, amid Ukraine's growing market of creative agencies, Cherukha decided to fix that.

The result was the collaboration with the Drama Queen marketing agency and its head Anna Goncharova, who previously worked with local leaders like Kachorovska footwear manufacturer and mobile

taxi service Uklon.

"When Etnodim came to me, they had grown to the point that they needed to become a brand," Goncharova told the Kyiv Post.

But what was supposed to be a big project just for Etnodim ended up bringing value to the whole of Ukraine.

#### No mystery

The campaign started with a video that asks a question "What is your vyshyvanka about?"

The answer is a recollection of pivotal moments in Ukrainian history, defining poem and song lines, significant cartoons and TV programs and even local dishes familiar to everyone from a school canteen. Compiling archive and news footage, the piece is narrated by a woman who appears in similar backgrounds as if walking through old memories.

There is a clip of the raising of the Ukrainian flag symbolizing independence. Another one shows a family at Independence Square during the EuroMaidan Revolution. One more features ex-President Leonid Kuchma's New Years' address alongside his grandson and dog — a silly moment Ukrainians remember. There are also the turbulent 1990s, school proms and vacationing in

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## City Life

# As pandemic eases, Kyiv gets more dining options

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## The Sinners

Behind its dazzling lights and high-rise buildings, Kyiv hides some of its best gems, secret bars. The Sinners is the most recent entry.

This bar offers a true speakeasy experience, as the owners do not disclose its location. Those looking to visit The Sinners, have to first arrive to Octo Tower café or neighboring Blur Coffee, ask for directions and then make their way to the secret place, somewhere around Klovaska metro station.

Once the destination is found, visitors will be able to enjoy an evening at a small and intimate bar with wall-sized windows and a charming view, some vintage furniture and green plants placed all around.

On the menu side, The Sinners pours wine, including the natural ones, and prepares a variety of cocktails. The drink carte offers some all-time favorites like Aviation and Paper Plane. The house specials are Zero Waste made of black rum, banana cordial and cherry bitters liquor, and many more. Though it takes a bit of an effort to find The Sinners, with its atmosphere and tempting drinks, it is definitely worth looking for.

Prices: cocktails – Hr 120–180  
5 Mechnykova St. 6 p.m. – 12 a.m.

## Zavertailo

Zavertailo is a new venue opened by the founders of Kyiv's longtime favorite, Honey café.

Named after the last name of owners Anna and Stanislav Zavertailo, the new bakery is located on a narrow street in the Podil neighborhood. It was opened only several weeks ago but has become an instant hit with Kyivans lining up to taste mouth-watering pastries.

The venue has a minimalistic interior design with big windows. It offers a great selection of breakfasts, including oatmeal with apple and cinnamon, several egg dishes and sandwiches with various fillings. Zavertailo also serves fish and meat entrees, and appetizers like beef tartare and fondue.

But pastry is still the calling card



A bartender prepares cocktails for the visitors of The Sinners bar in Kyiv on June 1, 2021. The speakeasy bar's location isn't disclosed, taking a bit of an extra effort for visitors to find it by asking for directions at neighboring Octo Tower or Blur Coffee cafes.



Seafood croquettes is on the menu of the new multi-cuisine restaurant Once Upon a Time.



New Asian street food joint Stack serves Korean sandwiches with ham or tofu.



Zavertailo is a new bakery that offers a great choice of pastry, including croissants and cruffins with various fillings.

here. Zavertailo serves more than ten types of croissants and cruffins, which is a combination of a croissant and a muffin, with sweet fillings including custard, chocolate, poppy seeds and cherries. The café also bakes sourdough bread and serves it with various dips like avocado butter

and mushroom mousse. There is also a great selection of natural wines and non-alcoholic drinks.

Prices: croissants – Hr 45–85, coconut omelet – Hr 145, beef tartare – Hr 195  
7 Mezhyhirska St. 7:30 a.m. – 10 p.m.

## El Gordo

Kyiv can't boast about a wide choice of Mexican food. But the recently-opened El Gordo is shifting the situation.

It is hard to imagine a better location for the Mexican street food venue: The capital's central Velyka Vasylkivska Street, with its constant fuss and buzz, is where El Gordo settled. The joint has an eye-catching, bright sign that immediately attracts passersby from the busy street. Inside, the place is as bright as from the outside: El Gordo has green walls with some Mexican-style drawings hanging on them and chandeliers shaped as sombreros, traditional Mexican hats.

