



## News Brief Update 28

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### Russia's war with Ukraine

Ukraine has set its sights on freeing all territory occupied by invading Russian forces after driving them back in a speedy counteroffensive in the north-east (see NATO Watch [Update 27](#)). Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy [said](#) on 14 September that about 8,000 sq km have been liberated so far, apparently all in the north-eastern region of Kharkiv. "Stabilisation measures" had been completed in about half of that territory, Zelenskiy said, "and across a liberated area of about the same size, stabilisation measures are still ongoing".

Russian troops [left behind](#) stockpiles of ammunition and other supplies following Ukraine's counteroffensive. One analyst estimated that more than 300 vehicles, including tanks, self-propelled mortars and supply trucks, had been lost between 7 and 11 September. In addition, Ukrainian authorities [said](#) they are capturing so many Russian prisoners of war the country is running out of space to put them. Ukrainian presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovich did not specify the number of Russian prisoners but said the PoWs would be exchanged for Ukrainian service members held by Moscow. Military intelligence spokesperson Andrey Yusov said the captured troops included "significant" numbers of Russian officers.

Russia responded to the counteroffensive by [escalating](#) missile strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure. In recent days, Russian forces appeared to be [targeting](#) a number of civilian and civilian infrastructure facilities throughout the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine. For example, eight Russian missiles that struck Kryvyi Rih (Zelenskiy's home town) on 14

September were [reportedly](#) directed at hydraulic structures, causing enough damage that the water level of the Inhulets river was rising and posing a serious threat to the city.

Speaking to reporters on 17 September after the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting in Samarkand (see below), President Putin [vowed](#) to continue his attack on Ukraine despite Kyiv's latest counteroffensive and warned that Moscow could ramp up its strikes on the country's vital infrastructure if Ukrainian forces target facilities in Russia. Putin said the "liberation" of Ukraine's entire eastern Donbas region remained Russia's main military goal and that he saw no need to revise it. "We aren't in a rush," he said. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who helped to broker the earlier grain export agreement (see below), [told](#) leaders at the summit that efforts were being made "to finalise the conflict in Ukraine through diplomacy as soon as possible". Putin apparently told Erdogan that Moscow was keen to build closer ties with Turkey and was ready to "significantly increase" all exports to the country.

#### **Further allegations of war crimes**

Following six months of Russian occupation, investigators [exhumed](#) hundreds of bodies buried in a mass grave site in the east Ukrainian city of Izium on 16 September. Virtually all the exhumed bodies had signs of violent death, Ukraine's regional administration chief [said](#), with some found with their hands tied behind their backs. The EU foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, [said](#) "We condemn these atrocities in the strongest possible terms". Prosecutors throughout Kharkiv and Bucha are working to

document evidence of possible war crimes committed by Russian soldiers. President Zelenskiy likened the discovery to what happened in Bucha outside Kyiv early in the war. “Russia is leaving death behind it everywhere and must be held responsible,” he [said](#).

The President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen [said](#) she wanted the Russian president to face the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague over war crimes in Ukraine. “That Putin must lose this war and must face up to his actions, that is important to me,” she told the TV channel of German news outlet Bild on 15 September. The Czech Republic, which currently holds the EU presidency, also called for a “special international tribunal”. “In the 21st century, such attacks against the civilian population are unthinkable and abhorrent,” [said](#) Jan Lipavský, Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic.

The ICC opened an investigation into possible war crimes in Ukraine just days after Moscow’s forces invaded and it dispatched dozens of investigators to the country to gather evidence. On 14 July, 45 countries [agreed](#) at a conference in the Hague to coordinate investigations into suspected war crimes in Ukraine. Meanwhile, a Ukrainian volunteer medic Yuliia Paievskaya captured by Russian forces during their siege of Mariupol [testified](#) before US lawmakers on 15 September, recounting her experiences of torture, death and terror.

