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# Military and political decisions as mechanisms of support to Ukraine by partner countries

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## Abstract

The international mechanisms and institutional support for Ukraine, which contribute to repelling Russian military aggression, are analysed.

**Key words:** aggression, large-scale invasion, state potential, NATO, OSCE, PACE, sanctions.

## Introduction

The large-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation (RF) against Ukraine has become the most serious challenge to world security and stability since the Second World War. The military actions of the Russian Federation in Ukraine can be qualified as a violation of the norms of international law and principles of international order. The criminal actions of the Russian authorities led to the bloodiest armed conflict in Europe in more than three-quarters of a century. The Russian Federation violated the rules of peaceful coexistence of states, which were ensured by observing the norms defined by the UN Charter (Pismennyi O. O. 2022).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine became a challenge for the international security system. The Russian Federation as a permanent representative of the UN Security Council, violating all the main goals and principles of this organization, carried out an unprovoked, deliberate, well-prepared armed attack on a neighbouring country. As a result, humanity found itself in a situation where the state, which was supposed to guarantee the peaceful coexistence of countries and protect them from armed conflicts, started a war in Europe. The international security system was not ready for such events. The imperfection of the political mechanisms for deterring aggressive military actions has led to an increase in the number of supporters of the security military-political bloc NATO, and the North Atlantic Alliance itself is forced to build up its combat capabilities.

It is known that states that are strong in the military and economic dimensions have more chances to win in a military confrontation. The superiority of Russian military, economic and resource potentials over Ukrainian ones is indisputable. That is why Ukraine needs to find ways to increase its potential and reduce the capabilities of the enemy.

## Theoretical background

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Russian military aggression against Ukraine goes beyond the scope of scientifically based options for solving the problems of conflict interaction between states that are in different worldview paradigms. Given this, there are few scientific studies related to the comprehensive analysis of the problems of balancing the potentials of Ukraine and the Russian Federation to increase the probability of the victory of the former. Thus, D. Oliynyk investigated the issue of multilateral support of international organizations for strengthening the economy of Ukraine in countering Russian aggression (Oliynyk D. I., 2023). L. Chekalenko identified

the possibilities of protecting Ukraine from Russian aggression through UN mechanisms (Chekalenko L. D.). Professor of the Royal University of Belfast, Luke Moffett, in his analytical report, offered options for compensation for damages caused during the war in Ukraine (Luke Moffett, 2022). In their study, O. Reznikova and K. Voitovsky paid attention to the geopolitical aspects of the influence on the course of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine (Reznikova O. Voitovsky K.). However, insufficient attention has been paid to the analysis of possible international mechanisms of support for Ukraine that contribute to repelling Russian military aggression in the world and the Ukrainian scientific community, and therefore this issue requires deeper scientific research.

**Purpose.** The article aims to analyse the international mechanisms of support for Ukraine, which contribute to repelling Russian military aggression.

### ***Results and Discussion***

The asymmetry of the potentials of Ukraine and Russia is objective and historically conditioned. According to most of the key indicators, Ukraine's capabilities are significantly lower, and not only in absolute terms, which is obvious given the three times the smaller population of Ukraine (43.7 million versus 142.3 million) but also in relative terms. Thus, the nominal GDP of Ukraine is 0.18% of the world, which is 11 times less than the similar indicator of the Russian Federation. In terms of GDP per capita with a nominal value of about 3,000 dollars, Ukraine is in the thirteenth place in the world. This indicator in the Russian Federation is about 11,000 dollars. In terms of purchasing power parity, the difference is not so great, but even here Ukraine lags behind the Russian Federation by more than two times: \$13,000 versus \$28,000 as of 2020 (Khil'ko M. M.).

The asymmetry is even greater in terms of the countries' military potentials. At the beginning of the large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, the defence forces of Ukraine were inferior to the Russians in all criteria for assessing their potential. According to Global Firepower, the number of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation exceeded the regular Armed Forces of Ukraine by more than four times (850,000 against 250,000). The number of certain types of weapons in Ukraine was three to fifteen times smaller than in the Russian Federation (Comparison of the military power). And some types of powerful strategic offensive weapons (ballistic and cruise missiles, missile cruisers, submarines, strategic missile carriers, long-range radar reconnaissance aircraft, etc.) Ukraine did not have it at all. In addition, the samples of weapons and military equipment available in Ukraine were mostly outdated (made more than 30 years ago). On the other hand, the fleet of Russian military equipment that took part in hostilities in the first months of the invasion was more modern and in some places several generations ahead of its Ukrainian counterparts. Thus, the fleet of Russian aviation equipment, air defence equipment, radio-electronic intelligence and radio-electronic warfare with such tactical and technical characteristics had no analogues in the Ukrainian Armed Forces at all. Ukraine's military budget in 2022 was 12.9 times smaller than Russia's (\$11.9 billion versus \$154 billion). In addition, nuclear-free Ukraine is facing an aggressor who has the world's largest number of nuclear weapons and the world's second-largest number of nuclear weapons on active duty.

