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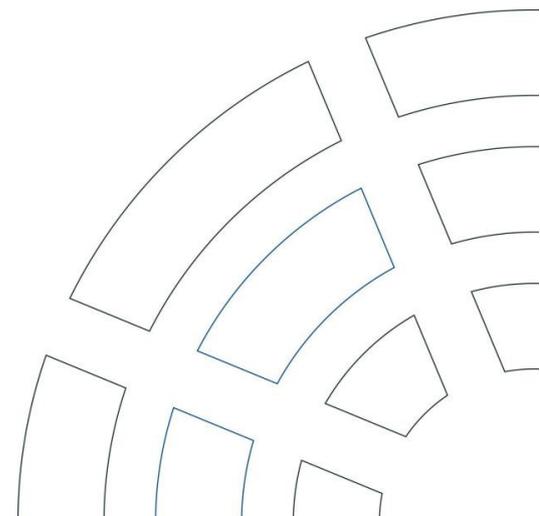
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UKRAINE'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM & ALLIED AND GLOBAL RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S WAR

Draft Special Report
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Russia's war in Ukraine is the most violent and consequential war in Europe since the end of World War II. Its outcome will likely determine the shape of great power competition for the remainder of the 21st century.

This updated draft special report outlines the variables leading to Russia's full invasion on 24 February 2022. It reviews the evolution of the war's distinct phases, as well as the parallel evolution of the coordinated Allied and partner assistance supporting Ukraine's legitimate self-defense against Russian aggression. In total, NATO Allies and partners have committed to over USD 165 billion in direct military, financial and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine since the beginning of the war – this assistance has been a vital lifeline enabling Ukraine's advancing self-defense and reform efforts to underwrite its future as a strong democratic Ally within the Euro-Atlantic community.

The report also reviews some initial lessons learned about the evolving character of war, as well as the strategic challenge posed to Allied defense industrial bases due to the high level of military support directed towards assisting Ukraine's legitimate self-defense. It also takes stock of the war's impact on the humanitarian situation in the country, reviews the impact of the unprecedented levels of punishing sanctions on Russia's ability to prosecute the war, evaluates the role the evolving strategic Russia-China partnership has in mitigating the impact of sanctions and global opprobrium upon Russia, and speculates on the early initiatives and efforts to consider the eventual monumental task of reconstructing a stronger, more resilient Ukraine from the ashes of this devastating conflict.

It concludes with a series of recommendations for Allies and partners to consider, among them: the continued immediate provision of military and financial aid to further Ukraine's battlefield advantages; the maintenance and tightening of the increasingly impactful sanctions regimes; increased political and diplomatic support for Ukraine's cause globally; and ways to consider ensuring the survival and strengthening of Ukraine's democracy and future Euro-Atlantic integration.

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I- INTRODUCTION

1. On 24 February 2022, Russia launched a premeditated, unprovoked and unjustified military invasion of Ukraine. The war has upended Euro-Atlantic security, disrupted global trade and economics and cast the gloom of nuclear threats over global political debates for the first time since the Cold War. It has become the most disruptive and consequential war in Europe since World War II.
2. Allies' response to the crisis has been twofold: an immediate surge of just-in-time weapons supplies to shore up Ukrainian defenses against Russia's invading forces and the reinforcement of NATO's eastern flank via the most substantial adaptation of NATO's deterrence and defence posture since the Cold War, putting NATO on a modern forward defence footing. Allies, partners and other nations sympathetic to Ukraine's cause have surged more than USD 165 billion in military, financial, and humanitarian assistance to support Ukraine's legitimate self-defence and to underwrite its reform efforts to solidify its future as a strong democratic Ally within the Euro-Atlantic community (Kiel, 2023).
3. Ukrainian forces have demonstrated they can use this assistance to great success, repelling Russia's initial attempts to seize Kyiv, grinding down Russian advances in the east and south, and even countering with an impressive two-pronged counter-offensive in the Kharkiv region and around Kherson. Over the 2022–2023 winter, both Russia and Ukraine reconstituted their forces' manpower, equipment and ammunition to seek new offensive momentum. Over late winter and early spring, Russia launched a relatively muted offensive concentrated around the city of Bakhmut. This offensive resulted in the total destruction of the city and came at a great cost in men and matériel. While Russian forces claimed victory by the end of May, total control remained contested. By early June, Ukrainian forces launched their long-anticipated counteroffensive campaign along three principal axes in the country's east and southeast.
4. This updated special report outlines the variables leading to Russia's full invasion on 24 February 2022. It reviews the evolution of the war's distinct phases, as well as the parallel evolution of the coordinated Allied and partner support for Ukraine's legitimate self-defence against Russian aggression. It then reviews some initial lessons learned about the evolving character of war, as well as the strategic challenge posed to Allied defence industrial bases due to the high level of military support flowing to assist Ukraine's legitimate self-defence. It also takes stock of the war's impact on the humanitarian situation in the country, reviews the impact of the unprecedented levels of punishing sanctions on Russia's ability to prosecute the war, evaluates the role the evolving strategic Russia-China partnership has in mitigating the impact of sanctions and global opprobrium upon Russia, and speculates on the early initiatives and efforts to consider the eventual monumental task of reconstructing a stronger, more resilient Ukraine from the ashes of this devastating conflict.
5. It concludes with a series of recommendations for Allies and partners to consider, among them: the continued immediate provision of military and financial aid to further Ukraine's battlefield advantages; the maintenance and tightening of the increasingly impactful sanctions regimes; increased political and diplomatic support for Ukraine's cause globally; and ways to consider ensuring the survival and strengthening of Ukraine's democracy and future Euro-Atlantic integration.

II- RUSSIA'S SLOW CAMPAIGN TOWARD A FULL INVASION

A. RUSSIA'S FIRST INVASION AND ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF UKRAINE BETWEEN 2014–2021

6. Ukrainians are quick to note that Russia's war on Ukraine has been ongoing for the last eight years, entering its most intense phase on 24 February 2022. In February 2014, Russia executed an operation to annex the Crimean Peninsula illegally. Allies have condemned this action ever since, highlighting Russia's direct violation of Ukrainian sovereignty in contravention of its 1994 Budapest memorandum obligations and the central tenets of the UN Charter.¹ For the first time since World War II, a European country annexed part of a neighbour's territory by force.

7. In parallel, in the spring of 2014, Russia fueled an insurgency in eastern Ukraine via financial and military support to armed formations in the Donbas and Luhansk regions. In 2015, the Minsk agreements – signed by Russia and Ukraine, as well as France and Germany – put into place a ceasefire provision between the Ukrainian armed forces and the Russian-backed armed formations. Not long after its implementation, consistent violations of the ceasefire, mainly by Russian proxies, settled Ukraine's east into an uncomfortable ebb and flow of low-intensity conflict, consistently shattering attempts to establish peace and the way forward to a negotiated settlement.

8. In 2018, Russia severely and illegally restricted freedom of navigation in the Sea of Azov by building the Kerch bridge connecting Crimea with Russia's Krasnodar region, violating the international law of the sea, as well as the 2003 Russia-Ukraine treaty which provides for freedom of navigation in the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov. Russia's illegal control of the peninsula provided it with significant power projection capabilities in the Black Sea region and beyond.

B. RUSSIA'S MILITARY BUILD-UP AND ESCALATION IN 2021–2022

9. From March to April 2021, Russia built up a sizeable contingent of combat-ready forces – more than 100,000 – on the borders of Ukraine and in the illegally occupied Crimea. Though Russia declared its intention to withdraw, significant amounts of military equipment remained near the Ukrainian border by the time the US and Russian presidents met in Geneva on 16 June 2021 to discuss strategic stability issues. A month after the meeting, Putin published a lengthy article "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians" (Putin, 2021) in which he belittled Ukrainian national identity, asserting Ukraine can only exist in close partnership with Russia, and presented a series of thinly disguised territorial claims (Dickinson, 2021).

10. By November 2021, Russia once again amassed troops and equipment – including main battle tanks, attack aircraft, electronic warfare assets and multiple launch rocket systems – along its border with Ukraine. In January and early February 2022, Russia also moved troops to Belarus under the pretext of joint drills with Belarusian armed forces and dispatched warships from its Baltic and Northern fleets to the Black Sea. Experts noted that the build-up differed from the previous one in important ways, including the stockpiling of blood for the wounded and partially mobilising Russia's national guard, presumably for maintaining order in the newly occupied territories, as well as the inclusion of units from all five military districts (Amiel, 2021).

1 Just after the illegal annexation of Crimea, Russian authorities began to commit well-documented human rights violations on the peninsula (US Department of State, 2019).

11. The United States began issuing warnings that Russia may have been weighing a potential invasion of Ukraine as early as November 2021 (Nardelli and al, 2021). By February 2022, Washington announced the invasion was imminent and urged, on 11 February, all American citizens to leave Ukraine (Borger and Sabbagh, 2022). By February, the number of Russian troops had increased to roughly 190,000 (Reuters (b), 2022), and the media published potential attack plans on Ukraine from the east (Russia), the north (Belarus) and the south (illegally-occupied Crimea) (Jones, 2022). Throughout, the Russian leadership vehemently denied any intention to invade Ukraine and ridiculed such claims as “hysteria” and “absurdity” (Associated Press, 2022).

12. In late 2021, Western leaders reached out to Moscow to understand Russia’s intentions. In December, Moscow unveiled a list of demands, including guarantees that Ukraine and Georgia would never join NATO and that the Alliance roll back its military posture to pre-1997 levels (Pifer, 2021). NATO Allies viewed these proposals as non-starters: at the extraordinary meeting of the NATO-Russia Council on 12 January, Allies were united in their commitment to Article 10 of the Washington Treaty which stipulates that any European nation meeting the criteria may apply to join NATO (NATO, 2022(a)). Allies also firmly rejected one-sided demands by Russia aiming to restrict NATO’s ability to defend and protect all Allies. As the NATO Secretary General stressed, “We cannot end up in a situation where we have kind of second-class NATO members, where NATO as an Alliance is not allowed to protect them in the same way as we protect the other Allies” (NATO, 2022(b)). A similar message was delivered to the Russian Federation at the bilateral US-Russia Strategic Stability Dialogue in Geneva and the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in the same week (RFERL, 2022(a), (b)). That said, the Alliance signaled its readiness to intensify dialogue on a range of issues, including arms control and transparency of military exercises (NATO, 2022(a)). Allies also issued multiple warnings that an invasion of Ukraine would result in devastating sanctions that would cripple the Russian economy (Neo and Clark, 2022).

13. The obvious unacceptability of Russian proposals raised concerns that Moscow was deliberately seeking their rejection to create a *casus belli* to invade Ukraine. In parallel, Moscow engaged in coalition building, via more frequent political and military contacts with Minsk and issuing a milestone joint statement with Xi Jinping at the start of Winter Olympics, in which China publicly subscribed to Russia’s long-standing criticism of NATO enlargement (Dou, 2022). On 21 February, Putin signed a document recognising the so-called republics in the Ukrainian Donbas. On 24 February, Russian forces began a full-scale invasion of Ukraine along four principal axes – President Putin called it a “special military operation”.

C. UKRAINE AND ALLIED PRE-WAR SECURITY COOPERATION: CREATING A CAPABLE, MODERN UKRAINIAN DEFENSE FORCE

14. The Ukrainian forces defending their nation against Russia’s full-scale invasion in 2022 were a far cry from those faced with Russia’s operation to annex Crimea in early 2014. Allies significantly ramped up financial, military and other advisory assistance to Ukraine after Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea and its support to armed formations in its eastern regions created an ongoing low-intensity conflict in the Donbas. By 2016, Allies established 16 different capacity-building programmes and Trust Funds to support Ukraine’s efforts to align their security and defence sector reforms to NATO standards – most notably the 2016 Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP). Ukraine also committed to the modernisation of its military along NATO standards, including the reform of its command-and-control elements. Allies granted Ukraine Enhanced Opportunity Partner status in June 2020, providing Ukraine preferred access to NATO’s exercises and exchange of information. The reform of the Ukrainian military was ongoing at the start of Russia’s 2022 invasion.