### ***Continuing concerns about the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station***

The International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) 35-nation board of governors [passed](#) a resolution on 15 September demanding Russia end its occupation of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine. It is the Agency’s second resolution on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Meanwhile, Ukraine began [shutting down](#) the last functioning reactor at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine on 11 September. The decision to shut down the plant came from Ukraine’s nuclear regulator, Energoatom, following

recommendations from the IAEA and the United States. Ukrainian authorities had initially resisted the move in recent weeks due to a concern that Russia would attempt to connect the plant to its own grid once it was disconnected from Ukraine’s. Even though the six reactors at the plant have been shut down, the plant needs electricity to keep them cool. The IAEA [said](#) on 17 September that one of the plant’s four main power lines had been repaired and is supplying the plant with electricity from the Ukrainian grid two weeks after it went down.

Fighting in and around the plant since the beginning of August raised concerns about the potential for a [nuclear accident](#). A 14-member International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) [expert mission](#) carried out an inspection of the plant in early September. For further details see NATO Watch updates [23](#) through to [27](#).

### ***Stalled diplomacy***

The prospects for peace in Ukraine are currently “minimal”, the UN Secretary General [said](#) on 14 September after a phone conversation with Vladimir Putin. “I have the feeling we are still far away from peace. I would be lying if I would say it could happen soon,” Guterres said, adding: “I have no illusion; at the present moment the chances of a peace deal are minimal.” Even a ceasefire was “not in sight”, he said. The same day, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz [said](#) Putin still believes he was right to launch an invasion of Ukraine, after his own 90-minute telephone call with the Russian president. “Sadly, I cannot tell you that the impression has grown that it was a mistake to begin this war,” Scholz said in a press briefing.

Negotiations between Ukraine and Russia took place for several months following the invasion, but they did not stop the war, and talks have been stalled for months. There has been some [speculation](#) that a tentative [fifteen-point peace plan](#) to end the war was close to being agreed at the end of March, but that the UK and USA reportedly urged President Zelensky to break off the talks with Russia. Before that, negotiations on Donbas had lasted for more than seven years with French and

German participation; but despite signed agreements and a ceasefire, the conflict was never resolved. Each side blames the other for a lack of progress and there appears to be no real prospect for any diplomatic breakthroughs or ceasefires in the near future. Positions between the two sides remain incompatible: Ukraine insists on full sovereignty over all Ukrainian territory as it existed when Ukraine became independent in 1991, while Russia claims sovereignty over Crimea and recognition of independence of the Donbas separatist republics. Moreover, Russia has recognized the independence of the Donbas republics on the whole administrative territory of the Donbas, even though some of that territory remains in Ukrainian hands and is the focus of current fighting.

France and Germany lead a NATO bloc favouring negotiations, while the US and UK lead a bloc that favour continuing to send more advanced weapons. One of the potential frameworks for a negotiated settlement is a four-point Italian proposal, calling for Ukraine committing to neutrality and not joining NATO, security guarantees for Ukraine, and negotiations between Ukraine and Russia on Crimea and the Donbas (see [NATO Watch Update 16](#)).

For options of what a possible settlement for Ukraine might look like, see Cambridge University's [Ukraine Peace Settlement Project](#).

### ***Military and financial assistance to Ukraine***

Ukraine continues to rely heavily on international military and financial support from Western states. Most of the military assistance has come in the form of bilateral arms transfers, training and other support, which is being coordinated by the US-led Ukraine Defence Contact Group, which meets on an ad hoc basis and involves Ministers of Defence and senior military officials from Western-aligned states from around the world. The latest meeting of the Group took place on 8 September at the US Ramstein Air Base in Germany. In addition, NATO agreed at its June

[Madrid Summit](#) to strengthen a 2016 [Comprehensive Assistance Package](#) for Ukraine. The additional elements to the package include both short-term assistance (ranging from fuel, protective equipment to portable anti-drone systems and secure communications) and longer-term support (to help modernize the Ukrainian armed forces to NATO interoperability standards and strengthen its defence and security institutions).

The US Department of Defense [announced](#) on 15 September that it is providing an additional \$600 million in military assistance to Ukraine to meet the country's "critical security and defence needs". In total, the Biden administration has committed about \$15.8 billion in security aid to Ukraine – \$15.1 billion since the beginning of Russia's invasion in February. Other estimates suggest that the United States has [pledged](#) about \$25 billion in military aid to Ukraine—more than four times Ukraine's 2021 defence budget. America's partners in Europe and beyond have [pledged](#) an additional \$12 billion, according to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy.

