

Open Letter – Ukraine and Global Security

As NATO's 75th Anniversary approaches, we the undersigned call upon Western leaders to urgently deliver the military assistance needed to ensure that Ukraine can withstand the ongoing brutal assault from Russia, restore its sovereign borders, and build a strong democracy with a modernized military force that will deter future Russian aggression. Global security hangs in the balance.

Now into the third year of this illegal war, Ukraine's ability to continue its successful defense against Russian aggression and one of the largest militaries in the world is endangered. The ongoing reduction of Western assistance will leave Ukraine with no chance to withstand this existential struggle and the military defeat of Ukraine's Armed Forces could happen within months.

Ukraine chose the path of democracy and rejected Russian authoritarianism with security assurances from Western partners that, if left unfulfilled, would represent a historic betrayal and the almost certain eradication of the Ukrainian people and their culture. Russia's leadership does not hide its plans to destroy Ukraine as an independent state, which it previously attempted in the 1932-33 Holodomor that resulted in the deaths of millions of innocent Ukrainians. Hundreds of thousands more will die trying to defeat Russia's current invasion, and millions will be forced to leave Ukraine and become refugees.

Despite this obvious tragedy, the consequences of the defeat of Ukraine will be much more serious to global stability and will imperil Western civilization. The reluctance and lack of courage by the West to support Ukraine will inevitably be perceived by other authoritarian regimes as an invitation to use military expansionism, resulting in other costly wars. Losing confidence in the U.S. as the leader of the free world, weaker states will seek to guarantee their security through arrangements with Russia and China. As European countries discover the fragility of NATO's symbolic deterrence, they will also pivot away from American influence and seek alternate security agreements. This could lead to the demise of the Western Alliance and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The West can still act to avoid this perilous but highly possible outcome. Ukraine's spirit is indomitable, and Ukrainians have proven repeatedly that they can effectively contain and defeat Russia on the battlefield, even in the face of Russian superiority in forces and means. Yet, the epochal threat posed by Russia cannot be answered with platitudes or hollow concepts. Rather, we call upon the leaders of all NATO states to immediately undertake the following actions:

- 1) Unblock all military assistance to Ukraine, including the accelerated delivery of critical combat systems, innovative battlefield technologies, priority training efforts, and needed replenishment of Ukraine's operational stocks of all scales of ammunition and spare parts.
- 2) At the upcoming NATO Summit, announce NATO's intention to support Ukraine until its sovereignty and territorial integrity have been restored, and provide Ukraine a pathway for accession to the Alliance.
- 3) In the meantime, like the recent Estonian pledge, conclude bilateral long-term security agreements with Ukraine, which commit Ukraine's Western partners to permanent military and technical assistance.

If, by the time of NATO's 75th Anniversary, Western leaders have not committed to providing Ukraine the resources that it urgently requires, the betrayal of Ukraine will signal to Russia and other potential antagonists that the Alliance lacks the strategic commitment, internal fortitude, and collective will to

defend the sovereignty of its member nations. For Ukraine's survival and NATO's continued relevance, there is no substitute for a Ukrainian victory.

General Sir Alexander Richard David Shirreff, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (2011-2014)

General Riho Terras, Chief of Defense of Estonia (2011 - 2018)

Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, The U.S. Army Europe Commander (2014-2017)

Lieutenant General Mark Phillip Hertling, The U.S. Army Europe Commander (2011-2012)

Major General Michael Repass, The U.S. Special Operations Command Europe Commander (2010-2013)

Major General Riho Ühtegi, The Estonian Special Operations Force Commander (2012-2019)

Bundeswehr Brigadier General (ret.) Klaus Wittmann

Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Minister of Defense of Poland (1992-1993, 1997 - 2000).