15. At least 10,000 Ukrainian troops were involved annually in NATO-led training and exercising between 2014–2022, helping instill a more modern approach to warfare and armed force

organisation.² From 2014 to January 2022, the United States committed more than USD 4 billion in security assistance "to help Ukraine preserve its territorial integrity, secure its borders, and improve interoperability with NATO" (Arabia et al., 2022). Other Allies, such as the UK, Poland and Türkiye also steadily increased their military support to assist with Ukraine's force modernisation efforts.

16. As a result, Ukraine increased its combat-ready forces from about 6,000 to nearly 150,000, while modernising its tanks, armored vehicles and artillery systems. NATO instructors, in Ukraine and across the Alliance, helped Ukrainian officers and soldiers to unlearn Soviet tactics and strategy that are predictable for Moscow (Seibt, 2022). The eight-year experience of countering Russian proxies in Donbas also helped to harden the Ukrainian military and identify talent among officers.

17. Allied efforts to bolster Ukrainian cyber defenses are also noteworthy. Two of NATO's post-2014 Trust Fund projects, the C4 and Cyber Defence Trust Funds, worked to bolster Ukrainian cyber resilience across all sectors, with a focus on the Ukrainian armed forces. In June 2017, a large-scale Russian cyber-attack against Ukraine prompted Allies to surge more support to protect Ukraine's computer networks. Financial and technical support from the United States and NATO Allies sought to plug remaining vulnerabilities against persistent sophisticated Russian attacks (Halpern, 2022).

Critical Pre-invasion support

18. In January 2022, the United States authorised Third Party Transfers from 14 NATO Allies and partners to send US-origin equipment to Ukraine, permitting, for example, the Baltic States to ship Javelin and Stinger missiles (Kaitseministeerium, 2022). Following suit, many NATO Allies³ stepped up to deliver helicopters, air defence systems, artillery ammunition, anti-armor systems and drones, among other items, to bolster Ukraine's defence capabilities. Critical cyber assistance also continued up to the invasion: as cyber-attacks struck Ukrainian government websites in January in parallel to the troop build-up along Ukraine's borders, NATO Allies gave Ukraine access to the Alliance's malware information-sharing platform.⁴ All these crucial pre-invasion deliveries were vital to the successful defence of Kyiv by Ukrainian forces during the war's first phase.

19. In the months prior to the invasion, the Biden administration also took the risky step to disclose intelligence about Russia's imminent invasion openly. This proved instrumental in taking away Russia's element of surprise, complicating Moscow's plans for "false flag" operations and mobilising the Euro-Atlantic community (Barnes and Sanger, 2022). Allies repeatedly warned Russia that invading Ukraine would result in devastating consequences, including severe economic sanctions and political isolation.

² Despite the ongoing conflict in its eastern regions, Ukraine remained a valuable security provider, contributing to the NATO Response Force, as well as several NATO-led operations, including in Kosovo, Afghanistan and the Mediterranean.

³ In addition to the United States, significant pre-invasion bi-lateral military support came from Poland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Canada.

⁴ Public-private sector cyber cooperation also proved essential to Ukraine's cyber defence efforts. Just prior to the invasion, Microsoft's Threat Intelligence Center detected Russian-directed 'wiper' malware targeting Ukrainian ministries and financial institutions. The malware was quickly taken apart, named ("FoxBlade"), and the information on how to patch against it passed to Ukraine's cyber defense authorities (Sanger, et al, 2022).

III- CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW AND THE PARALLEL ALLIED AND PARTNER SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE'S DEFENSE OPERATIONS

20. At the time of updating this report, Russia's invasion of Ukraine can be broken down into four broad phases: **Phase 1** (24 February–25 March 2022) – Russia's full-scale invasion to conquer Ukraine and replace its government; **Phase 2** (25 March–29 August 2022) – Russia's defeat outside of Kyiv and subsequent focus on eastern and southern Ukraine; and, **Phase 3** (29 August to the end of November 2022) Ukraine undertakes large-scale counter-offensives in the Kherson region and the Kharkiv region forcing Russia into retreat along multiple eastern and southern fronts. While Russia controlled the pace and direction of the war for the first two phases, Ukraine upended these dynamics by the third phase of the war. Upon Russia's completion of its mobilisation of an additional 300,000 troops, the war returned to a relative stalemate with positional warfare along the eastern lines of the conflict encapsulated by the over a yearlong battle for Bakhmut (**Phase 4** – December 2022 to present).

A. RUSSIA'S WAR IN UKRAINE: PHASE 1 (24 FEBRUARY–25 MARCH 2022): CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

21. Russia's invasion of Ukraine never had clear political goals, as statements from President Putin and various government officials were always either conflicting or unclear. Russia's armed forces' terrible performance in Phase 1 clearly demonstrated this policy-strategy mismatch. The Russian military began operations with a three-pronged attack from the north, the east and the south, while using cruise and ballistic missiles to strike sites across all of Ukraine's territory. This suggests Russia was trying to achieve several political goals at once; ranging from regime change in Kyiv to territorial acquisition in the east and the creation of land corridors to Crimea and Transnistria.⁵ Russian leadership likely hoped a limited number of missile, air and artillery strikes, coupled with the threat of approaching massive Russian military convoys, would paralyse Ukraine's ability to resist and either cause Kyiv to fall, or the government to flee.

22. Russia attempted to achieve these goals with a relatively small military force for the size of the target: Ukraine is the largest European country in terms of land mass, with a population of 44 million. In total, Russia amassed about 100 battalion tactical groups (approximately 1,000 soldiers each) along Ukraine's borders to the north, east and south – including Belarus' border north of Kyiv. The initial invading force represented about 65 percent of Russia's entire ground combat strength (Wheeler, 2022). Another approximately 90,000 can be added to account for the ranks of the Russia-backed militias in the Donbas, and the *Rosgvardiya* forces to hold territory behind the advancing ground forces (Cancian, 2022). After the Russian forces' early stall, reinforcements were called in, as well as mercenaries from Syria, Chechnya and the Wagner Group (Schmitt et al., 2022).

23. Russia's deficient planning and military forces showed quickly. Initial missile and air strikes did not have the desired effect. Insufficient attention to developing manoeuvre warfare capabilities resulted in large Russian columns paralysed by mechanical breakdowns, supply problems and dysfunctional command and control (BBC News, 2022b). Russian forces lacked a single operational commander and Russian units attacked along four principal axes with poor combat support and badly coordinated joint operations. Military analysts note Russia's military modernisation efforts lacked sufficient investment in maintenance and repair, resulting in Ukrainian roadways being littered with abandoned Russian military hardware (Chotiner, 2022). Further, the quality of equipment was undercut by pervasive corruption in the Russian defence procurement sector (Jackson, 2022). Most

⁵ In parallel, it was also likely hoped these campaigns would unleash a disruptive refugee flow into Western Europe and intimidate the Ukrainian population on the western side of the Dnieper River.

Russian soldiers, reportedly unaware of the invasion until the last moment and unprepared for the fight, began to refuse orders and sabotage their own equipment (McLeary & Brown, 2022; GCHQ, 2022). Russian forces' declining morale had a significant impact on effective maneuvering.

24. In contrast, Ukrainians' resolve to defend their homeland proved strong and the state resilient. Russian forces' progress stalled quickly in the face of stiff Ukrainian resistance and occasional counter-offensives. The Ukrainians exploited the defender's advantage in urban terrain and attacked and ambushed Russia's convoys over extended supply lines (Chotiner, 2022). Heavy urban fighting enveloped Kharkiv and Mariupol.

25. NATO estimated that between 7,000–15,000 were killed in the first month of fighting; the total taken off the battlefield from injury, being taken prisoner, or going missing rose to 40,000 (Michaels, 2022). Russia likely lost 25 percent of its initial invading force in Phase 1, including a significant percentage of senior officers (Tobias, 2022). Though Russia failed to take Kyiv, it did manage to expand its control to approximately 20 percent of Ukrainian territory, including capturing a regional capital (Kherson) and establishing a strategically critical land bridge to Crimea (Croker et al., 2022).

B. RUSSIA'S WAR IN UKRAINE: PHASE 1 (24 FEBRUARY–25 MARCH 2022): EVOLUTION OF ALLIED MILITARY SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE'S DEFENCE

26. The NATO Alliance has made it clear it does not seek a wider war with Russia. Allies, however, are steadfast in their support of Ukraine's fundamental right to defend itself, as enshrined in the UN Charter (NATO, 2022(f)). Since the beginning of the war, almost 50 NATO Allies and partners have contributed to Ukraine's defensive efforts (Gedeon, 2022; Overton et al., 2022; Ismay & Jakes, 2022). NATO Allies' and partners' years of financial, military and advisory support, in addition to the surge of military, economic and humanitarian aid post Russia's invasion are proving to be critical to Ukraine's unexpectedly strong resistance and counter-offensives.

27. Key first responders in February were the US, France, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Estonia and Germany (26 Feb), and Sweden, Norway, Greece, the Czech Republic, Spain, Portugal and Romania (27 Feb). The United States authorised an immediate USD 350 million in security assistance on 25 February. Several Allies relaxed export control policies: Germany authorised Estonia and the Netherlands to transfer their German-made howitzers and grenade launchers and sent Panzerfaust 3 anti-tank grenade launchers and surface-to-air missiles. Norway transferred 2,000 M72 anti-tank weapons with other equipment (Government of Norway, 2022).

28. Throughout March, Allies and partners increased their support to Ukraine. The United States approved a massive USD 13.6 billion in emergency humanitarian and military aid on 10 March (Snell, 2022). The EU approved an additional EUR 1 billion to support the Ukrainian armed forces with defence materiel to first aid kits and fuel via the European Peace Facility (EPF)⁶ (DW, 2022). To coordinate the expanding flow of military and humanitarian support, US European Command Headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany assembled a group of US personnel and a rotating crew of multinational partners to assist with matching supply and demand (Machi, 2022).

⁶ Established in March 2021, the EPF is an off-budget funding mechanism for EU actions with military and defense implications under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

C. RUSSIA'S WAR IN UKRAINE: PHASE TWO (25 MARCH–29 AUGUST 2022): CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

29. In an admission of defeat in achieving its original principal goal of regime change, Moscow declared on 25 March it was withdrawing its forces from around Kyiv and Chernihiv in the north to concentrate its war focus in eastern and southern Ukraine. In the wake of Russia's withdrawal, shocking revelations of atrocities against innocent Ukrainian civilians emerged in early April. In the first of what would become a series of highly symbolic and strategic blows to Russia, Ukrainian forces sank the Moskva, the flagship of the Russian Black Sea fleet on April 14, Russia's biggest naval loss since WWII (*Economist*, 2022(c)). In response, Russia moved its fleet back from Ukraine's coastline, effectively ending its efforts to seize Ukraine's Black Sea coastline.

30. The conflict shifted decidedly to the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine in May, with Russia making slow but steady territorial gains and, with it, the seizure of key cities and logistical nodes necessary to secure control of the entire Donbas region, now the principal war aim of Russian President Putin. The Russian campaign amplified and crept forward behind curtains of heavy artillery fire, leaving a path of destruction. The tragic siege and eventual fall of Mariupol is emblematic of this effort; it lasted almost three months, resulted in the city's near total destruction and likely left over 20,000 innocent civilians dead (Cookman & Gittleson, 2022; Schwirtz, 2022).

31. By June, the war was clearly a grinding war of attrition, with any potential breakthrough dependent upon the ability to resupply equipment and manpower. Artillery exchanges between both sides ramped up significantly. The Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar estimated Russia to be firing six times as many shells as Ukrainian forces along the over 1,000 km-long frontlines – at times reaching as many as 60,000 per day (Khurshudyan & Sonne, 2022). More conservative estimates note Russia was firing from 7,500 to 20,000 152-mm shells per day to Ukraine's approximately 4,000 to 6,000 (Vershinin, 2022; Watling & Reynolds, 2022). Even at the low end, the conflict's consumption of weaponry was at a scale and rate destined to challenge the industrial production capabilities of either side (Vershinin, 2022; Watling & Reynolds, 2022).