Such an asymmetry of forces and means does not contribute to the undisputed victory of Ukraine. In addition, the economic potential of the Russian Federation, the main part of which is large reserves of energy carriers and other natural resources, becomes the basis of the aggressor's resource superiority in war conditions.

Ukraine's military potential can be increased through the use of collective security mechanisms, one of which is the protection of Ukraine's territorial integrity by the forces of the North Atlantic Alliance. The combined military potential of NATO significantly exceeds the potential of the Russian aggressor, and its armed forces are equipped with modern means of armed struggle, which were created based on advanced technologies that the Russian Federation does not possess.

NATO representatives note that a sovereign and independent Ukraine is of primary importance for Euro-Atlantic security, and partnership with Kyiv has become one of the Alliance's priorities. The member states of the bloc do not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea and also condemn the aggressive actions of the Russian Federation and the destabilization of the situation in the Black Sea region (The transformation of the international security system).

After the beginning of the Russian aggression in 2014, Ukraine enshrined the desire to join the Alliance in its Constitution. In 2017, the parliament adopted a law that recognized the state's membership in NATO as a strategic priority of Ukraine's foreign and security policy. And in 2020, the President of Ukraine adopted a new National Security Strategy, which lays the foundation for deepening the partnership between Kyiv and the Alliance for Ukraine to become a member of the organization.

In the same year, Ukraine became the sixth country to acquire the status of a NATO partner with enhanced capabilities. It is awarded to members of the Partnership's Interoperability Initiative for particularly significant contributions to operations under the auspices of the organization. In February 2022, NATO member states adopted an unprecedented package of restrictive measures directed against the Russian Federation in connection with its full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine. However, the further role of our country in NATO remains a subject of debate and one of the points of the Alliance's negotiations with the Russian side.

On September 30, 2022, after a meeting of the NSDC devoted to Russia's attempt to annex four southern regions of Ukraine, the President announced the decision that Ukraine had signed an application to accelerate accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. However, the realization of such aspirations shortly is unlikely, since the agreement on Ukraine's accession to NATO must be ratified by all its members. NATO member states transfer weapons, ammunition, medical supplies, military equipment, as well as financial aid worth millions of euros to Ukraine. While Ukraine repels the largest armed aggression of the country in the last seventy years, which is the first in the world in terms of the volume of nuclear weapons and claims to be the leader on the Eurasian continent in terms of total military potential, the acceptance of Ukraine into NATO will mean the entry of the Alliance's forces into the war with the Russian Federation. Therefore, it is obvious that not all member states of the alliance support the agreement on Ukraine's accession to NATO. NATO's collective decision on Ukraine's accession to the Alliance may take place after the end of the war.

However, Ukraine, as a candidate for joining NATO and its partner with enhanced capabilities, receives indirect assistance from the Alliance, in particular, the personnel of the Defence Forces are trained according to NATO standards; consulting services are provided; partner countries opened access to critical intelligence information about the enemy, etc.

Another important direction of obtaining comprehensive assistance for Ukraine is political support in the international arena. Russian military aggression against Ukraine caused a negative reaction from many leading international organizations such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN. The Russian Federation was stripped of its permanent observer status in the Organization of American States and was also expelled from the Council of Europe after 26 years of membership. In response to the military attack on Ukraine, this supranational entity suspended the representation of the Russian Federation on February 25, 2022, and on March 15, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) recommended excluding Russia from the organization. After the speech of the President of Ukraine and the emotional debate that took place on October 13 in Strasbourg, the PACE adopted an unprecedentedly harsh decision, in which it was the first among international organizations to recognize "the current Russian regime as terrorist". In addition, the amendment to the text "Further escalation of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine" contained a call to the national governments of the member states of the Council

of Europe (CoE) to provide Ukraine with anti-aircraft defence systems, and also indicated that Russia is illegally in the UN Security Council, as “appropriated the place of the former USSR without formal legal procedures”.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe also has leverage over the security situation in Ukraine. However, due to the need for a consensus procedure for the adoption of joint resolutions in the OSCE, decisions that would significantly affect the course of Russian military aggression against Ukraine have not been adopted to date, while efforts are being made to block the work of representatives of the Russian Federation in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The United Nations also reacted negatively. On February 26, 2022, two days after the beginning of the invasion, the UN Security Council discussed a resolution calling on the Russian Federation to end the attack, but Russia vetoed the initiative. The excessive bureaucracy of the UN and excessive powers of the Russian Federation in the Security Council complicate the procedures of political pressure on the aggressor. The low effectiveness of the UN Security Council was once again confirmed after this body failed to warn and stop Russian aggression against Ukraine.

