# *What Will NATO Do About Ukraine?*

First of all, I congratulate our anti-aircraft warriors - the warriors of the anti-aircraft missile troops of the Ukrainian Air Force, who are celebrating their holiday today. I thank you for every target you have shot down, warriors! More than three thousand targets have been shot down: more than 180 aircraft, more than 130 helicopters, nearly 40 ballistic and more than a thousand cruise missiles, more than 1,600 drones of various types... All this means thousands and thousands of lives saved by you, hundreds of critical infrastructure facilities that you have protected.

The NATO Summit in Vilnius is one week away and the situation in Ukraine grows worse with each passing day. One indicator that things are grim is the confirmation today, by the usually effervescent Volodymyr Zelensky, that Russia launched a successful strike on the Ukrainian Intelligence Service (SBU) headquarters in Sumy.

In the past Zelensky has insisted that Ukraine's air defense system defeated all Russian missiles and drones. Not today. Reality intruded and the fact that he is confirming that there are dead and wounded SBU officers is a strong indicator that he is worried about an uncertain future.

Zelensky is not the only one signaling a shift in the attitude towards the reality of the war. Richard Haass, the soon to be former President of the Council on Foreign Relations, recently told a NY Times reporter who is the real threat. As Pogo once remarked, "I have met the enemy and he is us."

Everywhere he has gone as president of the Council on Foreign Relations, Dr Richard Haass has been asked the same question: What keeps him up at night? He has had no shortage of options over the years: Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, climate change, international terrorism, food insecurity, the Covid-19 pandemic.

But as he steps down after two decades running America's most storied private organisation focused on international affairs, Dr Haass has come to a disturbing conclusion. The most serious danger to the security of the world right now? The threat that costs him sleep? The United States itself.

NATO is no longer unified. Several European leaders are noting quietly that Europe cannot prosper without a relationship with Russia. In other words, isolating and shunning Moscow is no longer seen as a viable strategy. Latvia, albeit an insignificant military power, announced a change in its policy of issuing visas:

Embassies and consulates of Latvia will resume accepting applications for issuing visas to certain categories of Russian citizens from July 4th. This was reported by the Delfi portal.

Relatives of Latvian citizens and persons with the status of non-citizens of the republic (spouses, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, as well as dependents) will be able to apply for a visa. Exceptions will also affect relatives of citizens of EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland.

So what will NATO do? The United States and the United Kingdom still appear wedded to trying to put more military pressure on Russia and are likely to confirm the intention to provide Ukraine with ATACM missiles, F-16s and cluster munitions. If they follow through with these measures then Russia is likely to step up its attacks on decision making centers in Ukraine, which means hitting major military command posts that are staffed by NATO officers.

I think the NATO Summit is unlikely to produce a strong, joint communique re-committing NATO to fighting to the last Ukrainian. Some members will certainly push for that outcome, but others show waning enthusiasm for that policy.

Between now and next Tuesday I expect Ukraine to launch some desperate attacks in hopes of creating a public relations victory that can be celebrated at the Summit. But Russia is not sitting on its heels in a defensive crouch. It is carefully monitoring the build up of Ukrainian forces along the line of contact and hitting those assembly points with rockets, missiles and bombs delivered by combat air.

It still boils down to a simple math problem — Ukraine lacks sufficient manpower, equipment and air power to launch a sustained attack and the losses suffered in those attacks cannot be quickly replaced with competent soldiers. This is especially true at the senior command level. The attrition of Ukrainian Colonels and Generals is forcing the Ukrainian General Staff to promote inexperienced officers to command positions they are not qualified to execute. The world is witnessing the death spiral of the Ukrainian military. What remains to be seen is whether NATO is ready to acknowledge this reality.

The post What Will NATO Do About Ukraine? appeared first on DCWeekly.

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