32. Ukrainian forces recaptured the strategically important Snake Island at the end of June. The island is only 45 km from Romania and would have been critical to any Russian campaign to control all of Ukraine's Black Sea coast. The recapture of Snake Island essentially put such a campaign out of reach for Russia's forces without significant resupply of men and equipment to the region, which, it became increasingly evident, could not be spared. Importantly, in June, Ukraine also received its first shipment of M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS). Each system carries a pod of six GPS-guided missiles accurate to 70–84 km. This extended Ukrainian forces' precision-strike ability significantly (*The Economist*, 2022(d)). Reports at the time noted that both Germany and the United Kingdom would send along the M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), which is the predecessor to HIMARS, but fires the same missiles (*Economist*, 2022(d)).

33. The extended reach from NATO standard weapons allowed Ukraine to begin to target Russia's ability to prosecute its war in two key ways: via the destruction of ammunition depots in Ukraine and the rail lines Russian forces depend upon so much for the bulk of their logistical supplies; and, by the steady elimination of Russian command posts and, as a result, leadership. Both had a significant impact on Russia's military performance. Russia's gains declined significantly in pace and volume after it managed to wrest complete control of Severodonetsk in the Luhansk province at the end of June. In July, Ukraine began a limited counter-offensive against Russian occupation lines in the south. As noted above, however, Russia's military capacity was being steadily degraded by the precision-strike capabilities of Ukrainian forces as more advanced artillery systems flowed into Ukraine. The war was at a relative stalemate.

34. By 8 August, the US Defense Department estimated total Russian troop casualties (dead and wounded) to be between 70,000 and 80,000 (of which approximately 20,000 killed), with new casualties rising up to 500 per day (Cooper, 2022). In parallel, the Ukrainian government stated that between 100–200 of its soldiers were being killed a day, with a total of approximately 9,000 dead according to General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, Commander in Chief of the Ukrainian armed forces (Cooper, 2022; Axe, 2022). The UN estimated 13 million Ukrainians had been displaced by the war; nearly 6.7 million of whom as refugees across Europe. In addition, experts estimated USD 113.5 billion of damage done to the country (Interfax, 2022)

D. RUSSIA’S WAR IN UKRAINE: PHASE TWO (25 MARCH–29 AUGUST 2022): EVOLUTION OF ALLIED MILITARY SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE’S DEFENCE

35. In response, Allies pledged to ramp up their support even further and called for international war crimes investigations. At its 2022 Spring Session in Vilnius, the NATO PA adopted a declaration named [Standing with Ukraine](#), calling for a special ad hoc international criminal tribunal to investigate and prosecute the crime of aggression against Ukraine, thereby holding the Russian Federation accountable under international law – it also called for member state governments and parliaments to continue “building a strong coalition to support Ukraine with all possible assistance[...].”

36. Allies increased the flow of Soviet-era and modern defensive weapons systems into Ukraine in April: Washington added USD 300 million in security assistance – including switchblade drones – and another USD 100 million for anti-armor systems. Germany approved the delivery of 56 Pbv-501 infantry fighting vehicles and Slovakia sent an S-300 system to bolster Ukraine’s longer-range air defenses (Overton et al., 2022; Higgins, 2022). NATO Allies also committed to increase cyber security assistance and protection against Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) threats (NATO, 2022(g)). France sent CAESAR gun-howitzers and optronic systems.

37. As experts note, the drive to supply the Soviet-era kit upon which Ukrainian forces depended soon began to flush out all remaining stocks from NATO Allies who had been in the Eastern bloc (Horton, et al., 2022). This signaled two major shifts for Allies. First, as the flow of military aid to Ukraine switched to NATO standard equipment, increased training would be required. Second, Allies finally had an opportunity to abandon the last Soviet-era legacy equipment and look internally among the Alliance’s defence industrial base for resupply, and, by extension, further streamlining future Allied interoperability (Gould & Sprenger, 2022).

38. Several Allies sought to establish training programmes. Among the more visible has been the UK-led *Operation Interflex* which trained 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers in 2022 and is on pace to reach 20,000 in 2023 (NATO PA, 2023). Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Sweden contribute trainers to the mission (Gallardo & Caulcutt, 2022). The United States’ training mission in Ukraine, in place in Yavoriv since Russia’s 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea, relocated to Grafenwoehr, Germany after Russia’s invasion and has subsequently expanded and is supported by a large group of multinational trainers (Polyakova & Timtchenko, 2022).

39. By the end of April, the United States announced it would host talks on a (roughly) monthly basis with Allies and partners to coordinate efforts to bolster Ukraine’s defence capabilities: this resulted in the creation of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group. The initial meeting included all NATO and EU member states and many partners such as Israel, Australia, Kenya and Tunisia, with Japan and South Korea attending virtually (Brzozowski, 2022). The Ukraine Defense Contact Group coordinates security assistance to meet Ukraine’s immediate and over-the-horizon security battlefield needs. The group has met every month since its inaugural meeting.

40. In quick succession from 23 June to 30 June, the EU, G7 and NATO all held summits that produced substantial outcomes in support of Ukraine’s fight for freedom. The EU awarded Ukraine

candidate status and confirmed their commitment to increased military and financial assistance to Ukraine, immediately and over-the-horizon (Drachenberg, 2022). At the G7 Summit, leaders reaffirmed and pledged to strengthen sanctions against Russia. They also agreed to impose a price cap on Russian oil on the global market, to reduce Russian revenues, thereby limiting its ability to continue funding its war, but to also curb Russia's ability to use oil as a means of economic coercion (G7b, 2022). At the NATO Madrid Summit, Allies reconfirmed strong support for Ukraine's defence⁷; and, to push back against Russian aggression, agreed to set an adaptation agenda to meet the challenges of the next decade and beyond, encapsulated in the Strategic Concept.⁸

41. On 22 July, Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement to restart grain shipments blocked in Odessa and two other ports by the Russian navy since the start of the war. The loss of Ukrainian grain⁹ on global markets had an immediate impact on global food stock and prices and threatened real crises in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. In response to international pressure, and via Turkish leadership under UN auspices, Russia agreed to a negotiated agreement to allow Ukraine to ship limited amounts of grain to help ease the gathering food crisis. The initial deal was for 120 days and operated under the assumption it would be reviewed and renewed, if both parties agreed, every 60 days (Goncharenko, 2023; United Nations 2022).

E. RUSSIA'S WAR IN UKRAINE: PHASE THREE (29 AUGUST–DECEMBER 2022): CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

42. On 29 August, Ukrainian forces broke through Russia's first line of defence outside of Kherson city, which was the first major city to fall to Russia's February offensive. Ukrainian forces opened another front in Kharkiv based on surprise and speed on 5 September. These breakthroughs changed the fundamental dynamics of the war in Phase 3 – Ukraine gained the advantage of controlling the pace and direction of the war, convincingly putting Russia on the backfoot for the first time.

43. In one week, Ukrainian forces gained more ground in their Kharkiv region counter-offensive than Russia had in the previous five months (Levitt & Lu, 2022). In parallel, the campaign in Kherson also continued to grind against Russian forces in the south, pinning down essential Russian military resources (Kramer, et al., 2022). Russian forces in the north retreated from the Ukrainian advance so quickly that they abandoned massive amounts of ammunition and combat-ready equipment.¹⁰ Several conclusions can be drawn from Ukraine's Phase 3 counter-offensive. First, barring a dramatic turnaround, Russia's goal to expand west of the Dnieper River is likely unachievable. Second, and related to the first, Russia is no longer capable of cutting off Ukraine from the Black Sea, as it simply no longer has the available resources. Third, Russia's force generation along two principal axes, manpower and equipment/ammunition resupply, faces significant challenges. The

⁷ Allies also agreed at the Madrid Summit to increase NATO's direct support for Ukraine via the Comprehensive Assistance Package. As Allies note in the summit declaration, this increased direct NATO assistance to Ukraine will work to speed up the flow of "non-lethal defense equipment, improve Ukraine's cyber defenses and resilience" among other support to help strengthen long-term interoperability. Allies also committed to assist Ukraine with its eventual "post-war reconstruction and reforms" (NATO, 2022(i)).

⁸ The DSC General Report, [Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: Implications for Allied Collective Defence and the Imperatives of the New Strategic Concept](#), discusses the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine on the decisions Allies took to adapt their deterrence and defense posture at the Madrid Summit.

⁹ Prior to the war, Ukraine ranked among the top global exporters of wheat, barley, maize, rape and sunflower seed and oil, the vast majority of these flowed through Ukraine's Black Sea ports.

¹⁰ Ukrainian forces stated they had recovered two brigades' worth of equipment in less than a week (Jones & McCabe, 2022).

third challenge undermines Russia's ability to accomplish what President Putin stated as the main goal of the war on 16 September: "The liberation of the entire territory of Donbas" (Reuters (c), 2022).

44. Recognising this key issue, on 21 September, Vladimir Putin announced "a partial" mobilisation to bolster Russian forces. Putin did not specify the number to be levied, but in an interview just after, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said 300,000 – experts later noted this was likely inaccurate and an attempt to hide the numbers Russia was seeking (Sauer, 2022; Kofman, 2022). Russia forced newly mobilised and under-trained forces to plug the gaps left by the significant depletion of their forces during the summer's heavy fighting.

45. Russia's force-regeneration challenge - the resupply of equipment and ammunition - began to show the effects of the wide range of sanctions on Russia. The multi-layered sanctions restricted Russia's access to the advanced goods, technology and services crucial to Russia's defense industrial base (U.S. Treasury, et al., 2022). Most significantly, imports of semiconductors, essential to all modern weaponry platforms, had dropped by approximately 70 percent (US Treasury et al., 2022). When coupled with the fire rate, Russia's equipment was breaking down quickly with no replacement parts and a dwindling supply of ammunition. As US government experts noted, "Russia's hypersonic ballistic missile production has nearly ceased" and the Russian military was "cannibalizing chips from dishwashers and refrigerators to fix their military hardware" (US Treasury, et al., 2022). Reports soon surfaced Russia was being forced to look to North Korea and Iran for supplies and equipment (Barnes, 2022).

46. Also in his speech, President Putin noted his intention to secure Russia's hold on the eastern Ukrainian territories under Russian occupation by supporting referenda in Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia and Kherson; a euphemism for his intention to annex the territories into Russia (Putin, 2022). Putin also made renewed explicit nuclear threats to Allies during the speech. This made it clear Putin viewed attacks on the annexed territories as an attack on Russia itself, which could constitute a threat to its territorial integrity. In swift order, the Russian-backed administrations held sham referenda, and, by 5 October, President Putin signed the legislation annexing Ukraine's four provinces into Russia – none of which was under Russian full control at the time (Troianovski, 2022; *Economist*, 2022(f)). In a sign of the continued policy-strategy mismatch coming out of Moscow, however, confusion soon arose about where the new Russian administrative boundaries were (*Economist*, 2022(f)). The results of the so-called referenda were almost universally condemned.¹¹

47. On 8 October, a large explosion struck the Kerch Bridge, the only bridge connecting Crimea to mainland Russia and the centerpiece of President Putin's efforts to cement Russia's control of Crimea after illegally annexing the territory in 2014. The most significant damage was to one of its high-capacity rail lines; the bridge holds the only high-capacity rail link supplying Russian forces in southern Ukraine, only one other single-track link exits near Melitopol. The Ukrainian government, though applauding the act, did not take credit for it (Kramer & Schwirtz, 2022). In response, Russia launched a two-day barrage of cruise and ballistic missiles at civilian targets, killing at least 26 and injuring over 100 (*Economist*, 2022(g)). The attacks resumed the next week, targeting critical infrastructure. A full one-third of Ukraine's working power plants were damaged after the start of the 10 October missile barrages, as well as a significant portion of the country's civilian water infrastructure (Euractiv w/Reuters, 2022). These attacks attempted to degrade living conditions to

¹¹ NATO Allies vowed to never recognise their results; the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's President, Gerald E. Connolly, issued a strong rebuke of the "illegal and illegitimate" process and denounced the act as "dangerous escalation" (NATO, 2022j; NATO PA, 2022). On 12 October, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution condemning Moscow's illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory, with 143 of the 193 member states voting in favour and only five voting against – Russia and its allies in Belarus, North Korea, Syria, and Nicaragua (BBC, 2022(c)).

demoralise the Ukrainian population. Experts believe these strikes demonstrated that Russia is running low on precision-guided weaponry, as, for example, Russia began repurposing anti-aircraft and ship missiles to hit ground targets; reports also indicated the S-300 air defence system being used as a surface-to-surface missile (Jakes, 2022; Euractiv w/Reuters, 2022). Russia also increased its use of Iranian-made strike drones (Adams & Thomas, 2022).

