Russia's war with Ukraine

Russian forces have claimed a series of incremental gains in eastern Ukraine in recent weeks, after around two months in which front lines had largely been frozen in place. In his evening address on 4 February, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky acknowledged that the situation was getting tougher in the frontline cities in the east of the country. A UK Ministry of Defence intelligence update on 1 February said recent days have seen "some of the most intense shelling of the conflict" along the Dnieper River. "This has included continued shelling of Kherson city", the ministry notes, adding that outside the Donbas, Kherson is the city most consistently shelled in the conflict

Meanwhile, Russian air attacks on Ukraine's electricity grid appear to have slowed. Russia may be holding back some of its dwindling stock of missiles for the 24 February anniversary of its invasion, when Oleksii Reznikov, the Ukrainian Defence Minister, expects a major Russian offensive to take place. He said Russia would call on a large contingent of mobilised troops, and referring to the general mobilisation of 300,000 conscripted soldiers in September, he claimed that numbers at the border suggest the true size could be closer to 500,000.

Reznikov said on 3 February that the new tanks being supplied by NATO allies (see NATO Watch update 41) will serve as an "iron fist" in a counteroffensive by Kyiv to break through Russian defensive lines. Western supplies of 155-mm artillery would be vital for Ukraine to deter Russian attacks in the south and in the east, Reznikov said at a joint news conference with his Polish counterpart, Mariusz Błaszczak.

EU-Ukraine summit

On 3 February, Charles Michel, President of the European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, met with President Zelenskyy in Kyiv for the 24th summit between the EU and Ukraine. The EU leaders offered strong support for Ukraine but set "no rigid timelines" for its accession to the bloc. In addition, the European parliament voted on 2 February in support of a roadmap for Ukraine's accession to the EU. Zelensky had hoped the EU would put Ukraine on a rapid track to membership, but western EU member states are concerned that Kyiv's expectations on speedy membership talks are unrealistic. "There are no rigid timelines but there are goals that you have to reach," von der Leyen told the news conference. The EU granted Ukraine candidate status in June 2022, a historic decision taken with unprecedented speed for the post-1992 era. However, few member states expect Ukraine to join any time soon.

On the eve of the summit the EU pledged to double a military aid programme for Ukraine by training an extra 15,000 soldiers, and reiterated that it aimed to have a tenth package of sanctions against Russia in place by 24 February and would cap the price of Russian petroleum products (see below). The EU also intends to work with Ukrainian prosecutors to set up an international centre for the prosecution of the crime of aggression in Ukraine to be located in The Hague. The

purpose of this centre will be to collect and store evidence for any future trial, whether that took place via a special tribunal or some other way.

Stalled diplomacy

Both President Zelensky and President Putin have expressed a willingness to negotiate an end to the war, but their positions remain so far apart that there are no real hopes of peace talks in the near future. President Zelensky has previously suggested convening a special global peace summit that would focus on the implementation of Kyiv's [10-point peace plan](#), which includes the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity, the withdrawal of Russian troops, the release of all prisoners, a tribunal for those responsible for the aggression and security guarantees for Ukraine. Zelenskyy had asked the Group of 20 (G20) last month to adopt the plan to end the war. However, Russia shows no signs of being ready to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and pre-war borders.

A recent RAND [report](#) argued that an end to the war in which Ukraine gained full control over the entirety of its internationally recognized territory was "a highly unlikely outcome". In particular, the authors of the RAND report say that attempting the recapture of Crimea would increase the duration of the war. And some analysts are [suggesting](#) that there may be a "quiet consensus" emerging that Crimea cannot be recaptured militarily and that a peace could be maintained after a negotiated end to the war without Ukraine entering NATO.

Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister, Sergei Ryabkov, labelled talks with Kyiv "[pointless](#)" after the US and other NATO countries agreed to send tanks to Ukraine (see below). "Under the current conditions, when Washington announced the decision to supply tanks, and its vassals, including Ottawa, are competing over who will supply armored vehicles, especially old ones, to Ukraine, and how many of them… it's pointless to talk," said Ryabkov

There have been some negotiations on key issues, such as the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, getting grain out of Ukraine and in organising

prisoner swaps, but no Ukrainian-Russian negotiations since March on the big issues. Notably, a grain deal brokered by the UN and Turkey in July aimed at easing global food shortages was [extended](#) for four months on 17 November, and Russia and Ukraine have carried out numerous prisoner of war exchanges.

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 and Russia

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 most recent meeting took [place](#) on 20 January in Ramstein Air Base, 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 German Chancellor Olaf Scholz [said](#) in an interview on 5 February that President Zelensky had agreed that weapons supplied by the west will not be used to attack Russian territory. "There is a consensus on this point," Scholz told *Bild am Sonntag*. Scholz rejected President Putin's comparison of the intervention of the west with Russia's struggle during the second world war as "absurd". "We have carefully weighed each delivery of weapons, in close coordination with our allies,

starting with America," he said, adding that such a consensus-based approach "avoids an escalation".

The United States is the [largest] provider of military assistance to Ukraine, having committed roughly $20 billion since the start of the Biden administration, with $19.3 billion being provided since February 2022. In comparison, the top recipient in other years, Israel, received between $3 and $4 billion. The US State Depatment [announced] on 3 February a new military aid package for Ukraine worth $2.2 billion, which will include precision-guided rockets and Hawk air defence firing units, as well as other munitions and weapons. Significantly, it includes the ground launched small diameter bomb (GLSDB) for the first time, which will double Ukraine's strike range and allow Ukraine's military to strike deep behind the frontlines of the war.

European and other partners have [pledged] about $12 billion in military support to Ukraine, with more to come. As the second largest source of arms, the UK has [committed £2.3 billion] in military assistance to Ukraine so far and has pledged to match that assistance in 2023. The UK is also hosting a training programme (Operation Interflex), which is supported by several allies, with the aim of training 10,000 new and existing Ukrainian personnel within 120 days. France and Italy have finalised technical talks for the joint delivery of the Samp/T air defence system to Ukraine in spring 2023, the French defence ministry [announced] on 3 February. It comes after Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani [said] a day earlier that the system would be operational in Ukraine "within seven to eight weeks". The system can track dozens of targets and intercept 10 at once. It is the only European-made system that can intercept ballistic missiles. Earlier the FT had [reported] that Italy and France were joining forces to supply air defences to Ukraine.

[The EU] is also providing non-lethal and lethal arms through its European Peace Facility (EPF). This is the first time the EU has approved the supply of lethal weapons to a third country. To date, the EU has committed €3.1 billion in

assistance, and in October 2022, the EU also approved a new training mission for the Ukrainian armed forces. The EU will launch a humanitarian de-mining programme in Ukraine worth €25 million the EU [confirmed] on 3 February.

During his visit to Seoul on 30 January, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg [called] for South Korea to provide direct military support to Ukraine. South Korea, a growing arms exporter with a well-equipped, US-backed military, has provided humanitarian aid and other support to Ukraine while joining economic sanctions against Moscow. But it has not directly provided arms to Ukraine, citing a long-standing policy of not supplying weapons to countries actively engaged in conflict.

Tanks

Ukraine expects to receive 120-140 tanks in a "first wave" of deliveries from a coalition of 12 countries, the Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba [said] on 31 January, adding that the first tranche would include the German Leopard 2, the British Challenger 2 and the US M1 Abrams tanks, and that Ukraine was also "really counting" on supplies of French Leclerc tanks being agreed. The number of heavy tanks publicly pledged to Ukraine appears to be well short of the 321 that Vadym Omelchenko, Ukraine's ambassador to France, stated last week (see NATO Watch [update 41]). Germany has [approved] the export of older Leopard 1 battle tanks, which would add to the collection of fighting vehicles Berlin promised. A spokesperson said Olaf Scholz's government had granted an export licence for the German-made tanks first produced in the 1960s and replaced within Germany's own military by Leopard 2 tanks in 2003.

