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Speech by the President of Ukraine at the 58th Munich Security Conference — Official website of the President of Ukraine

14-18 minutes



Ukraine wants peace. Europe wants peace. The world says it doesn't want to fight, and Russia says it doesn't want to attack. Someone is lying. This is not an axiom, but it is no longer a hypothesis.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Two days ago I was in Donbas, on the delimitation line. Legally - between Ukraine and the temporarily occupied territories. In

fact, the delimitation line between peace and war. Where on the one side there is a kindergarten, and on the other side there is a projectile that hit it. On the one side there is a school, on the other side there is a projectile hitting the school yard.

And next to it there are 30 children who go... no, not to NATO, but to school. Someone has physics classes. Knowing its basic laws, even children understand how absurd the statements that the shelling is carried out by Ukraine sound.

Someone has math classes. Children can calculate the difference between the number of shelling occasions in these three days and the occasions of mentioning Ukraine in this year's Munich Security Report without a calculator.

And someone has history classes. And when a bomb crater appears in the school yard, children have a question: has the world forgotten its mistakes of the XX century?

What do attempts at appeasement lead to? As the question "Why die for Danzig?" turned into the need to die for Dunkirk and dozens of other cities in Europe and the world. At the cost of tens of millions of lives.

These are terrible lessons of history. I just want to make sure you and I read the same books. Hence, we have the same understanding of the answer to the main question: how did it happen that in the XXI century, Europe is at war again and people are dying? Why does it last longer than World War II? How did we get to the biggest security crisis since the Cold War? For me, as the President of a country that has lost part of the territory, thousands of people and on whose borders there are now 150,000 Russian troops, equipment and heavy weapons, the answer is obvious.

The architecture of world security is fragile and needs to be

updated. The rules that the world agreed on decades ago no longer work. They do not keep up with new threats. They are not effective for overcoming them. This is a cough syrup when you need a coronavirus vaccine. The security system is slow. It crashes again. Because of different things: selfishness, self-confidence, irresponsibility of states at the global level. As a result, we have crimes of some and indifference of others. Indifference that makes you an accomplice. It is symbolic that I am talking about this right here. It was here 15 years ago that Russia announced its intention to challenge global security. What did the world say? Appeasement. Result? At least - the annexation of Crimea and aggression against my state.

The UN, which is supposed to defend peace and world security, cannot defend itself. When its Charter is violated. When one of the members of the UN Security Council annexes the territory of one of the founding members of the UN. And the UN itself ignores the Crimea Platform, the goal of which is to de-occupy Crimea peacefully and protect the rights of Crimeans.

Three years ago, it was here that Angela Merkel said: "Who will pick up the wreckage of the world order? Only all of us, together." The audience gave a standing ovation. But, unfortunately, the collective applause did not grow into collective action. And now, when the world is talking about the threat of a great war, the question arises: is there anything left to pick up? The security architecture in Europe and the world is almost destroyed. It's too late to think about repairs, it's time to build a new system. Mankind has done this twice, paying too high a price - two world wars. We have a chance to break this trend until it becomes a consistent pattern. And start building a new system before millions of victims. Having the old lessons of the First and Second World Wars, not our own experience of the

possible third, God forbid.

I talked about it here. And on the rostrum of the UN. That in the XXI century there are no more foreign wars. That the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas affects the whole world. And this is not a war in Ukraine, but a war in Europe. I said this at summits and forums. In 2019, 2020, 2021. Will the world be able to hear me in 2022?

This is no longer a hypothesis, but not an axiom yet. Why? Evidence is needed. More important than words on Twitter or statements in the media. Action is required. It is the world that needs it, not just us.

We will defend our land with or without the support of partners. Whether they give us hundreds of modern weapons or five thousand helmets. We appreciate any help, but everyone should understand that these are not charitable contributions that Ukraine should ask for or remind of.

These are not noble gestures for which Ukraine should bow low. This is your contribution to the security of Europe and the world. Where Ukraine has been a reliable shield for eight years. And for eight years it has been rebuffing one of the world's biggest armies. Which stands along our borders, not the borders of the EU.

And Grad rockets hit Mariupol, not European cities. And after almost six months of fighting, the airport in Donetsk was destroyed, not in Frankfurt. And it's always hot in the Avdiivka industrial zone - it was hot there in the last days, not in Montmartre. And no European country knows what military burials every day in all regions are. And no European leader knows what regular meetings with the families of the deceased are.

Be that as it may, we will defend our beautiful land no matter if we have 50,000, 150 or one million soldiers of any army on the border. To really help Ukraine, it is not necessary to say how many servicemen and military equipment are on the border. Say what numbers we have.

To really help Ukraine, it is not necessary to constantly talk only about the dates of the probable invasion. We will defend our land on February 16, March 1 and December 31. We need other dates much more. And everyone understands perfectly well which ones.

Tomorrow in Ukraine is the Day of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred. Eight years ago, Ukrainians made their choice, and many gave their lives for that choice. Eight years later, should Ukraine constantly call for recognition of the European perspective? Since 2014, Russia has been convincing that we have chosen the wrong path, that no one is waiting for us in Europe. Shouldn't Europe constantly say and prove by action that this is not true? Shouldn't the EU say today that its citizens are positive about Ukraine's accession to the Union? Why do we avoid this question? Doesn't Ukraine deserve direct and honest answers?

This also applies to NATO. We are told: the door is open. But so far authorized access only. If not all members of the Alliance want to see us or all members of the Alliance do not want to see us, be honest. Open doors are good, but we need open answers, not open questions for years. Isn't the right to the truth one of our enhanced opportunities? The best time for it is the next summit in Madrid.