Germany will supply Ukraine with additional armoured vehicles and rocket launch systems but will not provide the battle tanks that Kyiv has long asked for, [said](#) the German Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht on 15 September. She added that Soviet-made BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicles would also "very quickly" head to Ukraine from Greece. Germany has delivered four more Gepard anti-aircraft guns and 65 refrigerators to Ukraine, the German government [announced](#) on 14 September. The four additional units bring the total number of Gepard units provided by Germany to Ukraine to 24.

Western governments are [mobilising](#) their arms manufacturers to ramp up production and replenish stockpiles heavily diminished by supplying Ukraine. The US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin is organising a meeting on 28 September of senior national armaments directors from allied countries to make long-term plans for supplying Ukraine and rebuilding their own arms reserves.

Meanwhile, Pope Francis [said](#) on 15 September it was morally legitimate for countries to provide weapons to Ukraine to help it defend itself from Russian aggression. "This is a political decision which it can be moral, morally acceptable, if it is done under conditions of morality ... Self-defence is not only licit but also an expression of love for the homeland," he said. "Someone who does not defend oneself, who does not defend something, does not love it. Those who defend [something] love it".

External military support to Russia so far has been limited to a handful of states, principally [Iran](#) and [North Korea](#).

For further details on arms transfers to Ukraine, see, the [Forum on the Arms Trade](#). And for a timeline of every US arms shipment to Ukraine that has been announced since the war began, see [here](#).

### ***The Kyiv Security Compact***

On the 13 September President Volodymyr Zelensky's office published a draft set of security guarantees that, if agreed, would commit Ukraine's allies to legally binding large-scale weapons transfers and multi-decade investment in the country's defences. The nine-page [Kyiv Security Compact](#) was prepared by a Working Group On International Security Guarantees for Ukraine co-chaired by former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Andriy Yermak, the head of Zelensky's presidential administration. Zelensky [said](#) the package - which called for Western countries to provide "political, financial, military and diplomatic resources" to boost Kyiv's ability to defend itself - should form the basis of a new security settlement for Ukraine.

The Compact claims that, "these will be the first such guarantees of the 21st century and can lay the foundations for a new security order in Europe". This model involves formalising guarantees that the international community would in future follow similar steps to those taken in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war to supply a state with all the resources

necessary to prevail, should it experience an incursion. But crucially it goes further than this, committing those states giving the guarantees to do all in their power to expand Ukraine's military capability over decades. It is a recipe for massive increases in military spending across Europe.

For further details see [The proposed 'Kyiv Security Compact' and the Western network of advisers and consultancy firms helping to steer Ukraine's foreign policy choices](#), NATO Watch Briefing no. 97, 16 September 2022

### ***Humanitarian consequences of the war***

Exact figures for the number of war fatalities, both military and civilian, are difficult to verify and confirm. [Undercounting and manipulation](#) of the data is common in war. Ukraine [claims](#) to have killed more than 54,000 Russian soldiers in the war to date. Gen. Valeriy Zaluzhny, commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Armed forces, [said](#) on 22 August at a public forum that nearly 9,000 Ukrainian military personnel have been killed in the war. This was the first time Ukraine has revealed the scale of its military losses since the war began, previously protected as a tightly guarded secret - although in early June, a senior Ukrainian presidential aide [told](#) BBC News 100-200 Ukrainian soldiers were dying in the Donbas region every day. In April, Russia [said](#) it had killed about 23,000 Ukrainian troops.

According to [data collected](#) by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as at 4 September, 5,827 civilians have died since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, including 375 children. The actual figures are likely to be considerably higher, as the receipt of information from some locations where intense hostilities have been going on has been delayed and many reports are still pending corroboration. For example, Ukrainian officials [said](#) that at least 1,000 people have been killed in the last six months fighting in Izium. Now with the city back in Ukrainian hands, officials were able to assess its losses and warned that the real figure of people killed since Russian forces took the city as a main

stronghold is probably much higher. According to [Action on Armed Violence](#) (AOAV) the number of casualties from explosive violence in the Ukrainian conflict reached 7,028 people by 14 September. From this number, 2,814 were killed and 4,214 were injured across 1,027 incidents. Ninety-five per cent (6,644) of civilian casualties have occurred in populated areas.