Spain will initially send between four and six Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine, El País [reported] on 1 February, while Portugal also [said] on 4 February it will send Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine. An inventory has been done of Portuguese stocks, with Lisbon asking Germany for parts to help repair them so they can be deployed to Ukraine. In addition, Morocco [reportedly] became the first African country to send heavy weapons to Ukraine,

with a commitment to send 20 T-72B battle tanks. This goes against the neutral stance which many African nations have adopted

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters in Zagreb on 30 January, the President of Croatia, Zoran Milanović, criticised western countries for supplying Ukraine with heavy tanks and other weapons. Milanović said he was "against sending any lethal arms" to Kyiv, arguing that supplying Ukraine with weapons only "prolongs the war" and that Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula seized and annexed by Russia in 2014, will "never again be part of Ukraine".

Combat aircraft

Following the German and US decisions to supply Ukraine with tanks, lobbying has stepped up for the supply of combat aircraft. US military officials are reportedly urging the Pentagon to supply F-16 jets to Ukraine so it is better able to defend itself from Russian missiles and drones. However, President Joe Biden said on 30 January that the United States will not provide the F-16 combat aircrafts that Ukraine has been seeking. Nonetheless, President Zelensky's most senior adviser, Andriy Yermak, suggested that Poland is willing to supply Ukraine with the F-16 aircraft. Yermak said Ukraine received "positive signals" from Warsaw in a Telegram posting. Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said on 2 February that he is open to supplying Ukraine with F-16 fighter jets if the decision were taken together with NATO allies. In an interview with Bild, he stressed that his assessment was "based on what NATO countries decide together" and that the decision required the "strategic consideration of the whole" alliance.

However, views on this issue across NATO remain cautious. Chancellor Scholz reiterated on 29 January that Germany will not send fighter jets. "I can only advise against entering into a constant bidding war when it comes to weapons systems," Scholz said in an interview with the *Tagesspiegel* newspaper. "If, as soon as a decision [on tanks] has been made, the next debate starts in Germany, that doesn't come across as serious and undermines citizens' confidence in government decisions".

However, the French Defence Minister Sébastien Lecornu said on 31 January that there was "no taboo" on the supply of combat aircraft, echoing similar remarks made by Emmanuel Macron the previous day. France also said it would donate 12 Caesar howitzers to Ukraine after a meeting with the Ukrainian defence minister. The training of Ukrainian pilots to fly French combat aircraft was also discussed but no decision has yet been taken.

The British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said sending fighter jets to Ukraine would require "months if not years" of training and that he was looking for the most effective way of helping Kyiv secure victory. Earlier on 1 February, the UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said he does not think it is the right approach "for now" to send UK combat aircraft to Ukraine. He said it was "not a solid decision", adding: "I've learned two things: never rule anything in and never rule anything out". The UK statements came as its former prime minister Boris Johnson called on western leaders to "give the Ukrainians the tools to finish the job", including heavy tanks and planes. Addressing the Atlantic Council in Washington on 1 February, Johnson urged the west to "stop focusing on Putin and focus entirely on Ukraine".

Drones

Ukraine's military will spend nearly $550 million on drones (UAVs) in 2023, and 16 supply deals have already been signed with Ukrainian manufacturers, Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov said on 30 January. Ukraine has received significant supplies of UAVs from its partners, but Kyiv is now seeking to boost domestic production to build what officials cast as an "army of drones".

Military assistance to Russia

External military support to Russia so far has been limited to a handful of states, principally Belarus, Iran and North Korea. Speaking during a state visit to Zimbabwe on 31 January, the Belarus President, Alexander Lukashenko, said his country is "already ready" to offer more assistance to Russia in its war against Ukraine. Lukashenko did not specify what that help

would entail. The offer came as Belarus and Russia were conducting a week-long military [training exercise](#) for the joint command of their regional grouping of forces.