However, El Gordo's menu is more minimalistic than its interior design. It offers eight types of tacos with

chicken, beef, fish or shrimp, as well as some avant-garde options with cactus and cheese. The eatery also serves a traditional taquito, which is a rolled-up, fried tortilla with various fillings, making them two ways, with chicken or beef.

The Mexican menu wouldn't have been complete without burritos and quesadillas, and El Gordo surely cooks both. There are also tortas (sandwiches) with chicken and beef and churros, a fried dough dessert popular in Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries.

Prices: tacos – Hr 36–56, quesadillas – Hr 99–109  
16 Velyka Vasylkivska St. 10 a.m. – 10 p.m.

## Stack

Traveling to Asia may not be possible this summer due to the pandemic travel restrictions but Kyiv offers several options to experience the Asian culture and the region's authentic dishes. Stack is a recent arrival that lets you do just that.

Located in the historic area on Sichovykh Striltsiv Street, with its pink neon light and huge transparent

glass-door entrance, this joint is hard to miss.

Stack does not stick to one particular Asian cuisine but offers the best street food options from different countries. It serves Korean sandwiches with ham or tofu, as well as traditional Korean rice noodles with vegetables. There is also Chinese fried rice or noodles with vegetables and traditional Indian naan bread with mushrooms and cucumber salsa. One can also add chicken, tofu or shrimps to any dish for an additional charge. On the drink side, Stack has a selection of cold-pressed juices, lemonades and coffee.

Prices: Korean sandwich – Hr 110–100, Chinese fried rice – Hr 120

57 Sichovykh Striltsiv St. Mon-Fri. 10 a.m. – 9 p.m. Sat-Sun. 12 p.m. – 9 p.m.

## Tut Bude

This new café is worth visiting for the view of the gorgeous St. Nicholas Cathedral alone. Tut Bude (Here Will Be in English) is a perfect place for both a romantic dinner, a late breakfast with friends or some alone time. Although the venue has a minimalistic interior and exterior design, it still stands out with bright azure door and windows.

Tut Bude's menu has options for any taste and occasion. The café serves eight types of breakfast meals, including eggs Benedicts, tofu omelet, syrnyky, or Ukrainian cottage cheese pancakes. There are also salads, soups, main courses and bowls. To sweeten the pot, the café has a vast assortment of desserts such as croissants, cakes, strudels and more. Coffee and wine are here to accompany meals.

Prices: syrnyky – Hr 129, avocado toast – Hr 158, bowls – Hr 168–189

98 Velyka Vasylkivska St. Mon-Fri. 7:30 a.m. – 10 p.m. Sat-Sun. 8:30 a.m. – 10 p.m.

## Once Upon a Time

Once Upon a Time has started making a name for itself even before it first opened the doors on June 1, with all its tables pre-booked in advance.

The restaurant has joined the family of Podil establishments, located near Poshtova Ploscha metro station. The joint has an underground location and on-point interior design made of unusual wooden decor, dark stone walls reminiscent of a cave and unusual lamps such as the one shaped like a human heart.

The restaurant's food choice is versatile with no focus on one particular cuisine. Instead, the guests are promised to be surprised by the house variations of the world-known dishes. They include shrimp and crab croquettes, donuts with "mushroom dust," Crimean Tatar chebureki, or deep-fried turnovers made here with a flavor twist involving Asian soup tom yum.

Prices: donuts with mushroom dust – Hr 78, hummus – Hr 161, vegetable salad – Hr 125

8/13 Borysohlybska St. 6 p.m. – 2 a.m.



A waitress serves coffee and a dessert at Mates cafe in Kyiv downtown on June 1, 2021. Mates offers a wide range of hot and cold drinks, desserts and holds pop-up breakfasts on weekends.

# Tasty options to explore East Asian cuisine in Kyiv

By Asami Terajima  
terajima@kyivpost.com

From Japanese sushi to Chinese dim sum, the popularity of East Asian cuisine has gone through the roof over the last few decades.

Rich in history, traditional East Asian culinary practice has been gaining attention around the world. Taking a gastronomic tour in Asia is on the bucket list for many foodies out there, but the pandemic has made it difficult to fulfill their dreams.

Luckily, small businesses offering East Asian goodies have been popping up in Ukraine, introducing locals to new food traditions.