48. By the beginning of November, the Kherson offensive, launched just prior to the Kharkiv breakout, had put too much pressure on Russian supply lines to sustain their positions. Russia announced a force withdrawal on 9 November. Russia's commander in Ukraine at the time, Sergei Surovikin, admitted it was no longer possible to continue to supply his forces in the city (Fiedler & Kuznetsov, 2022). Ukrainian troops had liberated the only regional capital Russian forces had occupied since the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

F. PHASE FOUR (DECEMBER 2022–PRESENT): POSITIONAL WARFARE, THE BATTLE FOR BAKHMUT AND DUELING OFFENSIVES

49. Over the first five months of **Phase 4**, Russia attempted offensives at several areas along the eastern and southern lines. In January and February 2023, Russia intensified its offensive operations, likely in the attempt to claim some form of strategic victory for President Putin prior to the anniversary marker of the war, but these proved relatively lacklustre and petered out over the spring – the only exception being the battle for Bakhmut, which has lasted well over a year at the time of the update.

50. Beginning in August 2022, Russian forces began to focus the brunt of their attacking energy on Bakhmut. Bakhmut serves as the southern anchor point of a Ukrainian defensive line, the control of which would expose the larger cities of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk to Russian assault (*Economist*, 2022(i)). Wagner mercenaries led the offensive, and were supported by Russian air power, artillery, and infantry, their positions were reinforced by more seasoned forces after the withdrawal from Kherson (*Economist*, 2022(i)). Wagner forces have remained in the lead throughout the offensive.

51. The battle for Bakhmut has been an extremely high-intensity fight over a small city¹² with relatively little strategic value, which itself has declined over the months of fighting (Ourdan, 2023). As the battle dragged on over the winter and into the spring, however, it gained outsized symbolic significance on both sides. For Russia, continuing the siege is a sign of the desperation to achieve a single strategic victory, after over a year of almost total strategic failure – a victory in Bakhmut may bolster Russian forces' very low morale. In parallel, Ukrainian forces continued their defence for months into the spring to deny Russia any form of strategic or symbolic victory. In addition, over much of the battle, Ukrainian forces viewed Bakhmut as a key area to inflict devastating losses on Russian forces – over the winter, NATO military officials put the kill ratio at five-to-one in favour of the Ukrainians, while the Ukrainians claimed it was an even higher seven-to-one ratio (Dettmer and Melkozerova, 2023). Into the spring, however, experts believed the attrition ratio had drawn even and the continued defence of Bakhmut was no longer in the long-term strategic interest of Ukraine (Lee, 2023).

52. Over the many months of intense fighting for control of Bakhmut, reports indicated that Russia suffered at least 100,000 Russian casualties (and approximately 20,000 fatalities) (Kanno-Youngs, 2023). About half the fatalities were from the Wagner Group (Kanno-Youngs, 2023). Accurate information on Ukrainian casualties is not being reported. Russia's loss of equipment and manpower

12 Bakhmut had a pre-war population of 70,000.

in Phase 4 has been very high, for relatively little gain. By July 2023, the head of the UK's armed forces estimated Russia had lost half of its total combat power (Rathbone, 2023). Experts believe that the size and scope of Russian losses in manpower and equipment over the course of the battle for Bakhmut has significantly deteriorated their ability for any further offensives without a new round of force conscription and the time necessary to reconstitute their force structure (Cotovio, 2023).¹³

G. UKRAINE'S 2023 COUNTEROFFENSIVE: 'STARVE, STRETCH AND STRIKE'

53. Ukraine began its counteroffensive in the second week of June 2023. The campaign has since evolved into two phases. The first phase, from approximately the second week of June until the end of July, consisted of probing attacks via three principal axes of the nearly 1,000km-long front lines of contact with Russian forces. The second, ongoing as this update was written, has witnessed a major push south by Ukrainian forces in the direction of Melitopol and Berdyansk, cities that control Russia's 'land bridge' connecting the Russian mainland with Crimea (*Economist*, 2023(f)). Along the way, Ukraine's operational strategy has been described as 'starve, stretch, and strike' – meaning strikes on logistical hubs (starve); probing operations across multiple axes (stretch); and then drive hard into a Russian weakness to break through its defensive lines (Rathbone, 2023).

54. The first phase was almost immediately ensnared by Russia's massive defence lines, constructed with great intensity since the then-commander Surovikin ordered a strategic withdrawal from Kherson in early November 2022. Russia's defensive lines are many layers deep and protected by a forward positioned contact line (Van Brugen, 2023). The lines consist of miles-long formations of anti-vehicle traps (trenches), dug-in 'dragon's teeth' above-ground vehicle obstacles and pill boxes. Spread throughout, in significant concentrations of up to several per square metre, are an array of mines, creating vast, complicated minefields (Hernandez & Holder, 2022; Kramer, 2023). Ukrainian armed formations trying to advance into the lines were also held back by Russia's effective use of its Ka-52 'Alligator' attack helicopters, which have longer-range precision air-to-surface missile capabilities and drones to effectively force advancing Ukrainian armour to stand off (Hall & Olearchyk, 2023). Ukrainian forces attempted to leverage their long-range firepower advantage to sever Russian supply lines and destroy logistical hubs and command centres. Ukrainian forces' advances in the first phase were relatively minor, measured by small village captures and new efforts to weaken Russian control of Bakhmut. Losses in men and materiel were significant on both sides: outside of some early forays, Ukraine kept its Western-trained and equipped combat brigades out of the fight over the first phase.

55. Over the past month, Ukrainian forces appear to have shifted to a second phase of the offensive, committing more of their Western-trained and equipped forces. The Institute for the Study of War outlines in a report that Ukraine's attack axes continue around Bakhmut, an area bordering western Donetsk and eastern Zaporizhia, and further south in Western Zaporizhia (ISW, 2023(b)). As experts have noted, a concerted and successful "strike" by Ukrainian forces south toward Melitopol and Berdyansk would result in the largest strategic gains for Ukraine, as it would cut Russia's land bridge to Crimea and its ability to resource its forces in Zaporizhia, and put most of Crimea within artillery range (Kofman, 2023(b)). It appears Ukraine's forces have moved to strike in this direction with the capture of Robotyne, giving it the potential to push further south to both strategic cities (Kofman, 2023(b)).

56. Despite the significant international assistance backing Ukrainian forces, experts note this assistance remains insufficient to give Ukraine either overwhelming firepower or air superiority, both of which would be necessary to engage in high-mobility warfare (Freedman, 2023). As such, as

¹³ Russia fired over 10 million artillery shells in 2022, while it can only produce a million annually; it lost 2,500 tanks and can now only produce 200 new tanks a year (Rathbone, 2023).

experts stress, Ukraine's strategy of grinding down Russian forces via attritional campaigns will continue and plays to their strengths in the war as it is currently playing out (Kofman and Gady, 2023). The battlefield balance in terms of air superiority, however, looks set to change in the coming months, as both Denmark and the Netherlands look set to deliver a batch of long-awaited F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine; Denmark will deliver 19 and the Netherlands a still undetermined number (they have 42); Norway has also committed to delivering a number of the aircraft as well. F-16 deliveries will be paced by the arrival of these nations' ordered F-35 replacements (*Economist*, 2023(g)). The United States gave assurances to both nations on August 17 that it would approve the necessary transfer requests for the aircraft to go to Ukraine once the pilots completed their training – US President Biden endorsed training programmes for Ukrainian pilots in May (Holland & Ali, 2023).

57. In parallel with its probes and feints along the front lines, Ukraine has been launching increasingly sophisticated drone attacks. Ukraine's aerial drone attacks have been reaching as far as Moscow and are demonstrating increasing sophistication. At sea, Ukrainian naval drones have proven effective at challenging Russia's renewed escalation of the war on the Black Sea.

H. RUSSIA'S RENEWED BLOCKADE OF UKRAINE'S BLACK SEA EXPORTS: THE SUSPENSION OF THE BLACK SEA GRAIN INITIATIVE AND THE ESCALATION OF THE WAR ON THE BLACK SEA

58. As noted above, Russia bowed to international pressure and, driven by Turkish leadership under the auspices of the UN, accepted an agreement allowing Ukraine to export limited amounts of grain, related foodstuffs and fertilizers (including ammonia) from three ports – Odesa, Chornomorsk and Yuzhny (UN, 2022). The plan was linked to parallel Russian efforts to ensure its foodstuffs and fertilizers also reached global markets (UN, 2023(a)). Prior to Russia's 2022 invasion, agriculture accounted for more than 10 percent of Ukraine's GDP and 15 percent of total employment (*Economist*, 2023(b)).

59. As part of the agreement, the Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) was established to oversee compliance: headquartered in Russia, the JCC included representatives from Russia, Türkiye, Ukraine and the United Nations. Ships were guided into the international waters of the Black Sea to avoid heavily mined areas off the Ukrainian coast – JCC teams would subsequently inspect the ships for unauthorised cargo and personnel (UN, 2022). The Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) operated as designed for almost a year; being renewed consistently – first after 120 days, and then every 60 days.

60. On 17 July 2023, Russia announced its withdrawal from the BSGI. In parallel with its withdrawal, Russia reimposed its blockade of Ukrainian ports and began a series of high-intensity missile and drone strikes on Ukrainian Black Sea port infrastructure – the most significant on Odessa. On 19 July, Russia's Ministry of Defence announced that any ship bound for a Ukrainian port would be considered hostile and, therefore, a legitimate target (Bigg & Rennison, 2023). Russia's escalation of the war on Ukrainian ports and grain infrastructure caused an immediate spike in global wheat prices, which have remained volatile and high since, renewing international concerns about global food insecurity, particularly in Africa and the Middle East (Bigg & Rennison, 2023).

61. Prior to 2022, Ukraine exported approximately 45 million tons of grain annually; 90 percent via Odessa and other Black Sea ports. The grain deal allowed Ukraine to export 32.8 million tons via three Black Sea ports to 45 countries on three continents over the course of its almost one year of existence (UN, 2023(b)). As an additional release valve for its war-constrained agriculture sector, Ukraine increased the amount of grain shipped via its three principal ports on the Danube River. The Danube ports are linked by rail and road, but are, nonetheless limited in their capacity relative to the Black Sea port infrastructure. Still, while the Danube ports accounted for only 1.5 percent of

Ukraine's trade by volume prior to the war, this number grew to almost 20 percent by the summer of 2023 (*Economist*, 2023(c)).

62. Following its withdrawal from the grain deal, Russia has stepped up its drone and missile attacks across all major Ukrainian shipping ports on the Black Sea and along the Danube. These attacks have inflicted significant damage on Ukraine's agricultural export infrastructure and incinerated hundreds of thousands of tons of grain. Russia's missile and drone strikes on the Danube ports are often on the riverbank just opposite NATO Ally Romania, significantly upping the risk of a potential errant fire (Hopkins, 2023).

63. As Russia has sought to escalate the Black Sea theatre of the war, Ukrainian forces have manoeuvred to hold Russia's Black Sea fleet and infrastructure at risk. For example, on the same day Russia withdrew from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Ukrainian naval drones struck the Kerch bridge, the second successful strike on the bridge since the war's beginning (Bubalo & Goksedef, 2023). The Kerch bridge is a key symbol of the post-2014 connection between Russia and Crimea; it has also served as a major route for resupplying Russian forces occupying southern Ukraine. On 4 August, another large naval drone incapacitated a Russian Ropucha-class landing ship anchoring near Russia's major Black Sea naval and shipping port of Novorossiysk on the far-eastern shores of the Black Sea (Balmforth, 2023). The drone travelled an estimated 700km to reach its target, demonstrating the significantly expanded reach of Ukraine's maritime forces.