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

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 in war. Norwegian chief of defence Eirik Kristoffersen [estimated](#) 180,000 Russian troops have been killed or wounded in over the course of the conflict, while the figure for the Ukrainians is 100,000 military casualties and 30,000 dead civilians. He gave the figures in a tv interview on 22 January, without specifying how the numbers were calculated. America's most senior general and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mark Milley, [estimated](#) in November that Russia's military had seen more than 100,000 of its soldiers killed and wounded in Ukraine, adding Kyiv's armed forces have "probably" suffered a similar level of casualties in the war. Milley also suggested that around 40,000 civilians had died after being caught up in the conflict. Ukraine [claims](#) to have killed more than 131,000 Russian soldiers in the war to date. Speaking on Ukrainian tv on 2 December, Kyiv's presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak [said](#) up to 13,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed since Russia invaded in February, apparently based on official figures from Ukraine's general staff. However, at certain points in the war, Ukraine [said](#) that between 100 and 200 of its forces were dying each day on the battlefield, making Podolyak's estimate seem conservative.

According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), a disaggregated data collection, analysis and crisis mapping project, there were a total of 28,357 conflict-related fatalities in Ukraine in 2022 (see table).

Table: ACLED conflict-related fatalities data for Ukraine 2018-22

Event type	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Battles	703	265	40	57	12163
Explosions/Rem ote violence	155	97	68	88	15025
Protests, riots and strategic developments	12	15	0	0	4
Violence against civilians	19	26	5	4	1165
Total	**889**	**403**	**113**	**149**	**28357**

Source: [ACLED dashboard](#); accessed 18 January 2023

According to [data](#) collected by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as at 30 January, 7,110 civilians have died since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, including 438 children. The actual civilian casualty 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. According to [Action on Armed Violence](#) (AOAV) the number of civilian casualties from explosive violence in the Ukrainian conflict reached 11, 291 people by 3 February. From this number, 3,987 were killed and 7,304 were injured. Ninety-four per cent (10,623) of civilian casualties have occurred in populated areas.

The number of refugees from the conflict have now surpassed 8 million. As of 21 January, there were 8,046,560 [refugees](#) from Ukraine recorded across Europe, 4,823,326 of whom were registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe. This gives them the right to live and work in any EU country and benefit from housing and schooling assistance.

Further reading:

On outcomes and consequences of the war

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Daniel Boffey, 'We killed three Russians': the secretive Ukrainian special forces taking the fight across the border, The Guardian, 4 February 2023

Sergey Radchenko, It's time to talk about Nato membership for Ukraine, The Spectator, 4 February 2023

Blaise Malley, Diplomacy Watch: Second thoughts on Ukraine retaking Crimea? Responsible Statecraft, 3 February 2023

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Anatol Lieven and Artin DerSimonian, There are no good alternatives to Russian influence in the Caucasus, Responsible Statecraft, 2 February 2023

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President of NATO member state says Crimea will 'never again' be part of Ukraine, argues against sending more weapons, Business Insider, 31 January 2023

NATO chief warns that Putin winning in Ukraine would signal to China it can achieve its goals through 'brute force', Business Insider, 31 January 2023

NATO chief urges Seoul to send military support to Ukraine, Associated Press, 30 January 2023

Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the CHEY Institute during his visit to the Republic of Korea, 30 January 2023

Lyle J. Goldstein, Is the Ukraine War moving toward a 'Korea solution'?, Responsible Statecraft, 30 January 2023

Mira Oklobdzija, Ukraine and Secrecy, FPIF, 30 January 2023

NATO Official Says Alliance 'Ready' for Direct Confrontation with Russia, Newsweek, 29 January 2023

Carol R. Saivetz, Russia in the Caucasus and Central Asia After the Invasion of Ukraine, Lawfare, 29 January 2023

Samuel Charap and Miranda Priebe, Avoiding a Long War U.S. Policy and the Trajectory of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict, RAND, January 2023

On the risk of nuclear war

There have been concerns for several months that the war in Ukraine might be approaching "a moment of maximum danger". In particular, there are worries that a cornered, desperate Vladimir Putin may resort to nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Meanwhile, on 31 January the US accused Russia of not complying with its obligation under a nuclear arms control treaty by not allowing inspectors to visit its nuclear weapons sites. Russia's "refusal" to allow inspections under the New Start treaty "prevents the United States from exercising important rights under the treaty and threatens the viability of US-Russian nuclear arms control", a US state department spokesperson said. A NATO statement on 3 February supported the US position and urged Russia to respect the treaty.