Here is the Kyiv Post's guide to productions and places to explore a taste of East Asia in the capital.

## Kolobok Bo's rice balls

When traveling to Japan, it's hard to miss the convenience stores in almost every corner of any city, selling everyday necessities like ready-to-eat meals, bottled beverages and snacks.

Locally called "konbini," these one-stop shops are open round the clock and are known to be efficient and innovative, where customers can choose from many grab-and-go options, including a whole shelf dedicated to onigiri rice balls.

Much like sandwiches in Europe, onigiri rice balls, usually wrapped with seaweed and containing fish, meat or vegetable filling, are iconic snacks in Japan. In konbini, they are individually wrapped in plastic to ensure that the seaweed sheet stays fresh and crisp.

Japan's rice balls are now also available in Kyiv thanks to the Kolobok Bo supplier. The company makes onigiris with six kinds of fillings, such as tuna with mayonnaise, teriyaki chicken and salmon kimchi. The Japanese snacks are then distributed to 25 cafés across the capital. They can also be bought directly from Kolobok Bo for Hr 65 (\$2.3) apiece and delivered to one's home.

One of the co-founders, Dmytro Oseledets, says that most people in Ukraine have not been introduced to onigiri yet, but he is optimistic that it will become a trend in the near future because "people always want to try something new."

Kolobok Bo's onigiris can be purchased through Instagram and have them delivered on Tuesday or Friday. They are also available at a num-



Alina Korchakova, the owner of Baker Fluffy, holds freshly-baked Japanese cotton cheesecakes at the bakery in Kyiv's Dream Town shopping mall on May 29, 2021.

ber of cafes in Kyiv, which include Hand Brew Coffee (32 Bohdana Khmelnytskoho St.) and Kyiv Flower Project (20 Vozdvyzhenska St.)

## Chinese mooncakes

Traditionally eaten at the Moon Festival celebrated in fall, the small baked cakes — typically round, symbolizing the full moon — are presented as gifts to friends and acquaintances on this occasion.

Historians believe that the custom of eating Chinese mooncakes during the festival began in the Yuan Dynasty (13–14th centuries), the first foreign-led regime in ancient China ruled by Mongols.

According to a local folktale, mooncakes helped the Chinese people regain control of their territory even when they were being closely watched by the Mongols. It is believed that Chinese generals hid their messages in mooncakes to communicate while secretly organizing a revolt.

In Ukraine, Chinese mooncakes, famous for a sweet dense filling enveloped into a pastry skin, can be purchased from Mooncake\_ua, a small manufacturer based in the city of Dnipro. The family business of Pavel Khedekel and his daughter Sofia Khedekel offers them at an affordable price and delivers to all corners of the country.

There are 10 types of fillings available, such as the authentic sweet azuki red bean paste, poppyseed and sugar-free alternatives like dates. Each of them is individually packaged in plastic and neatly packed in a box.

Mooncake\_ua's desserts are sold in a set of three for Hr 70 (\$3.2), a set of five for Hr 90 (\$3.3), a set of nine for Hr 150 (\$5.5) and a set of 20 for Hr 290 (\$10.6). Order through Mooncake\_ua's Instagram

## Fluffy jiggly cheesecakes

With the moist, cotton-soft texture of soufflé, Japanese cheesecake is catching the hearts of people around the globe. What began in 1985 at a small local cakery Uncle Tetsu in Japan has grown to a global hit, rapidly gaining popularity in social media.

There is usually a long line of customers hoping to get a taste of Uncle Tetsu's freshly-baked signature desserts with the average wait time between 15 to 30 minutes.

Despite originating more than 8,000 kilometers away, Japanese cheesecake has also made its way to Ukraine. Inspired by the airy dessert from Uncle Tetsu, Alina Korchakova wanted to make "something that's not in Ukraine yet" and opened a bakery specializing in Japanese taste. Her Baker Fluffy has cheesecakes

in four flavors, which are vanilla, chocolate, raspberry and melon. While vanilla and chocolate-flavored soufflé cakes come in two sizes (180 grams and 450 grams), the other two are only offered in a smaller size.

Korchakova says the cheesecakes are being baked every morning and only use fine ingredients. In contrast with the New York-style cheesecakes, the Japanese ones are lower in calories and the texture is "very fluffy," according to the owner.