### **Activities in occupied parts of Ukraine**

Russia [accused](#) Ukraine of carrying out targeted strikes in the cities of Kherson and Luhansk against senior local officials who have been collaborating with Moscow. At least five HIMARS missiles crashed into the central administration building in Kherson, which Russian troops have occupied since March after arriving from Crimea. In the eastern city of Luhansk, a pro-Russian prosecutor died with his deputy when their office was blown up. The cause of the explosion was not immediately clear. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's senior adviser, Mikhailo Podolyak, said Ukraine was not behind the blast. Further south, the Russian-backed separatist authority in Berdiansk also [blamed](#) Kyiv for the "double murder" of a deputy head of the military civil administration and his wife, who headed the city's territorial election commission for the referendum.

### **Further reading:**

#### **On outcomes and consequences of the war**

Andrew Bacevich, [Russia's underperforming military \(and ours\)](#), Responsible Statecraft, 17 September 2022

Ivo Daalder, [Putin's NATO bungle](#), Politico, 16 September 2022

[NATO to Be Drawn into Ukraine War if Russia Goes 'Scorched Earth'](#): Admiral, Newsweek, 15 September 2022

Nick Megoran, [Ukraine war: this map holds an important clue about Kremlin fears of Nato expansion](#), The Conversation, 15 September 2022

[NATO Nowhere Near Ready for Direct War with Russia: Ex-General](#), Newsweek, 15 September 2022

Conor Echols, [Zelensky takes weapons push to Congress — and the defense industry](#), Responsible Statecraft, 14 September 2022

[Kremlin says Ukraine's NATO ambitions remain a threat to Russia](#), Reuters, 14 September 2022

[Long-term military guarantees from west would protect Ukraine – report](#), The Guardian, 13 September 2022

[Ukraine Wants NATO-esque Bloc to Immediately Defend Border With Russia](#), Newsweek, 13 September 2022

Andrew Bacevich, [Russia's Underperforming Military \(and Ours\): Convenient Lessons to Impede Learning](#), TomDispatch, 13 September 2022

[Ukraine's First Association Council Meeting with the EU in a Candidacy Status](#), Globesec, 12 September 2022

[Nato plans winter supplies for Ukrainian troops](#), Army Technology, 12 September 2022

Andrew Launtz, [Biden wants Ukraine aid slipped into massive US govt funding bill](#), Responsible Statecraft, 12 September 2022

Jasper Haman, [NATO Sacrifices Global Stability on Altar of Its 'Punish Putin' Strategy](#), Morocco World News, 10 September 2022

#### **On the risk of nuclear war**

The war in Ukraine might be approaching "a moment of [maximum danger](#)". Worries that a cornered, desperate Vladimir Putin may resort to nuclear, chemical or biological weapons have resurfaced in the US and Europe. On 17 September US President Joe Biden [urged](#) Russian President Vladimir Putin to not use tactical nuclear or chemical weapons in the wake of further setbacks in Ukraine. Asked by CBS what he would say to Putin if he was considering using such weapons, Biden said: "Don't. Don't. Don't. It would change the face of war unlike anything since world war two". Biden said the US response would be "consequential," but declined to give further details.

Simon Tisdall, [What happens if Putin goes nuclear in Ukraine? Biden has a choice to make](#),  
The Guardian, 17 September 2022

## On sanctions against Russia

Russia's invasion of Ukraine galvanized the US, UK and EU, and a handful of other Western-aligned countries, to unleash a series of sanctions meant to punish Vladimir Putin's government and pressure him to pull his forces back. While the sanctions lists are sometimes difficult to interpret, the EU has [sanctioned](#) 1,158 individuals and 98 entities—an approximate doubling of its entire sanctions portfolio across the dozens of sanctions regimes it implements; the UK also roughly doubled its portfolio (excluding the UN listings it is obligated to implement) having [imposed](#) sanctions on over 1,000 individuals and over 100 businesses; and the US has [sanctioned](#) more than 1,000 individuals or organizations since the invasion. The numbers, and the pace of the rollout, dwarf the sanctions lists for the likes of Iran, North Korea, Libya, the thematic counterterrorism lists, and all others.