Jon Wolfsthal, Russia is Not Complying with the New START Arms Control Treaty, Blog, 2 February 2023

US accuses Russia of violating key nuclear arms control treaty, The Guardian, 31 January 2023

On investigations of war crimes in Ukraine

A senior Russian lieutenant who fled after serving in Ukraine has described how his country's troops tortured prisoners of war and threatened some with rape. "I have personally seen our troops torture Ukrainian soldiers", Konstantin Yefremov, told the Guardian on 2

February. Meanwhile, a former commander of Russia's Wagner mercenary group, Andrei Medvedev, who fled to Norway told Reuters on 2 February he wanted to apologise for fighting in Ukraine and was speaking out to bring the perpetrators of atrocities in the conflict to justice. Medvedev crossed the Russian-Norwegian border on 13 January, and says he witnessed the killing and mistreatment of Russian prisoners taken to Ukraine to fight for Wagner.

Germany has collected evidence of war crimes in Ukraine, the country's prosecutor general said in a newspaper interview published on 4 February, adding that he saw a need for a judicial process at international level. He said the amount of evidence was in the "three-digit" range. International fact-finding missions and investigations have identified clear patterns of violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine since the Russian invasion in February 2022. The violations are wide-ranging, including the conduct of fighting as well as treatment of prisoners of war, forced abductions, torture, restriction of civil and human rights, and denial of essential services. The United Nations, the International Court of Justice, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Court of Human Rights, the ICC and Ukrainian national courts have all been active in attempting to hold criminals accountable.

The ICC, for example, 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. A substantial ICC investigative team appears to be working in Ukraine on a near permanent basis. Similarly, within the OSCE the Moscow Mechanism was activated to establish two expert missions to investigate violations and abuses committed in the war (see the subsequent April and June reports). On 14 July, 45 countries agreed at a conference in the Hague to coordinate investigations into suspected war crimes in Ukraine. In October, a report published by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine found reasonable grounds

to conclude that an array of war crimes, violations of human rights and international humanitarian law have been committed in Ukraine. Russian armed forces are responsible for the vast majority of the violations identified. Finally, a report published on 7 December by OHCHR said Russian forces killed at least 441 civilians in the early days of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. The report documents attacks in dozens of towns and summary executions that it said might be war crimes. The actual number of victims in the Kyiv, Chernihiv and Sumy regions was likely to be much higher, the UN human rights office added. The report covers the period from the invasion's start on 24 February until early April, when Russian forces withdrew from those three areas.

On sanctions against Russia and post-war reconstruction in Ukraine

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 1,236 individuals and 115 entities—an approximate doubling of its entire sanctions portfolio across the dozens of sanctions regimes it implements; the UK Government has frozen more than £18bn of assets belonging to oligarchs and other Russians and UK sanctions have been imposed on 1,271 people according to the annual review of the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), published on 10 November; 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. Also, many Western companies continue to trade within Ukraine. Nonetheless, new rounds of sanctions continue to be applied with notable impact, especially on the richest Russian oligarchs.

The EU has promised that a tenth package of sanctions against Russia will be in place by 24 February, the first anniversary of the war. The EC president, Ursula von der Leyen, said the package would cover trade worth €10 billion and "hit the trade and technology that supports Russia's war machine". The next round of EU sanctions, however, is not expected to include nuclear power, which Hungary has already threatened to block. Meanwhile, the US Attorney General Merrick Garland announced on 3 February that he had authorised the country to begin using seized Russian money to aid Ukraine. The money would come from assets confiscated from Russian oligarch Konstantin Malofeyev after his April indictment for alleged sanctions evasions, he added.