I. EVOLUTION OF ALLIED MILITARY SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE'S DEFENSE SINCE SEPTEMBER 2022

64. The changing momentum of the war galvanised international efforts to Ukraine press its newfound advantages. The Ukraine Defense Contact Group met on September 8 with 50 Allied and partner nations present, the largest assembled since its inception. US Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin noted "the group arrived with momentum and left with more momentum" and pledged to find "new and innovative ways to support the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian people as they defend their country, their lives and their freedom" (US DoD, 2022). In addition to new pledges for cannon and rocket artillery, artillery ammunition, and equipment for troop mobility, the group acknowledged the significant impact of other Allied initiatives, such as the UK training programme, and the coordinated efforts of Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia for "reinvigorating" their defence industrial bases to supply the Ukrainian military with ammunition, spare parts and other materiel support to Ukraine's counter-offensive (US DoD, 2022).

65. The Ukraine Defense Contact Group has since worked to sustain the long-term flow of arms into Ukraine (Insinna, 2022). Officials sought to identify gaps in Ukrainian weapons stockpiles and coordinate manufacturing effectively to fill them as quickly as possible (Ismay & Jakes, 2022).¹⁴ The group has focused on the provision of the entire range of equipment and ammunition needed to not only bolster Ukrainian forces' defence capabilities, but also future offensives to reclaim occupied territory. These include air defence systems, canon and rocket artillery (and their munitions), main battle tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, APCs, as well as training and other non-lethal support (BBC News, 2022(d)). The group also discussed Allied and partner plans to oversee and guarantee the security of supply for their own strategic stockpiles, given the high demand for supply of weaponry to Ukraine and the risk this may pose to them (BBC News, 2022(d)).

¹³ Key issues identified, for example, were production support for gun barrels, ball bearings, steel casings, as well as microchips needed to keep the Ukrainian forces mobile with effective firepower (Insinna, 2022).

66. The Group meets on a (roughly) monthly basis (14 times in total), the most recent meeting being on 18 July 2023, with participation growing to 54 Allies and partners. Successive rounds of meetings have produced tens of billions of pledged and delivered military assistance. These assistance packages include long-range artillery systems and ammunition, advanced air defence systems (including three Patriot systems donated by the US, Germany, and the Netherlands, SAMP/Ts from Italy and France, and National/Norwegian Advanced Surface to Air Missile Systems), MANPADs, APCs, IFVs, main battle tanks and lethal UAVs. As US Army General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated recently, the supplies and training over the last few months have allowed for Ukraine to train, man and equip up nine brigades of combined-arms armored and mechanised infantry-type forces, as well as multiple light infantry/ranger-type units (Foreign Affairs Podcast, 2023). These capabilities have guaranteed Ukraine's ability to both defend and attack, at the time and place of their choosing.

IV- PLEDGED ALLIED SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE AT THE VILNIUS SUMMIT: A ROADMAP FOR ENDURING SUPPORT

67. At the 11–12 July NATO Summit in Vilnius, Allies pledged “unwavering solidarity with the government and people of Ukraine in the heroic defence of their nation, their land, and our shared values” (NATO, 2023(b)). At the summit Allies pledged not only to “step up political and practical support to Ukraine”, but also to sustain this support for “as long as it takes” (NATO, 2023(b)). Allies outlined three principal elements of this increased level of support.

68. First, they **agreed to bypass the Membership Action Plan (MAP)** requirement, thereby facilitating Ukraine's future entry into the Alliance by making it a more simplified one-step process. As Allies noted in lifting the MAP requirement: “We reaffirm the commitment made at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Ukraine will become a member of NATO” (NATO, 2023(a)). Second, **Allies established the NATO-Ukraine Council**, which acts as a joint forum in which ‘Allies and Ukraine sit as equal members’ (NATO, 2023(b)). The council will serve as a key mechanism to enhance political dialogue, engagement, and cooperation as Ukraine continues to work to fulfill membership requirements. The NATO-Ukraine Council can also serve as an effective consultation body for crisis management. The Council's inaugural meeting was held in Vilnius and was chaired by the NATO Secretary General. Third, **Allies agreed to make NATO's Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) for Ukraine a multi-year programme** to assist Ukraine with critical non-lethal assistance as it engages in its self-defence efforts; these include medical supplies, fuel and demining equipment. At a July 18 meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, Secretary General Stoltenberg noted the enhanced and multi-year CAP effort would also assist with Allied and Ukrainian forces' interoperability, to include the adoption of NATO doctrine and standards, as well as the ongoing transition away from Soviet equipment.

A. G7 JOINT DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

69. On 12 July, the G7 leaders and President Zelenskyy signed a Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine.¹⁵ The Declaration launched negotiations to formalise support through “specific, bilateral, long-term security commitments and arrangements”. These commitments and arrangements have three aims:

¹⁵ The G7 consists of six Allies (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States), NATO partner Japan and the EU (a ‘non-enumerated’ member).

- i. **To ensure Ukraine has sustainable forces to defend itself now and deter any future Russian aggression** by providing security assistance and modern military equipment, supporting the defence industry, conducting training and exercises, increasing intelligence sharing and cooperation and aiding cyber, security and resilience efforts;
- ii. **To strengthen Ukraine's economic stability and resilience and enable future prosperity**, including through reconstruction and recovery efforts; and,
- iii. **To provide technical and financial support for urgent needs as well as Ukraine's reform agenda.**

70. In case of future Russian aggression, the G7 leaders noted their intention “to immediately consult with Ukraine” on appropriate steps, including the supply of “swift and sustained security assistance, modern military equipment [...], and economic assistance, to impose economic and other costs on Russia, and to consult with Ukraine on its needs”. The G7 countries would also work with the country “on an enhanced package of security commitments and arrangements in case of future aggression”.

71. In turn, Ukraine committed to “contributing positively to partner security and to strengthen transparency and accountability measures” on assistance it receives and to continue its wide-ranging reform agenda, including in the rule-of-law, defence and security sectors.

B. NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

72. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly established a cooperative partnership with Ukraine since its independence in 1991. The Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council (UNIC) has since become the visible and consistent manifestation of this partnership. In the wake of Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and instigating, organizing, and supporting armed uprisings in eastern Ukraine, the Assembly voted to expel Russia from the organisation. In parallel, the Assembly intensified its cooperation with Ukraine's parliament (Verkhovna Rada) via meetings, training programmes and high-level visits.

73. Since Russia's renewed, unprovoked and illegal full-scale invasion of February 2022, the Assembly has further increased its cooperative efforts and support. This includes regular UNIC and other meetings to continue dialogue with the Verkhovna Rada; mobilised support within Allied member state parliaments; dedicated reports, resolutions and public statements. The Assembly also created a special fund to assist with the continued functioning of the Verkhovna Rada. In February 2023, the NATO PA President travelled to Kyiv on the first presidential visit since the start of Russia's war in Ukraine.

V- MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE AND THE CHALLENGE TO ALLIES' DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE

74. Russia's invasion of Ukraine bears more similarities to the total, industrial warfare of World War I than other, more recent conflicts as it has bogged down into an industrial-style artillery war of attrition. As in all attritional warfare, both Russia and Ukraine are attempting to break the other's ability to reconstitute their military forces, both manpower and equipment, to achieve their objectives. From the outset of the war, these requirements have posed an existential threat to Ukraine, as most of its industrial factories were in eastern Ukraine, including areas Russia occupies, and the ones

located further west have been the target of Russian missile barrages since the invasion began. However, NATO Allies have stood behind Ukraine, understanding the global ramifications of a Russian victory, and have donated vast amounts of aid – including financial, political, diplomatic and humanitarian. But NATO Allies have also depleted their own weapons stockpiles to ensure Ukraine has the necessary armaments to combat Russia’s invasion and launch counter-offensives.

75. However, such transfers have revealed a strategic vulnerability within the NATO Alliance. The defence industrial bases of NATO countries – principally private companies producing military equipment – lack the capacity to increase production to both arm Ukraine and re-supply NATO stockpiles, leading to global shortages of weapons systems and the ammunition they require. For example, Ukraine currently fires between 5,000–6,000 artillery shells per day or 150,000–180,000 per month. At current production levels, the United States produces roughly that amount per year while Europe produces approximately 300,000 shells per year (*Economist*, 2023). The US plans to increase production of artillery shells, hoping to produce 240,000 per year by 2023 and 480,000 per year by 2025 (Cancian, 2023).

76. But, as experts note, increasing production is not that simple (Jones, 2023). The arms industry only produces what they project their clients – usually often only their domestic governments – will purchase. Until Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, this meant sustaining production capacity at levels required to replace what equipment was used during training. Yet, even after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, many military suppliers are not increasing, or have not yet increased, their production. Experts chalk this up to concerns within the industry that increased demand is only a product of Russia’s invasion and will disappear at the war’s conclusion (Cancian, 2023; Jones, 2023). If companies make long-term investments to increase their industrial capacity, and demand declines in the medium-term, they risk bankruptcy.

77. Therefore, to stimulate production, NATO Allies must commit to multi-year contracts for defensive systems to give the private sector the financial security it needs to invest in increasing its production potential. Even after these investments are made, increasing the production of military equipment will require increasing the production of input supplies. For artillery, this will largely focus on the machinery required to forge shell casings and make the required explosives (*Economist*, 2023). However, for more complex arms like the Javelin anti-tank system, which requires some 250 microprocessors, increasing production will be far more complex as it requires securing and improving sub-supply chains (Gould, 2022(a)). For instance, Lockheed Martin, which produces the Javelin, has had difficulty procuring the microprocessors from Intel, and rocket motors from other suppliers who reverted to supplying companies like Airbus and Boeing as air travel increases following the COVID-19 pandemic (Cameron, 2023).

78. Increased demand for military equipment, however, is beginning to create new sources of supply. Ukraine has begun to produce both 152-millimetre and 122-millimetre ammunition domestically and formerly closed production plants in other eastern European countries, like Bulgaria, are reopening (Helfrich, 2023; Gibbon-Neff et al., 2023). Yet, to address global ammunition shortages, NATO Allies will have to reinvest in their defence industrial bases likely through increased defence spending. Such policies are growing in popularity as NATO Allies contend with the new strategic environment described in the 2022 Strategic Concept which outlined a world of rising authoritarian powers challenging the rules-based international order to promote authoritarian forms of governance. For NATO Allies to defend the global order broadly, and Ukraine specifically, they will have to take the necessary steps increase their production of military equipment.

79. At the July summit in Vilnius, Allies took a major step in this direction by announcing the Defence Production Action Plan. Via the plan, Allies hope to further aggregate demand, encourage inter-Allied cooperation, streamline procurement processes, and encourage defence sector transparency (NATO, 2023(a)). By fostering a stronger and more resilient environment for

transatlantic trade and investment, Allies can work to invest in the new capabilities required by NATO's new baseline for defence and deterrence as announced in the 2022 Strategic Concept. This initiative will be underwritten by Allies' pledge in Vilnius to commit at least 2 percent of GDP in defence spending, of which 20 percent will be dedicated to new equipment purchases.

VI- EARLY LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF WARFARE

80. Russia's unjustified aggression against Ukraine has served as a critical wake-up call for the Alliance. The return of large-scale warfare to Europe has also provided vital insights into the conduct of modern and multi-domain warfare. While the *nature* of war remains brutal in its logic and execution, its *characteristics* are changing (Barrons, 2023). Amidst the tragedy and suffering that Vladimir Putin's decision to attack Ukraine has inflicted on the country and its people lies a unique opportunity to draw important lessons on modern war fighting which can and should be applied to future Allied force planning and construction.

A. THE ENDURING ROLE OF CONVENTIONAL HARD POWER

81. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has not demonstrated the total transformation of war that some futurists predicted and is a graphic illustration that hard kinetic power continues to play an important role in high-intensity and large-scale fighting over territory (Barrons, 2023). As described by Admiral Rob Bauer, Chair of the Military Committee, the war in Ukraine has "shown us that you have to be able to fight tomorrow's battles as well as yesterday's battles...today. Modern warfare is just as much about bits and bots as it is about mud and blood" (NATO, 2023).