Baker Fluffy's Japanese cheesecakes can be purchased for Hr 87 (\$3) and Hr 215 (\$7.7) online at [www.bakerfluffy.com](http://www.bakerfluffy.com) or at the physical location at Dream Town 1 shopping mall (1B Obolonskyi Ave., 3rd floor)

## Fermented Korean kimchi

The staple traditional Korean side dish made of fermented and salted vegetables, with its high probiotic and fiber content, has been around for over 2,000 years. The beloved East Asian recipe used to preserve vegetables helped ancient Koreans overcome cold winters.

Packed with nutrients while being low in calories, the dish offers a variety of health benefits, which include keeping the digestive system healthy, boosting the immune system and reducing the risk of serious conditions such as stroke and cancer.

Kyiv-based Garazade Elfag and his wife Tabriz Hasankhani have been making kimchi at home for nearly four years until they started a small family business in 2020, driven by their love for Korean cuisine.

The selection of fermented vegetables at Kim's Kimchi was first small, but the menu has been expanding ever since. Besides regular kimchi made of Chinese cabbage, the producer also uses other ingredients like green onion, cucumber and radish. Elfag says their kimchi undergoes a proper fermentation process but is cooked mildly spicy to suit the taste

buds of Ukrainians.

About 900 grams of Chinese cabbage kimchi can be purchased for Hr 250 (\$9) while the price is Hr 300 (\$11) for kimchi made of green onions, cucumbers and radish. There is half-size green onion kimchi available as well for Hr 150 (\$5.5). An order can be made by contacting Kim's Kimchi through Instagram or by calling them at +38063 190 7040.

## Osaka's octopus balls

The Japanese street snack in the shape of little round balls containing pieces of octopus originated in the city of Osaka back in the 1930s, where the irresistible smell of takoyaki spreads across the street now and then.

The small dumplings made of a savory pancake-like batter, garnished with sauces and seasonings, are popular at festivals, often prepared from food stands right in front of customers.

Ka Wing Leung, a 37-year-old Hong Konger who moved to Ukraine three years ago, is passionate about Japanese cuisine and wants to show Ukrainian people that it's a whole lot more than sushi. Leung opened Kyiv's first takoyaki stand in 2020, keeping the prices affordable whilst maintaining the food quality high.

Besides takoyaki, street vendor Octi offers other Japanese everyday food like onigiri with fried shrimp, bento box meal and grilled eel bowl.

A serving of takoyaki is sold for Hr 79 (\$2.9), onigiri with shrimp/salmon for Hr 49 (\$1.8) and eel bowl for Hr 169 (\$6.2). 5 Yurii Illienka St. Tue-Fri. 12:45 p.m. — 8:30 p.m. Sat-Sun. 1:30 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.

## Trendy matcha desserts

Matcha has been an international phenomenon in the past few years, competing against coffee in a popularity contest. Set as a trendy flavor at the forefront of the dessert scene, it's become more common to spot matcha-based sweets in Kyiv's eateries and coffee shops.

Daria Deni and Anton Müller's Japanese dessert exploration began three years ago when few people in Ukraine knew about matcha or traditional Japanese confectionery. Fueled by a "passion to make something new, unpredictable and different," the two launched the Kasuteira production.

Named after a popular Japanese honey sponge cake that hails from Portugal, Müller said the name was chosen to depict the connection between Europe and Asia.

Müller's personal favorite is Japanese rice cake mochi with red azuki bean paste (Hr 200 or \$7.3). Other desserts available include matcha ice cream with dark chocolate chips (Hr 180 or \$6.6), hand-crafted matcha chocolate (Hr 100 or \$3.7) and matcha fondant (Hr 100 or \$3.7).

Kasuteira's Japanese desserts can be purchased through Instagram, while they are also available at three locations: the Naked Bar (21 Reitarska St.), Kitaika (8 Raisy Okipnoi St.), Kafe Kafe (22A Mechmykova St.)



Kimchi made with spicy fermented vegetables is incorporated into a variety of dishes in Korea.



Onigiri rice balls, usually wrapped with seaweed and containing fish, meat or vegetable filling, are iconic snacks in Japan.



The origins of Chinese mooncakes with a pastry skin enveloping a sweet, dense fillings can be traced back to ancient times.

# Etnodim demystifies traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirts

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Crimea.