Ukraine imposed sanctions against 182 Russian and Belarusian companies, and three individuals, on 29 January in the latest of a series of steps to block Moscow's and Minsk's connections to Ukraine. The sanctioned companies chiefly engage in the transportation of goods, vehicle leasing and chemical production, according to the list published by Ukraine's national security and defence council. Meanwhile, President Zelensky stepped up his campaign to keep Russian athletes out of the 2024 Paris Games. Ukraine's president said he had sent a letter to the French President Emmanuel Macron stating that allowing Russia to compete would be tantamount to showing that "terror is somehow acceptable".

Price caps on Russian oil products

EU member countries agreed on a European Commission proposal to set price caps on Russian oil products, the Swedish presidency of the EU said. Ambassadors of the 27 EU states agreed at a meeting on 3 February to impose a $100-a-barrel cap on premium products such

as diesel and a $45 cap on low-end products, according to diplomats. The price cap came into effect on 5 February, as did the EU's ban on Russian oil product imports. The price caps, together with an EU ban on Russian oil product imports, are part of a broader agreement among the G7 countries. It follows a $60 per barrel cap on Russian crude that G7 countries imposed on the 5 December 2022 (see NATO Watch Update XY), which according to Von der Leyen, costs Russia €160 million a day. Both caps prohibit Western insurance, shipping and other companies from financing, insuring, trading, brokering or carrying cargoes of Russian crude and oil products unless they were bought at or below the set price caps. Meanwhile, the Russian government on 30 January banned domestic oil exporters and customs bodies from adhering to western-imposed price caps on Russian crude. The measure was issued to help enforce President Putin's decree of 27 December that prohibited the supply of crude oil and oil products from 1 February for five months, to nations that abide by the caps. The new Russian act bans corporates and individuals from including oil price cap mechanisms in their contracts.

Paul Poast, The West's Sanctions Against Russia Aren't Working, World Politics Review, 3 February 2023 (paywall)

Matthew Becerra, Gauging the Efficacy of Western Sanctions Against Russia, Geopolitical Monitor, Situation Reports, 30 January 2023

Anna Kolesnichenko and Jakub Wisniewski, Russia Sanctions – How to Make Them Work, Globsec, January 2023

On energy security in Europe

Norwegian academics, rights campaigners, authors and a former minister have urged Oslo to increase its support for Ukraine, saying the government must do more to help after earning billions in extra oil and gas revenue from Russia's war. Norway's oil and gas revenues have soared to record levels over the past 12 months as energy prices have tripled after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Norway has replaced Russia as Europe's largest supplier of natural gas.

Europe is striving to diversify its energy supply sources to curb its dependence on Russia. Gas shortages have been occurring across Europe and governments have been pushing 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.

On developments within Ukraine

President Zelensky's crackdown on corruption has continued (see NATO Watch update 41). The woman leading the Kyiv tax authority was accused of a multimillion-dollar fraud after a raid on one of her four homes. Ukraine's state bureau of investigation said in a statement that the acting head of the inspectorate, who has not been named, had abused her "power and official position" along with other members of the authority. The Ukrainian president has also revoked the citizenship of several former influential politicians, in what he said was another step to "cleanse" the country of pro-Russian influences. Zelensky would not list the names, but said they had dual Russian citizenship. According to Ukrainian state media, the list includes several top politicians from the office of Viktor Yanukovych, who served as Ukraine's pro-Russian president from 2010 until he was removed from office in 2014.

On developments within Russia

Russia's ministry of education has provided further details on plans to include basic military training in secondary schools, according to UK intelligence. The UK's Ministry of Defence said on 29 January that the module "will include training with AK series assault rifles and hand grenades, military drill and salutes". It added that the initiatives, to come into force in September, were most likely a deliberate "evocation of the Soviet Union" as similar training took place in schools up until 1993.