82. While Russia has failed to achieve any of its military objectives and continues to sustain substantial losses of its heavy military equipment such as its main battle tanks, this can be explained at least in large part by poor planning and preparation of military operations and general dysfunction across the Russian Armed Forces (RAF) (Lee, 2022). Meanwhile, the impact of the delivery of modern heavy Western weapons to Ukraine was almost immediate. For example, Ukrainian forces effectively used their supply of Western artillery such as M142 HIMARS rocket launchers and AHS Krab howitzers to disrupt Russian logistics chains, halt Russia's advances, as well as mount counteroffensives against Russian-held positions to liberate occupied territory (Davydenko, et al., 2022). Supplied air defence has also been vital, preventing the RAF from imposing decisive results on the ground and protecting the sky above major Ukrainian cities.

83. As the war drags on, it has become clear Ukraine's capacity to carry on the fight can only be sustained via the continued military support, i.e., strategic depth, of Allies and their international partners. This includes more Western heavy weaponry and, crucially, ammunition. Ukraine's use of artillery shells is not excessive when compared with historical conflicts, but Allied stocks have been severely diminished (see below). As described by Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, "the current rate of Ukraine's ammunition expenditure is many times higher than our current rate of production". Years of austerity and incorrect predictions about the future characteristics of warfare have contributed to the hollowing out of Allied stockpiles since the Cold War (Watling, 2023).

B. EMERGING AND DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

84. Ongoing fighting in Ukraine has illustrated how military capabilities are increasingly dependent on intelligent, interconnected and digital networks. While hard power and military mass remain essential, Allies understand the growing near-peer technological advances by adversaries and are

investing more in the technological capabilities changing the character of warfare. Advanced cyber capabilities are critical and companies such as SpaceX and Palantir have kept Ukraine forces connected and capable of conducting intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) data collection. As such, it is no wonder cyber-attacks targeting government institutions and critical infrastructure are central to Russia's war strategy. Ukraine has managed to mitigate the impact of Russia's cyber campaigns through domestic resilience and the international cyber support highlighted above.

85. Driving a sea change in the character of war is the growing availability of large swaths of open-source intelligence (OSINT) provided by tools ranging from space and satellite imagery to civilian smartphones. OSINT has been crowdsourced with classified intelligence to empower Ukraine to cut through the fog of war and gain a tactical edge by more accurately viewing, tracking and locating enemy positions and troop movements (even at night) (Barrons, 2023). For example, Russia's invasion was monitored meticulously months before it began, courtesy of widely available space and satellite imagery, and this technology also provides key intelligence to Ukrainian forces with regards to post-strike damage assessment against enemy targets.

86. As satellite technology continues to develop, along with advances in artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics and machine learning, the speed at which an army detects, locates and strikes enemy targets will become even more crucial. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and guided munitions will therefore play an increasingly important role. As in other recent conflicts such as the Second Armenia-Azerbaijan War, drones have been used heavily for reconnaissance and close air support. Ukraine's success in deploying the Turkish-produced Bayraktar TB-2 drone, particularly in the early months following Russia's escalation of the conflict, illustrate this (Soylu, 2022). That said, drones alone cannot turn the tide of war as electronic warfare capabilities and air defenses keep pace with their development and act as countermeasures.

87. Through the adept use of technologies at its disposal, Ukraine has been able to carry out rapid and accurate strikes to eliminate heavy weaponry, disrupt logistics and supply chains and undermine Russia's broader military organisation, which has in turn addressed the asymmetry many feared would lead to a Russian victory. Russia's full-scale invasion represents a paradigm shift in international security and will serve as a benchmark for how Allies prepare for the next potential major conflict (Barrons, 2023). Allies' ability to adapt to the impact of cutting-edge technologies and apply lessons learned from the war will thus enable NATO and its member states to maintain the collective technological edge necessary to be able to execute an extended range of operations in multi-domain modern warfare.

VII- THE ROLE OF THE WAGNER GROUP IN RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE: THE RISE AND FALL OF YEVGENY PRIGOZHIN

88. The role of the Wagner Group, a paramilitary company with close ties to the Kremlin, and its leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, developed over the course of Russia's war against Ukraine. Wagner forces participated in Russia's initial invasion of the Donbas region in 2014, albeit with limited engagement. However, following Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 and the difficulties which the Russian army encountered in attempting to break through Ukrainian defensive lines, Wagner's involvement changed.

89. Having proved their worth to the Kremlin as part of Wagner’s operations on multiple fronts abroad¹⁶, Wagner’s mercenaries, comprised of contracted fighters and convicts recruited *en masse*, were made the “assault engine” of a revised Russian campaign that focused on Eastern Ukraine (Ber, 2023). Wagner forces delivered some successes, capturing the towns of Popasna and Soledar, often using barbaric fighting methods, which are well documented¹⁷.

90. Prigozhin then set his sights on the city of Bakhmut, which became a battle of symbolic importance for both the Russian and Ukrainian armies. The Wagner leader used the fight for the city to portray himself as an effective leader and criticise the Russian military leadership, namely the Minister of Defence, Sergei Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, Valery Gerasimov. He repeatedly accused the Ministry of Defence of withholding ammunition deliveries and once Wagner claimed to have taken control of the city, Prigozhin argued the indecisiveness of Russia’s military leadership meant, “five times more guys died than should have” (Yaffa, 2023).

91. The Wagner Group’s relative military success further raised Prigozhin’s profile, but his provocative statements regarding Russia’s direction in the war and his public defence of Russian soldiers who he argued were being mismanaged by the leadership of the Russian Armed Forces publicised the power struggle between the paramilitary organisation and the Ministry of Defence (Baunov, 2023). In response, Shoigu announced a decree that all “volunteer units” in Ukraine, i.e., Wagner forces, would have to sign contracts with the Ministry of Defence and be incorporated into the state army by 1 July (Baunov, 2023). Likely unhappy with Prigozhin’s increasing volatility and bravado, Putin backed Shoigu and his announcement. Prigozhin remained defiant, stating “none of Wagner’s fighters is ready to go down the path of shame,” and they would not be signing any contracts (Yaffa, 2023).

92. Sensing his independence and authority were under threat, Prigozhin launched a “march for justice” in the early hours of 24 June as Wagner fighters began to leave Ukraine and head through the Russian border post at Novoshakhtinsk (Luna et al., 2023). Within 24 hours, Wagner personnel moved to Rostov-on-Don and captured the headquarters of the Southern Military District, a key command centre for Russia’s operations in Ukraine (*The Economist*, 2023). An armed convoy also made a 1,000km surge towards Moscow, allegedly shooting down military helicopters and a command aircraft near the city of Voronezh along the way (Yaffa, 2023).

93. The mutiny came to a head with the convoy 200km from Moscow. Putin declared the armed rebellion treasonous and vowed harsh punishment. Prigozhin, realising he could not take his march further, announced that he feared the insurrection could spill more blood and called a truce. Belarussian President Aleksander Lukashenko was used as a cutout mediator, allowing Putin to stay above the fray, and it was agreed that Wagner forces who were not part of the mutiny would be contracted into the army, while the others would move to Belarus (Ashby et al., 2023). The charges against Prigozhin were also reportedly dropped.

94. Prigozhin’s aim appeared not to be to overthrow the regime, but rather to cause key personnel changes within the Ministry of Defence and cement his power within the state apparatus. Five days after the mutiny, Putin met with Prigozhin and other Wagner officials and according to Dmitry

¹⁶ Outside of Ukraine, the Wagner Group is present across Africa and the Middle East. It has taken on an active role in notable conflicts in Syria, Libya and the Central African Republic, among others, exploiting those countries’ natural resources and spreading Russia’s global influence (Luna et al., 2023).

¹⁷ In 2021, the European Council (2021) formally accused the Group of “serious human rights abuses, including torture and extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and killings” in places such as the Central African Republic, Libya, Syria and Ukraine.

Peskov, the Kremlin spokesperson, confirmed that “they are staunch supporters and soldiers of the head of state and commander-in-chief—and also said they are prepared to fight for the country going forward” (Yaffa, 2023). The United States estimates that the organisation had 50,000 fighters in Ukraine at its peak – a number that includes 10,000 contractors and 40,000 enlisted convicts. By July, several thousand Wagner forces arrived near Asipovichy, Belarus, ostensibly to train local reservists. Both Poland and Lithuania were quick to warn that the growing presence of Wagner troops in Belarus poses a security risk along NATO’s eastern flank (Chiappa, 2023). According to Prigozhin at the time, however, Wagner was instead preparing for new missions, including a reinvigorated presence in Africa¹⁸ (Yaffa, 2023).

95. While the scenario of immediate further civilian and military upheaval in Russia was avoided with the aborted march on Moscow by Wagner forces, President Putin faced a significant amount of uncertainty in its wake: the Wagner rebellion undermined the perceived invincibility of his leadership and exposed the fragility of the Russian state (*Economist*, 2023). Moreover, the ease with which Wagner forces moved towards Moscow suggest a level of dissatisfaction with Russian leadership and the likely complicity of some higher-ranking members of the Ministry of Defence. The degree to which the affair has divided or distracted the Russian army is yet to be determined, but continued dissatisfaction with Russia’s leadership within the army could have severe implications for the Russian President and the future conduct of the war.

96. Any putative agreement between Putin and Prigozhin, however, was short-lived. Prigozhin was killed on 23 August as a private jet he was riding in crashed on its way from Moscow to St. Petersburg. Prigozhin was traveling along with other Wagner Group leaders, notably its founding commander Dimitri Utkin (Sonne & Hopkins, 2023). At the time of this update, as a result of Prigozhin’s death, the future of the Wagner group remains unclear.

VIII- HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

97. Russia not only blatantly violated the UN Charter with the unprovoked invasion of a sovereign country, but there is mounting evidence that Russian forces have committed substantial war crimes in Ukraine. Exactly one year into the war, Ukrainian prosecutors had registered over 70,000 cases of suspected war crimes, a number that is rising rapidly (Wesslau, 2023). In addition, numerous accounts of Russia indiscriminately shelling population centres, hospitals (including maternity wards), schools and other civilian areas have been publicised, and evidence has emerged of the use of prohibited munitions (Amnesty International UK, 2022). Both the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the UN’s Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine have documented evidence of acts appearing to constitute war crimes, such as indiscriminate killings and sexual and gender-based violence against civilians (Howard, 2022). Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and other international watchdogs continue to collect evidence on human rights violations like killing and raping of civilians, torture and other acts of unspeakable cruelty (Human Rights Watch, 2022(a); Amnesty International, 2022(a); York, 2023).

98. These scenes of shocking brutality against civilians, including evidence of mass graves and indiscriminate execution in areas abandoned by retreating Russian forces – for example, in Bucha and Irpin – have outraged global public opinion. Human Rights Watch has also gathered evidence on forced transfers, filtration and forcible disappearances of civilians (Human Rights Watch,

¹⁸ Prigozhin’s attendance at the most recent Russia-Africa Summit in St. Petersburg in July 2023 underlined his determination to maintain Wagner’s role on the continent and the Kremlin’s consent to that end, despite his attempted mutiny (Ashby et al., 2023).

2022(b)). US and Ukrainian officials have stressed that these horrors are but the “tip of the iceberg” regarding what has transpired in Russian-occupied territories (White House, 2022(a)). Top US officials, including Secretary of State Antony Blinken, have repeatedly noted that Russia’s targeting of civilians is deliberate, and President Biden has committed to working with Allies and partners to hold Russia and Putin to account for war crimes (White House, 2022(b)). Besides the US and the EU, other European countries and Ukrainian and international NGOs are fully engaged in accountability efforts (Wesslau, 2023).

99. There is broad international support for investigating and prosecuting these crimes. The UN’s International Court of Justice (ICJ) opened an investigation into Russia’s actions under the UN Convention against Genocide, with the support of over 40 countries (Kaul, 2022) and more than a dozen nations having submitted documentation to the ICJ regarding allegations of genocide being committed by Russia (Howard, 2022). The case is still pending, awaiting the ICJ’s final decision (ICJ, 2023). Some experts insist Russia is committing genocide under international law, given its systemic violence against Ukraine’s society, the treatment of children and Russian aggression toward symbols of Ukrainian identity. It is not certain, however, if courts will recognise Russia’s actions as meeting the definition of genocide as codified in the 1948 Genocide Convention (Law, 2023). At the time of writing, the Baltic States, Canada, Czech Republic, Ireland and Poland officially recognise Russian actions as genocide, alongside Ukraine itself (Eurotopics, 2022; Treisman, 2022; Jack, 2022; Ukrinform, 2022; Witek, 2022).