However, rather than dissuading the Kremlin as intended, the penalties appear instead to be exacerbating inflation, worsening food insecurity and punishing ordinary Russians more than Putin or his allies. Moreover, Russia has claimed (see NATO Watch [Update 17](#) and [Update 18](#)) that it is getting more revenue from its fossil fuel sales now than before its invasion of Ukraine, despite (or partly because of) Western sanctions.

Finance ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) nations [announced](#) on 2 September that they plan to implement a price cap on Russian oil. In a [statement](#), the ministers said the cap was designed to reduce "Russia's ability to fund its war of aggression" and that they would "urgently work on the finalisation and implementation" of the measure, but left out key details of the plan. Prior to the G7 announcement, Russia [said](#) imposing the price cap would trigger Russian retaliation. Gazprom announced an indefinite shutdown of the Nord Stream 1 pipeline on 2 September (see below).

The US State Department and US Commerce and Treasury [expanded](#) sanctions on 15 September to include Russian technology firms in order to stifle Russian efforts at military modernization. The sanctions target a total of 31 Russian companies, including those involved in space-defence and quantum computing. The State Department and Treasury indicated that these efforts are, in part, to cut Russia off from the global technology market by prohibiting the exportation of high-technology to the country. The [new sanctions](#) include 22 Russian individuals and two Russian entities. The people include Maria Alexeyevna Lvova-Belova, Russia's presidential commissioner for children's rights, who has led Russia's efforts to deport thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia and forced the adoption of Ukrainian children into Russian families. The entities include Task Force Rusich, a neo-Nazi paramilitary group that has participated in combat alongside Russia's military in Ukraine.

Poland and the Baltic states have announced they will temporarily restrict access for Russian citizens holding EU visas. The prime ministers of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland said in a [statement](#) on 8 September that the move had been taken to address "public policy and security threats" arising from the "substantial and growing influx of Russian citizens" into the EU. The measures were expected to come into force by 19 September and would "restrict the entry into the Schengen area for Russian citizens travelling for tourism, culture, sport and business purposes". The next day, the European Commission [urged](#) all EU states to reassess the terms on which they grant visas to Russian travellers and to root out applicants that pose a security threat. "We should not be naive, Putin's aim is to destroy the EU and he would like to attack us where we are weakest," the EU home affairs commissioner, Ylva Johansson, said on 9 September. On 16 September Switzerland [aligned](#) itself with the EU in suspending a 2009 agreement easing rules for Russian citizens to enter the country. "The suspension of the agreement does not mean a general visa freeze for Russians but rather they will need to use the ordinary visa

procedure to enter Switzerland”, the country’s federal council [said in a statement](#).

### On international food security and Ukrainian grain exports

The [announcement](#) on 22 July of a grain deal between Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and the UN – which could allow Ukraine to export up to 22 million tons of grain stuck in its ports via the Black Sea – was a rare ray of light. The resumption of food exports is crucial for Ukraine's economy as well as global food security, but will rely on a fragile truce in the Black Sea (on international food security and Ukrainian grain exports, see NATO Watch [Update 17](#), [Update 18](#), [Update 20](#) and [Update 21](#)). The resumption of grain exports is being overseen by a Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) in Istanbul where Russian, Ukrainian, Turkish and UN personnel are working.

A [report](#) published on 15 September by the US government-backed Conflict Observatory said Ukraine has lost nearly 15% of its grain storage capacity in the war, threatening its role as a key food supplier to the world. The report found that Russians had seized 6.24m tonnes of food storage capacity, and another 2.25m tonnes of capacity in Ukrainian hands had been destroyed. As a result, farmers were running out of room to store their output for shipment, which could discourage plantings for the next crop, especially winter wheat, the report added.