The promo doesn't feature all the symbols that were used on Etnodim's new vyshyvankas, but that wasn't the purpose. Nostalgic, touching and deeply intimate, the video speaks to every Ukrainian's heart, pushing them to reflect on their past and present.

"This is what my vyshyvanka is about," the narrator says at the end of the video. The quote is also the title of the whole campaign.

The collection features nine designs including two dresses and seven shirts, two of them unisex and the rest for women, since it's the core audience of Etnodim. The prices range from Hr 2,600 (\$93) to 4,600 (\$164).

From afar, the garments resemble old-school vyshyvankas with ornaments traditionally embroidered along the sleeves and around the collar. Instead of common patterns symbolizing harvest, livestock and other things that were meaningful then and are meaningless now, there are some unexpected but easily recognizable images.

"Ornaments are no longer mysterious," Etnodim's campaign web page reads.

One of the designs called "Zvistka" ("News" in Ukrainian) weaves together the old symbol of good news, the

swallow, and the modern one, that of social media notifications represented by Instagram's logo.

The "Crimea" design pays respect to the Russian-occupied territory that is yet an essential part of modern Ukraine's history and identity. It features big flowers with their middle part shaped as the map of the Crimean peninsula. "Nezalezhni" ("Independent") incorporates the date of Ukraine's Independence Day in the ornament. "Kashtan" ("Chestnut") represents Kyiv and the tree that has grown to be the main city symbol.

The most challenging design to develop was "Slovo" ("Word"), named after an apartment building in the eastern city Kharkiv, where prominent Ukrainian writers lived in the 1920–1930s. Many of them fell victims to Joseph Stalin's repressions and were the first in a whole generation of killed artists known as Executed Renaissance.

The design took three weeks to complete, Etnodim's designer Anna Fesenko told the Kyiv Post. "I began digging into the information and understood that each writer and poet that lived there needs to be portrayed through a specific symbol," she says.

A cherry symbolizes humorist Ostap Vyshnya, since that's what his last name means in Ukrainian. Writer Mykola Khvylovy is represented by



"Zvistka" ("News" in Ukrainian) is one of the vyshyvanka shirts from the recent collection by Etnodim, which incorporates modern symbols into the traditional clothing pieces of Ukrainians. This design weaves together the old symbol of good news, the swallow, and the modern one, that of social media notifications represented by Instagram's logo.

Etnodim

waves, or "khvyli" in Ukrainian.

The Slovo shirt differs from a traditional vyshyvanka both in style and composition. The symbols are scattered across a beige or black shirt, resembling tattoos. The shirt was also made unisex, showing that Slovo was home to both men and women.

"The idea was very non-standard," Fesenko says. "Now, Slovo is one of the campaign's most popular designs," Cherukha says.

According to Cherukha, there is a growing trend of bringing attention to the Ukrainian identity – the rise of folk music is one of the many examples – and Etnodim's campaign is another such attempt.

"We have also gotten on this wave," he says. "This is our identity, which separates us from other countries."

## Much love

Etnodim's campaign experimented with something many Ukrainians consider sacred, a piece of clothing they often use to dress up on special occasions like Independence Day, wedding and birthday celebrations.

Because of vyshyvanka's cultural significance, the team anticipated mixed reactions, with the conservative population rejecting their ideas.

But the response exceeded all expectations. The video went viral with thousands of Ukrainians sharing it online. The collection's popularity naturally followed and it is almost sold out by now.

"I have never received so much love, nor have I seen another client receive as much love as Etnodim got," Goncharova says.

The team believes that it was their personal touch that caused such a strong reaction.

"(People) took it as an intimate thing, as if we guessed something which for them is very personal, but also felt part of a shared experience, living through it as a community," Goncharova says.

Since its birth 13 years ago, Etnodim has sought to show Ukrainians that vyshyvankas can be an everyday garment, but this campaign proved it can also be a relevant, timely and deeply personal piece.

"There is a phrase that art is the reflection of everyday life, and with this campaign, we showed that a vyshyvanka is the reflection of our every day," Cherukha says. "We are going to keep doing that." 🇺🇦

## EMPLOYMENT / CV / TENDER

# Kyiv Post

UKRAINE'S GLOBAL VOICE

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For more information, contact Kyiv Post Brian Bonner, executive director/chief editor at [bonner@kyivpost.com](mailto:bonner@kyivpost.com)

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