100. The ICC, which investigates crimes committed by individuals rather than states, is looking into war crimes accusations against Russian officials. It is also possible for ICC members to set up an international criminal tribunal to prosecute war criminals, an option the Netherlands is considering (Deutsch & Emmott, 2022). On 4 March 2023, the EU decided to create an ad-hoc tribunal focusing on Russia’s crime of aggression – the International Centre for the Prosecution of Crimes Aggression against Ukraine (ICPA) – filling in any prosecution gaps from the ICC (Drik, 2023). On 17 March 2023, the ICC issued arrest warrants for President Putin and Russia’s commissioner for children’s rights, Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova, for the “unlawful deportation” of Ukrainian children – the first issued ICC warrants for crimes committed in Ukraine and one of the rare ICC warrants for an acting head of state. Experts estimate at least 6,000 Ukrainian minors have been relocated to Russia over the past year; President Zelenskyy reckons the number to be over 16,000 (Borger & Sauer, 2023). In response, Moscow launched criminal cases against an ICC prosecutor and various judges and Russia’s former President Dmitry Medvedev threatened to bomb the court with hypersonic missiles (Sharma, 2023). The ICC is also expected to pursue a case against Russia’s attacks against critical infrastructure far from the battlefield (Law, 2023). More than 30 justice ministers convened in London on 20 March 2023 to discuss how to support the ICC in holding Russia accountable for its war crimes in Ukraine, e.g., via procuring evidence and witness hearings.¹⁹

101. On 18 June 2023, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported 9,083 civilian deaths and 15,779 civilian injuries in Ukraine since 24 February 2022. The OHCHR and Human Rights Watch have stated this is likely a significant underestimate (OHCHR, 2023; Human Rights Watch, 2023). Ukrainian sources report much higher numbers (e.g. Karmanau et al., 2022), and international researchers are investigating as atrocities continue. In addition to brutal injuries and loss of life, the war in Ukraine has restricted millions of civilians’ access to basic

¹⁹ The Dutch announced an additional EUR 1 million in financial support and are likely to send forensic teams to Ukraine to assist investigations as in 2022 (Stöckl, 2023). Amnesty International stated there is plenty of evidence to classify Russia’s activities as war crimes, and potentially as crimes against humanity (Amnesty International, 2022(b)). The documentation of crimes remains crucial for holding perpetrators responsible.

services such as food, water, heat, housing, electricity, education and healthcare (UNICEF, 2023) and also has damaged or destroyed half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure (Schlein, 2023).

102. The humanitarian and environmental impact from the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam on 6 June 2023 is significant and expanding. The Kakhovka reservoir was vital in supplying energy, drinking water and irrigation to multiple regions in southern Ukraine and provided water for industries in cities like Kryvyi Rih, Nikopol, Marhanets and others. The flooding caused by the dam's destruction immediately affected approximately 40,000 people in the Kherson region, with damage reported in over 80 nearby villages and towns prompting urgent evacuation of over 2,000 people (OCHA, 2023). The release of more than 18 cubic km of water over three to four days left up to 700,000 residents without access to drinking water (UN Ukraine, 2023). In the long term, the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam will render more than one million hectares of land in three southern Ukrainian oblasts unusable for the next three to five years due to the lack of water supply (Sergatskova, 2023). This loss will have a critical impact on the agricultural sector, causing farmland to dry up due to damaged reclamation systems. Without artificial irrigation, the Ukrainian agricultural industry, which is vital for self-consumption and exports, could collapse (Sergatskova, 2023). Agriculture accounts for up to 14 percent of Ukrainian employment and agricultural exports accounted for 41 percent of total exports in 2021 (USDA, 2022).

103. The UNHCR has reported that approximately 17.6 million people in Ukraine urgently need humanitarian support, including over five million internally displaced people (IDPs) (UNHCR, 2023(b)). As of 7 July 2023, the UNHCR recorded more than nearly seven million Ukrainian refugees across Europe of which over five million are registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes (UNHCR, 2023(c)). Refugees, IDPs and those stranded and/or unable to escape to safer areas are mostly women, children and elderly men, as able-bodied men aged 18–60 were instructed to stay in the country (Harlan, 2022).

104. Ukrainian refugees have been met with remarkable hospitality – European states as well as thousands of individual volunteers set up reception centers offering shelter, food, transport, medical care, financial support and employment. As of July 2023, almost one million Ukrainian refugees are hosted in Poland, and significant numbers are also in Germany (over one million), the Czech Republic (354,825), the UK (208,500), Italy (163,750), Spain (185,000) and France (70,570) (UNHCR, 2023(b)). The EU swiftly invoked – for the first time – the Temporary Protection Directive, which entitles anyone legally residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 to have a clear legal status for up to three years, which includes the possibility to work, study and access social welfare in a member state of their choice. As of 1 March 2023, four million Ukrainians benefited from this EU emergency scheme (Martini, 2022; European Council, 2023). The EU also invoked its Technical Support Instrument to help member states welcoming and integrating people fleeing the war in Ukraine with a new set of projects announced on 21 March (European Commission, 2022; European Commission, 2023). As of 31 May 2023, the EU institutions had committed €2.1 billion of humanitarian aid to Ukraine (Bushnell et al., 2023). The UNHCR is coordinating the provision of services, such as legal aid, psychological support, child protection and gender-based violence case management (UNHCR, 2022).

IX- SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA'S ABILITY TO PROSECUTE THE WAR AND ACROSS THE BROADER ECONOMY START TO BITE

105. At the start of the war, the United States, joined by its Allies and partners, imposed sweeping financial sanctions and stringent export controls to hamper Russia's economy, financial system and access to advanced technologies (White House, 2022). Throughout the war, the layers of sanctions on Russia have become more burdensome and all-encompassing. The EU has imposed multiple

rounds of punishing sanctions against Russia for its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and in direct response to Russia's continued escalation of the war with the illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory based on sham referenda, increased force mobilisation, and "issuing open nuclear threats" (European Commission, 2022). The effort works in coordination with EU partners to impose further export restrictions to squeeze off Russia's access to the capital and goods to degrade production rates and quality of Russia's defense industrial base and deprive Russia's broader economy of the fast-dwindling links with European services and expertise (European Commission, 2022). It also laid the legal framework in the EU for the imposition of the price cap on Russian oil on global markets, which began 5 December 2022.

106. The EU's latest rounds of sanctions are in line with the steady drumbeat of Allied and partner efforts to use economic coercion to hinder Russia's ability to prosecute its illegal war in Ukraine, and potentially put enough internal political pressure on the regime in Moscow to change course all together.²⁰ The vast range of sanctions against Russia is unprecedented in size and scope and can be broken down into three broad categories: sanctions on individuals (oligarchs and cronies), financial sanctions and trade restrictions (export bans). To date, there are over 1,800 individuals sanctioned for their proximity to the Kremlin and its policies; much of their assets outside of Russia seized or frozen, and their ability to travel to access these assets curtailed (European Council, 2023). Financial sanctions against Russia hit both Russian lenders and its central bank. The sanctions bar Russian commercial banks' access to global capital markets, ten of which, including the two biggest by assets, have been kicked off the SWIFT global payments system and another 26 are blocked from dollar-denominated international transfers (*Economist*, 2022(h)). Trade restrictions mostly hit Russia's export of raw materials, upon which its economy is very dependent; oil is by far the most lucrative. Export controls make it almost impossible for Western firms to sell in the Russian market and dual-use restrictions curtail the flow of advanced goods, such as technology and low-tech goods (chemicals and commodities) (*Economist*, 2022(h)).

107. Previous reports by this Committee have noted Russia's considerable efforts to shield itself from the impact of Western sanctions (particularly since 2014) via measures such as the de-dollarisation of its trade regimes, diversified central bank reserves and alternative payment systems (Perrin, 2020; *Economist*, 2022(h)). In addition, Russia has been able to exploit the remaining holes in the layered sanctions, such as the Russian banks remaining on SWIFT and the inability to freeze more than a quarter of Russian assets abroad (*Economist*, 2023(a)). As a result, the impact of the sanctions has been mixed over the first year of the war: Russian oil exports (boosted for most of the last year by high oil prices) are on par with recent years prior to the war and trade routes east and alternative payment systems have alleviated financial sanction pressures. Sound early steering by the Russian central bank has mitigated much of the extreme levels of damage predicted. Similarly, despite the EU's ban on imports of refined oil from Russia, the country has managed to reroute its diesel exports to new buyers and exploit sanctions for profit (*Economist*, 2023(d)). Trade figures show that Russian exports of diesel reached a record high in March 2023, and despite a slight decline since then, they remain consistent with the previous years. Two groups of countries are enabling this: those buying more diesel from Russia to replace supplies from elsewhere, including South American and North African nations, which have increased their purchases from Russia while also boosting their own exports. Russia's export machine, aided by traders like Gunvor and Vitol, has creatively adapted to the sanctions, with ship-to-ship transfers and employing fake location signals to circumvent restrictions. Such resilience in the face of sanctions may lead to an oversupply of diesel in the market, hurting European and Asian refiners and benefitting those who disregard the sanctions (*Economist*, 2023(d)).

²⁰ The sanctions do not target Russian society. As such, areas such as food, agriculture, health and pharma are excluded from the sanctions regimes.

108. Other creative ways have allowed Russia to get around import restrictions. Parallel imports (from the West to Russia via third country intermediaries) have risen sharply. For example, Armenia's imports from the EU doubled in 2022, while its exports to Russia tripled and Serbian exports of mobile phones to Russia skyrocketed from \$8,518 in 2021 to \$37 million in 2022 (*Economist*, 2023(a)). In fact, the IMF now predicts Russia's GDP to grow by 0.7% in 2023 – equivalent to France, and ahead of Germany and the UK (IMF, 2023). To target these loopholes and strengthen the effect of the existing sanctions, the EU has adopted its 11th package of sanctions in June 2023. The package includes a mechanism that restricts exports of certain goods to third countries that are facilitating sanctions evasion, expands transport restrictions banning the use of Russian-registered trucks and vessels involved in ship-to-ship transfers, and adds more Russian individuals and entities to the sanctions list (Dentons, 2023(a)). Notably, tighter export restrictions on dual-use and advanced technology items now cover entities in China, Uzbekistan, the United Arab Emirates, Syria and Armenia, in addition to Russian and Iranian entities (European Commission, 2023(b)). The adoption of the 11th sanctions package is a positive move by the EU; however, its scope is limited as it focuses only on specific forms of circumvention. It remains to be seen how effective these measures will be in countering Russia's growing sophistication in evading sanctions (Taran, 2023).

109. Still, microchips and other electronics from 70 different US and European manufacturers compose many essential elements of Russian weaponry, while other sectors from raw material extraction to aviation and the automotive industries require foreign parts and expertise to be maintained. These elements have been sorely lacking as a result of the sanctions regimes and are having a significant impact across Russian industry from its advanced high-tech weapons manufacturers to its civil aviation and automotive industries and beyond (*Economist*, 2023(a)). As experts note, while the Russian economy will be able to sustain a long war, it will struggle to keep up with a more intense one (*Economist*, 2023(a)).

X- THE RUSSIA-CHINA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: BEIJING'S ROLE AS A RELEASE VALVE FOR GROWING INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE ON MOSCOW

110. Since February 2022, China and Russia have become closer and more strategic partners. Following its renewed invasion of Ukraine and subsequent isolation from the West, the Kremlin has become more economically dependent than ever on China. Meanwhile, Beijing has drawn its own benefits from Russia's need for political and economic support. However, China's need to retain an ability to wield international influence, or "discourse power", imposes certain limits on the bilateral relationship.

111. The intensification of the China-Russia partnership has been evident over the last year. First, the joint declaration issued on 4 February 2022 prior to Russia's escalation of the conflict in Ukraine boldly confirmed a "no limits" relationship between the two countries. Since then, China has provided tacit support for Putin's war, for example, by laying blame on the West for Russia's unprovoked invasion, abstaining in the March and October 2022 UN General Assembly votes condemning Russia's actions, and by disseminating pro-Russia propaganda to the Chinese public.