### On energy security in Europe

Gas shortages are occurring across Europe, raising the prospect of energy rationing as governments push to develop alternative supplies. The West accuses Russia of restricting energy supplies to boost prices in retaliation for sanctions imposed after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Russia denies it is to blame, and instead attributes responsibility to Western sanctions and various technical problems. Russia [stopped](#) the flow of gas via the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Europe on 31 August, citing the need to carry out repairs, but [said](#) on 5 September that it will not resume in full its gas supplies to Europe until the west lifts its

sanctions against Moscow. President Putin has also [threatened](#) to cut off all deliveries of gas, oil, and coal to Europe if they imposed a price cap on Russian energy imports.

US energy supplies may also be [threatened](#) by growing Russian and Saudi Arabian oil affiliations. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and OPEC Plus, an oil cartel created in 2016 by Russia and Saudi Arabia, indicates an enduring relationship between the two countries. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Saudi Arabia continued to support Russia's oil industry despite Western discouragement. A discrete transition of Middle Eastern reliance on Western fossil fuel companies to Russian affiliation may be taking place. Meanwhile, activists from environmental group Greenpeace on 17 September [blocked](#) a shipment of Russian gas from unloading at a liquefied natural gas terminal in northern Finland. The activists want Helsinki to stop importing Russian gas due to the war in Ukraine.

### On developments within Russia

The acting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Nada al-Nashif, [said](#) on 12 September that Russia was intimidating domestic opponents of the war. “In the Russian Federation, the intimidation, restrictive measures and sanctions against people voicing opposition to the war in Ukraine undermine the exercise of constitutionally guaranteed fundamental freedoms, including the rights to free assembly, expression and association”. Nonetheless, the same day a public statement was [released](#) signed by municipal deputies from 18 districts of Moscow and St Petersburg demanding that Vladimir Putin resign. “We, the municipal deputies of Russia, believe that the actions of President Vladimir Putin harm the future of Russia and its citizens”, read the statement published by Ksenia Torstrem, the municipal deputy of the Semenovsky district of St Petersburg. “Deputies are not yet forbidden to have an opinion. And it is also not forbidden to speak for the resignation of the president. He is not a monarch, but a hired worker, receives a salary from our taxes”.

Kremlin sources “are now working to clear [Russia’s President Vladimir] Putin of any responsibility of the defeat, instead blaming the loss of almost all of occupied Kharkiv oblast on under-informed military advisers”, [according](#) to the US-based Institute of the Study of War. The institute said in its 13 September assessment that “Kremlin officials and state media propagandists are extensively discussing the reasons for the Russian defeat in Kharkiv oblast, a marked change from their previous pattern of reporting on exaggerated or fabricated Russian successes with limited detail”.

A US intelligence review commissioned by the Biden administration found that Russia spent at least \$300 million on covert international political influence in more than two dozen countries since 2014. The review was [declassified](#) on 13 September to expose the Kremlin’s “attempts to undermine democratic processes” in dozens of countries according to an anonymous senior US official who spoke to the Washington Post. Cryptocurrency and physical gifts were reportedly funnelled through both Russian embassies and oligarchs.

### On China’s position on the war

China has refused to condemn Russia’s invasion and its president, Xi Jinping, told Putin it would support Russia’s “sovereignty and security”. NATO’s new [Strategic Concept](#) asserts that there is a “deepening strategic partnership” between China and Russia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping [met](#) in Uzbekistan on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in the city of Samarkand on 15 September. President Putin thanked the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, for his “balanced” approach to the Ukraine crisis and criticised Washington’s “ugly” policies. After the meeting, China [released](#) a statement indicating that it was “ready to work with Russia in extending strong support to each other on issues concerning their respective core interests.” The eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organization includes India, Pakistan and four ex-Soviet nations in Central

Asia. During the summit, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi [told](#) Putin that “today’s time is not a time for war”. Putin told Modi he knew of India’s “concerns” about the conflict, echoing language he had used with Chinese president Xi Jinping the day before. “We will do our best to end this as soon as possible,” Putin said, while accusing Kyiv of rejecting negotiations.