On developments within NATO

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Russia and China's growing relationship poses a threat not only to Asia but also to Europe. In a speech to Keio University in Tokyo on 1 February, he underlined the importance of stronger cooperation and more "friends" for NATO in the Indo-Pacific region, adding that the war in Ukraine had demonstrated "how security is interconnected".

NATO urges Russia to comply with nuclear arms treaty, Politico, 3 February 2023

Statement by the North Atlantic Council on the New START Treaty, 3 February 2023

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Marc Garlasco and Andrew Hyde, Civilian Harm Mitigation: An Opportunity for Values-Based U.S. Leadership at NATO, Lawfare, 2 February 2023

NATO Military Committee discusses NATO-Georgia military cooperation, NATO News Release, 1 February 2023

NATO chief stresses importance of Indo-Pacific partners amid security tensions, Reuters, 1 February 2023

Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at Keio University, Japan, 1 February 2023

As China and Russia get "closer" and Beijing invests in nuclear weapons, NATO focuses on new "friends", CBS News, 1 February 2023

NATO chief says China has 'no justification' for Taiwan threats, Nikkei Asia, 1 February 2023

NATO chief Stoltenberg calls for stronger partnership with Japan, Al Jazeera, 31 January 2023

NATO, Japan pledge to strengthen ties in face of 'historic' security threat, Reuters, 31 January 2023

NATO chief urges closer ties with Japan to defend democracy, Associated Press, 31 January 2023

Secretary General in Tokyo: No NATO partner is closer or more capable than Japan, NATO News Release, 31 January 2023

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Canada Iceland
Unites States
Founded in 1949

- 30 member countries
- Ratification process for membership formally launched July 5
- Aspiring countries

[Joint press point](#) by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, 31 January 2023

[Secretary General stresses value of NATO's global partnerships in visit to Republic of Korea](#), NATO News Release, 30 January 2023

[NATO's new secretary-general, same as the old one?](#) Politico, 30 January 2023

[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. To date, 28 NATO member states have ratified the decision. Hungary and Turkey are the two member states where parliaments have not yet been asked to vote on the issue. Hungary will ratify the bids early next year, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán [announced](#) on 24 November. The assumption is that Turkey is likely to wait until after a general election in June 2023, but ratification by Turkey is still by no means certain.

Turkey has made its approval conditional on Stockholm cracking down on exiled Kurdish militants and other groups that Ankara considers a threat to its national security. Turkey's President Erdoğan [said](#) he will not support Sweden's NATO membership bid after a protest in Stockholm that included the burning of a copy of the Quran outside the Turkish embassy. Those protests in the Swedish capital on 21 January (see NATO Watch [update 40](#)) have heightened tensions with Turkey. President Erdoğan [signalled](#) on 29 January that Turkey may agree to Finland joining NATO without Sweden. "We may deliver Finland a different message [on their NATO application] and Sweden would be shocked when they see our message. But Finland should not make the same mistake Sweden did", Erdoğan said in a televised speech. However, Finland is sticking to its plan to join NATO at the same time as Sweden, and hopes to do so no later than July, Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto [said](#) on 30 January

Sweden's government should "act differently" if it wants to clinch Turkish support for its bid to join NATO, Hungary's Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said on 31 January, adding that the recent Quran-burning protest in Stockholm was "unacceptable." He made the remarks at a news conference following talks with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu in Hungary's capital Budapest. Hungary's vote on accepting Sweden and Finland into NATO will be on the Hungarian parliament's agenda during its first session of the year in February, Szijjarto said. Meanwhile, a bipartisan group of senators urged President Joe Biden to delay the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey until Turkey agrees to allow Sweden and Finland to join NATO. The group of 27 senators wrote in their letter on 2 February that Congress "cannot consider future support for [Turkey]," including the sale of the F-16 jets, until Turkey "completes ratification of the accession protocols".

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