At the beginning of April 2022, the General Assembly decided to exclude the Russian Federation from the UN Human Rights Council against the background of the publication of evidence of violence and barbaric crimes committed by the Russian military in Ukraine. During the meeting of the Security Council, the permanent representative of the US to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, emphasized that the Russian Federation “should not occupy an authoritative place in a body whose sole purpose is to respect human rights”, and noted that Moscow’s membership is not only a manifestation of hypocrisy but also creates a danger, because Russia uses the Council as a platform to spread disinformation.

Russia lost elections to four UN committees (Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, UN Women’s Executive Board, UNICEF Executive Board and Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples), and one of them was to Ukraine. These events are considered as the isolation of the Russian Federation in the global arena. In particular, the British diplomat J. Roscoe noted that due to further isolation in the UN, Russia will be reduced to pariah status as a result of military aggression against Ukraine (The transformation of the international security system).

However, the UN’s potential to counter Russian military aggression has not yet been exhausted. The authorities of Ukraine, mass media and society should continue informational pressure to reform the UN and adopt political resolutions in favour of Ukraine.

Economic support for Ukraine is possible through the provision of direct financial assistance by partner countries, the admission of Ukrainian products to their markets, and the supply of a wide range of goods and services as humanitarian aid. At the same time, it is necessary to organize the maximum economic isolation of the aggressor country.

Cooperation with global financial organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, can be one of the effective ways to support Ukraine’s economy. By making appropriate decisions, they can provide financial and technical assistance to our country for the implementation of infrastructure development projects, energy, transport and other industries.

Today, the process of joint general financial support of Ukraine continues. In recent months, the governments of many countries, together with Ukrainian government officials, have been actively working out possible options for the use of Russian assets abroad that have been frozen under international sanctions. These funds can be used for the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine; however, the positive outcome of these intentions cannot be guaranteed and is still considered sceptical given the legal complexity of this process. Proposals to freeze Russian assets abroad have already caused concern in states that have strained relations with the US and EU countries, which under certain conditions could lead to the collapse of the international economic system as a whole.

An effective and efficient joint tool in the fight against the aggressor is the multifaceted sanctions policy of the Western countries against the Russian Federation. The decision to introduce the tenth package of sanctions against Russia adds to the list of restrictions for individual citizens, financial institutions, imports of technology and industrial goods. The total cost of restrictions is more than 11 billion euros. Also, for the first time, sanctions were introduced against structures from third countries that help Russians circumvent restrictions. In particular, we are talking about seven companies from Iran, which were exposed in the supply of military goods to the Russian Federation.

Ukraine should develop its innovative industries and support the development of high-tech sectors of the economy. It is also important to ensure the efficient use of resources and to develop a strategy for the development of the economy for the future.

A complete economic blockade of the aggressor can collapse its economy like an avalanche and destroy the economic resource that Russia uses to support its military aggression. However, such restrictions also have the opposite effect. Countries that impose anti-Russian economic sanctions also feel their negative impact on their economies. Therefore, the absolute economic blockade of the aggressor is illusory today. In our opinion, during the preparation and implementation of the next sanctions, Ukraine's partners will be forced to maintain a balance between the effectiveness of influencing the aggressor and the preservation of their economic capabilities.

## **Conclusion**

1. To balance the potential of Ukraine and Russia to restore territorial integrity, Ukraine needs significant international support in the military, political and economic spheres. This support should be dual, aimed at increasing the potential of Ukraine in the specified areas, and at the same time at preventing the growth of the potential of the Russian Federation.

2. The most significant directions of support for Ukraine, which have a quick effect, are military-technical and financial-economic. The level of this effect is directly proportional to the amount of foreign partners' contribution in these areas. Economic and political sanctions are aimed at reducing the military and economic potential of the aggressor and have a cumulative delayed effect.

3. One cannot limit oneself to certain areas of support for Ukraine, neglecting others. Achieving the desired result is possible only under the condition of coordinated work of all authorities and citizens of Ukraine, and communication with foreign partners regarding the needs of Ukraine in the fight against the invader.

**Prospects for further research.** Considering the topicality of the issue and its practical significance, it is advisable to study more deeply the results of supporting Ukraine in each area separately.

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