Aslı Aydintaşbaş, Marie Dumoulin, Ellie Geranmayeh and Janka Oertel, [Rogue NATO: The new face of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation](#), ECFR Commentary, 16 September 2022

Sarang Shidore, [Putin-Xi meeting at summit marks the rise of Eurasia](#), Responsible Statecraft, 15 September 2022

### On developments within NATO

Earlier this year, Germany [announced](#) it was setting up a €100 billion special fund to strengthen its military. On 12 September, Germany’s Defence Minister said the country must continue to increase military spending in order to reach NATO’s 2 per cent requirement. This announcement follows several similar commitments made by other European countries recently. In July Spain [stated](#) it would increase its military spending from 13 billion euros to 26 billion euros in seven years. France has also taken measures to increase its military spending, as the government recently [proposed](#) a 44 billion euros budget for its military in 2023. The French announcement came a few weeks after President Emmanuel Macron’s speech at the Eurosatory trade conference, in which he [declared](#) that France had entered a “war economy” and called on neighbouring nations to support Europe’s defence-industrial base before looking abroad. Finally, the new UK Government headed by Liz Truss has [said](#) it will increase the defence budget to 3% of GDP.

[Nato allied nations’ forces conduct Portugal-led exercise REPMUS 22](#), Naval Technology, 16 September 2022

[NATO steps up engagement with private sector on emerging technologies](#), NATO News Release, 15 September 2022

Conor Echols, [Should big-money Dem donors really head embassies in NATO's east?](#)  
Responsible Statecraft, 13 September 2022

[NATO exercise Dynamic Mariner/Mavi Balina 22 begins in Mediterranean](#), NATO News Release, 12 September 2022

[Germany must meet NATO's 2% spending target over long term, defence minister says](#), Reuters, 12 September 2022

Natasha Hawa, [What is NATO's future?](#) English Almayadeen, 11 September 2022

[Turkey-Greece Tensions Could Disrupt NATO Unity, Experts Warn](#), VoA, 10 September 2022

[Russia is preparing to veto the EUFOR Mandate and NATO is preparing the Ground](#), Sarajevo Times, 10 September 2022

[Summit prepares ground for 'NATOisation of Europe' and continues collision course with China and high levels of military spending](#),  
NATO Watch Briefing No.96, 6 July 2022

### On Finland and Sweden joining NATO

Finland and Sweden were invited to join NATO, after a [trilateral memorandum](#) with Turkey agreed on the eve of the NATO Madrid Summit assuaged Ankara's previous objections. The two Nordic countries will become NATO members after the Accession Protocol is ratified by all 30 member states. The invitation to Finland and Sweden represents a major geopolitical shift in Europe as the two countries move away from neutrality. However, ratification by Turkey is still by no means certain. The trilateral agreement could still falter on implementation, especially regarding Turkish extradition requests. To date, 27 NATO member states have ratified the decision, with Spain and Portugal the most recent to do so. Spain's lower house approved the accession on 15 September with 290 votes in favour, 11 votes against and 47 abstentions, while Portugal's parliament did so on 16 September, by a 219-11 vote, with only the Communists and Left Bloc voting against. Hungary, Slovakia and Turkey are the three member states where parliaments have not yet been asked to vote on the issue.

A new Gallup Poll released on 16 September confirmed overwhelming support among Finns and Swedes for their nations' expected accession to NATO, while their views toward Russian leadership have turned "profoundly negative" as the war in Ukraine rages on. The survey found that 81% of Finns and 74% of Swedes approve of the alliance's leadership, while their approval of Russian leadership dipped to 6% in Finland and 2% in Sweden.

[Portugal's parliament backs NATO membership for Finland and Sweden](#), Reuters, 16 September 2022

[Finns, Swedes Overwhelmingly Back NATO, Poll Shows](#), VoA, 16 September 2022

[Spain's parliament backs NATO membership for Finland and Sweden](#), Reuters, 15 September 2022

[Greek Parliament ratifies Sweden and Finland NATO bid](#), Ekathimerini, 15 September 2022

[Turkey renews veto threat on Sweden, Finland NATO bids](#), al Monitor, 14 September 2022

For further details see:

[Murky trilateral agreement results in Turkey lifting objections to Finland and Sweden's NATO application](#), NATO Watch News Brief, 29 June 2022

[Should Finland and Sweden hold a referendum on NATO membership?](#) NATO Watch Briefing no. 93, 6 May 2022

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