Russia says Ukraine seeks to join the Alliance to return Crimea by force. It is gratifying that the words "return Crimea" appear in

their rhetoric. But they inattentively read Article 5 of the NATO Charter: collective action is for protection, not offensive. Crimea and the occupied regions of Donbas will certainly return to Ukraine, but only peacefully.

Ukraine consistently implements the Normandy agreements and the Minsk agreements. Their foundation is the unquestionable recognition of the territorial integrity and independence of our state. We seek a diplomatic settlement of the armed conflict.

Note: solely on the basis of international law.

So what is really going on in the peace process? Two years ago, we agreed with the Presidents of France, the Russian Federation, the Chancellor of Germany on a full-scale ceasefire. And Ukraine is scrupulously adhering to these agreements. We are as restrained as possible against the background of constant provocations. We are constantly making proposals in the framework of the Normandy Four and the Trilateral Contact Group. And what do we see? Shells and bullets from the other side. Our soldiers and civilians are being killed and wounded, and civilian infrastructure is being destroyed.

The last days have become especially illustrative. Hundreds of massive shelling occasions with weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements. It is also important to stop restricting the admission of OSCE observers to Ukraine's TOT. They are threatened. They are intimidated. All humanitarian issues are blocked.

Two years ago, I signed a law on the unconditional admission of representatives of humanitarian organizations to detainees. But they are simply not admitted to the temporarily occupied territories. After two exchanges of captives, the process was blocked, although Ukraine provided agreed lists. Inhuman

torture at the infamous Isolation Prison in Donetsk has become a symbol of human rights abuses.

The two new checkpoints we opened in November 2020 in the Luhansk region still do not function - and here we see outright obstruction under contrived pretexts.

Ukraine is doing everything possible to reach progress in discussions and political issues. In the TCG, in the Minsk process, we've put forward proposals - draft laws, but everything is blocked - no one talks about them. Ukraine demands to unblock the negotiation process immediately. But this does not mean that the search for peace is limited to it alone.

We are ready to look for the key to the end of the war in all possible formats and platforms: Paris, Berlin, Minsk. Istanbul, Geneva, Brussels, New York, Beijing - I don't care where in the world to negotiate peace in Ukraine.

It does not matter if four countries, seven or a hundred participate, the main thing is that Ukraine and Russia are among them. What is really important is the understanding that peace is needed not only by us, the world needs peace in Ukraine.

Peace and restoration of territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders. This is the only way. And I hope no one thinks of Ukraine as a convenient and eternal buffer zone between the West and Russia. This will never happen. Nobody will allow that.

Otherwise - who's next? Will NATO countries have to defend each other? I want to believe that the North Atlantic Treaty and Article 5 will be more effective than the Budapest Memorandum.

Ukraine has received security guarantees for abandoning the world's third nuclear capability. We don't have that weapon. We also have no security. We also do not have part of the territory of

our state that is larger in area than Switzerland, the Netherlands or Belgium. And most importantly - we don't have millions of our citizens. We don't have all this.

Therefore, we have something. The right to demand a shift from a policy of appeasement to ensuring security and peace guarantees.

Since 2014, Ukraine has tried three times to convene consultations with the guarantor states of the Budapest Memorandum. Three times without success. Today Ukraine will do it for the fourth time. I, as President, will do this for the first time. But both Ukraine and I are doing this for the last time. I am initiating consultations in the framework of the Budapest Memorandum. The Minister of Foreign Affairs was commissioned to convene them. If they do not happen again or their results do not guarantee security for our country, Ukraine will have every right to believe that the Budapest Memorandum is not working and all the package decisions of 1994 are in doubt.

I also propose to convene a summit of permanent members of the UN Security Council in the coming weeks with the participation of Ukraine, Germany and Turkey in order to address security challenges in Europe. And elaborate new, effective security guarantees for Ukraine. Guarantees today, as long as we are not a member of the Alliance and in fact are in the gray zone - in a security vacuum.

What else can we do now? Continue to effectively support Ukraine and its defense capabilities. Provide Ukraine with a clear European perspective, the tools of support available to candidate countries, and clear and comprehensive timeframes for joining the Alliance.

Support the transformation in our country. Establish a Stability and Reconstruction Fund for Ukraine, a land-lease program, the supply of the latest weapons, machinery and equipment for our army - an army that protects the whole of Europe.

Develop an effective package of preventive sanctions to deter aggression. Guarantee Ukraine's energy security, ensure its integration into the EU energy market when Nord Stream 2 is used as a weapon.

All these questions need answers.

So far we have silence instead of them. And as long as there is silence, there will be no silence in the east of our state. That is - in Europe. That is - in the whole world. I hope the whole world finally understands this, Europe understands.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I thank all the states that supported Ukraine today.

In words, in declarations, in concrete help. Those who are on our side today. On the side of truth and international law. I'm not calling you by name - I don't want some other countries to be ashamed. But this is their business, this is their karma. And this is on their conscience. However, I do not know how they will be able to explain their actions to the two soldiers killed and three wounded in Ukraine today.

And most importantly - to three girls from Kyiv. One is ten years old, the second is six, and the third is only one. Today they were left without a father. At 6 o'clock in the morning Central European Time. When the Ukrainian intelligence officer, Captain Anton Sydorov was killed as a result of artillery fire prohibited by the Minsk agreements. I don't know what he thought at the last moment of his life. He definitely didn't know what agenda

someone needs to meet to end the war.

But he knows exactly the answer to the question I asked at the beginning. He knows exactly who of us is lying.

May his memory live forever. May the memory of all those who died today and during the war in the east of our state live forever.

Thank you.