112. Economically, the China-Russia relationship has deepened substantially due to almost perfect complementarity. Due to Western sanctions, Russia needs Chinese technology and investments, while China benefits from gaining access to Russia's natural resources (Gabuev, 2022). Furthermore, China has been serving as a release valve for international sanctions levied against Russia, particularly via the energy trade. Supplies that would normally have travelled westward were re-directed east, providing essentially a barrel-for-barrel swap, allowing Russia to benefit from

continuous exports and China to stock up on cheap fuel (Aizhu, 2022). In June 2023, Chinese imports of discounted Russian oil hit a record high, beating the record set in the month prior (Lin and McMillan, 2023). Not only is Russia now China's largest oil supplier, but China is also importing more agricultural products (especially wheat), natural gas, and coal from Russia (Tyson, 2022). This situation benefits both parties, but also enables China to extract more leverage in the relationship, as Russia has few options for international buyers.

113. While lethal aid remains a red line, the extensive non-lethal support that China provides to Russia, including critical equipment and materials, significantly sustains Moscow's war efforts (Garlauskas et al., 2023). China's growing trade ties with Russia, particularly in the semiconductor sector, play a crucial role in counteracting the effects of international sanctions and battlefield losses. Furthermore, China's trade patterns with other countries raise the possibility that it could provide or already provides Russia with even more semiconductors through third-party channels, beyond what is evident from the direct Russia-China trade data (Garlauskas et al., 2023). By doing so, China removes a key constraint on Russia's ability to build more missiles, drones and other advanced military hardware, thus sustaining its war economy. Despite the mounting evidence of Chinese electronics being found in Russian weapons, confirming their dual-use nature, China's foreign ministry continues to emphasise its "responsible" attitude towards the export of military items (Williams and O'Donnell, 2023).

114. Militarily, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Kremlin have increased cooperation on strategic communications in addition to joining forces to conduct joint patrol and training missions in the Pacific (*The Japan Times*, 2022). China also participated in the Vostok 22 military exercise hosted by Russia held from 30 August–5 September 2022 and the Russia-China-South Africa exercise in February 2023. During a recent meeting in Beijing (3 July), the Chinese Defense Minister and the head of the Russian Navy expressed their mutual desire for enhanced naval cooperation between the two countries through joint exercises, cruises, and professional coordination (The Defense Post, 2023).

115. Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow in March 2023 signaled a new step in Sino-Russian relations. The visit was a demonstration of public support for Putin just days after he had been issued with an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court (ICC), but as Alexander Gabuev (2023) notes, its real significance lies within the decisions that were made between the two leaders regarding future Chinese-Russian defence cooperation. While any new defence agreements have not been made public, there is a history of the two sides coming to terms and only later publicising the details²¹. However, the significance of the visit should not be overstated until potential terms of future Russian-Chinese defence cooperation have been determined.

116. China faces the strategic challenge of trying to avoid both further conflict escalation and further isolating itself on the world stage. Although it is the senior partner in an increasingly asymmetrical relationship and Russia delivers key benefits for China – economically, and symbolically, as Russia remains China's main ally in upholding an authoritarian alternative to liberal democracy on the global stage – Beijing has also paid a price for refusing to condemn Russia's war. Indeed, China's tacit support for Russia has resulted in it falling out of favour with the West and some developing nations in which it would have liked to gain influence (Xuetong, 2022). Thus, China is increasingly attempting to present itself as a responsible global player by advocating for peace, as evidenced by its 12-point 'Peace Plan' (Radchenko, 2023). However, the plan's ambiguity and inconsistency are apparent, as it supports territorial integrity and sovereignty, hinting at the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity, but it does not insist on the withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine. Instead, the plan

²¹ In 2014, China became the first overseas buyer of Russia's S-400 surface-to-air missile system, but the agreement was not made public until eight months later (Gabuev, 2023).

emphasises the importance of respecting the security interests of all parties, including Russia's claims related to Ukraine and NATO. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg criticised the Chinese peace proposal, stating that it lacks credibility due to China's failure to condemn the illegal invasion of Ukraine (NATO, 2023(a)).

117. While deepening its relationship with Russia, China has thus taken steps to portray itself as a neutral actor. In September 2022, Putin admitted Xi Jinping had "questions and concerns" about Russia's actions in Ukraine (Lau, 2022), illustrating a new dynamic in the relationship. At the end of April 2023, Xi Jinping called Volodymyr Zelenskyy – their first conversation since February 2022 (Rachman, 2023). Days later, China voted in favour of a UN resolution that acknowledged "the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine" (Liboreiro, 2023). Furthermore, in May 2023, China sent a top diplomatic envoy, Li Hui, to Ukraine and Russia to discuss a "political settlement" to the conflict. This event marked the first visit by a senior Chinese official to Ukraine since the launch of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 (Euractiv, 2023(b)).

118. However, the longer Russia's war in Ukraine lasts, the more difficult China's balancing act will become. Beijing's dubious and often opaque actions vis-à-vis the war in Ukraine are clearly in opposition to the values held by NATO Allies, and any nation or organisation that prioritises freedom, justice and democracy. While its relationship with Russia does carry limits, the CPP believes China has little to gain from siding with the West as the US administration is unlikely to reverse course on US priorities or strategy based solely on Xi Jinping admitting to the unlawfulness of Putin's brutal war (Xuetong, 2022). Sino-Russian relations will therefore remain on stable footing, with potential for growth in areas that could carry significant implications with regards to strategic competition.

XI- THE RECONSTRUCTION OF UKRAINE

119. With its infrastructure and economy in tatters, Ukraine and its partners are preparing for the biggest reconstruction since World War II – a colossal task that will require vast international support and substantial cross-sectoral²² changes within Ukraine. A joint assessment of the World Bank, the European Commission, the United Nations and the Ukrainian government shows Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery could require USD 411 billion, as of mid-March 2023 (France24, 2023). To support Ukraine's economy, IMF has approved a four-year financing package worth \$15.6 billion, a programme that emphasises macroeconomic stability in the first year followed by ambitious structural reforms for medium-term growth (Betliy, 2023).

120. A German Marshall Fund (GMF) study stresses the importance of post-war planning, identifying four investment phases: (1) *relief* – emergency aid and basic rehabilitation; (2) *reconstruction* – rapid response to destruction; (3) *modernisation* – "building back better" a more digital, ecological and democratic country with the goal of (4) *EU accession* (GMF, 2022). At present, those supporting Ukraine prioritise immediate macro-financial assistance and military support (Ganster et al., 2022). While the EU leads on recovery assistance, Ukraine must set the priorities with civil society being fully engaged (GMF, 2022).

121. Demonstrating Western resolve to support Ukraine's recovery, the Donor Coordination Platform was launched on 26 January 2023 by the G7 in cooperation with Ukraine, the EU and financial institutions (European Commission, 2023(c)). Financing will be multi-faceted and likely

²² Including agriculture, transportation, energy, housing and industry (Markarova, 2023).

comprise bilateral donations and the support of international financial institutions²³ (e.g. grants and loans), private sector investments, Ukraine's general budgetary resources and other new financial tools (GMF, 2022). To attract private investors and thereby facilitate the immediate start of rebuilding as well as create new markets to restore the economy, Ukraine has called for a war insurance covering investors against conflict-related risks, which could be established with the support of the World Bank or national governments, due to concerns that the ongoing fighting will damage new investment projects (Tamma, 2022). An important step towards this was taken at the 2023 Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC) in London. There are also discussions on creating legal mechanisms to seize the USD 300 billion of frozen Russian state assets (Summers et al., 2023).

122. Several international conferences on Ukraine's reconstruction have taken place, most prominently the URC which took place from 4–5 July 2022 in Lugano, Switzerland, and attended by participants from more than 40 countries and various international organisations, to discuss the principles and priorities for Ukraine's rebuilding and modernisation. Ukraine presented its three-phase²⁴ "Recovery and Development Plan (2022–2032)" worth USD 750 billion (Mishchuk, 2022). The adopted "Lugano Declaration" established seven guiding principles²⁵ for the recovery process (URC, 2022). A recent (21–23 July 2023) URC in London focused on postwar reconstruction efforts. Co-hosted by the UK and Ukraine, it gathered representatives from over 59 countries, resulting in commitments of over USD 60 billion for Ukraine (UK Government, 2023(c)). The promotion of private sector involvement in Ukraine's recovery process was a central theme. Key discussions covered transparency, human capital recovery, energy sector rebuilding, digital excellence, humanitarian demining and housing sector support. Notable commitments included the EU's pledge of €50 billion, the US providing USD \$1.3 billion, and the UK offering USD 3 billion in credit guarantees (UK Government, 2023(c)). New initiatives were launched for a Ukraine Development Fund (UDF), a development finance institution supported by BlackRock, J.P. Morgan, and McKinsey (Dentons, 2023(b)). To relaunch the private insurance market in Ukraine, a statement of intent was signed by the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine along with the European Commission, Switzerland, Norway, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The agreement aims to provide business insurance against war risks for investments in Ukraine, supported by donor assistance, to attract Ukrainian and international insurance and reinsurance companies and foster economic recovery (UA Government Portal, 2023). The conference highlighted Ukraine's long-term vision, including goals for EU membership, becoming the EU energy hub and implementing comprehensive reforms. The next conference is scheduled to take place in Germany in 2024 (UK Government, 2023(c)).

123. The Ukrainian government and experts are calling for instant reconstruction and post-war planning for Ukraine to remain liveable and boost its war-torn economy (Aarup & Savage, 2023). Donors, however, are hesitant to initiate long-term investments due to the ongoing fighting and shelling of Ukraine, as well as the uncertain outcome of the war (Mishchuk, 2022), thereby holding back funds. Another factor of concern is corruption, such as Ukraine's recent scandal involving government officials and allegations that Ukraine's Defence Ministry had paid inflated prices for food intended to go to its troops (Schwartz & Varenikova, 2023). To sustain international support, trust, Western unity vis-à-vis Ukraine and to avoid the misuse of aid funds, accountability, transparency,

²³ For example, the World Bank has so far mobilised \$13 billion in emergency aid and the IMF has provided USD 2.7 billion in emergency loans over the past year to Ukraine (Smith, 2023).

²⁴ Initial phase (USD 60–65 billion), fast recovery phase (2023–2025, USD 350 billion), and the long-term transformation phase (2026–2032, USD 400 billion).

²⁵ Partnership; reform focus; transparency, accountability and rule of law; democratic participation, multi-stakeholder engagement; gender equality and inclusion; and sustainability.

strengthening of the rule of law and de-oligarchisation are included in the recovery plans (Ganster et al., 2022; Markarova, 2023).

XII- LOOKING AHEAD: SUPPORTING UKRAINE TODAY AND PROTECTING ITS HARD-WON DEMOCRACY FOR TOMORROW

124. Russia's invasion of Ukraine was premeditated, unprovoked and unjustified. It has wreaked untold suffering upon the Ukrainian people, and damaged or destroyed full cities and towns, as well as much of the country's life-sustaining infrastructure. The intensity of the war being waged has killed tens of thousands of soldiers and strained either side's capacity for force regeneration – both in terms of manpower and industry.

125. This is a brutal war. It is filled with war crimes committed against innocent civilians by ill-disciplined Russian soldiers and indiscriminate Russian missile barrages raining down on Ukrainian cities across the country. The war has witnessed Russia's attempt to annex even more territory illegally in the Ukrainian provinces of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson – adding to the initial illegal act perpetrated in Crimea in 2014. Looming ominously over the conflict has also been the reckless escalatory nuclear rhetoric from Russian President Vladimir Putin from the very beginning.

126. The only offence Ukraine committed against Russia was to look west for its future. Ukraine had independent democratic ambitions since it separated from the Soviet Union in 1991, but these were suffocated for years by entrenched oligarchic interests, which fueled corrupt patronage systems undermining the strength and independence of state institutions needed for a strong democracy. Focused post-2014 efforts changed all of this and transformed Ukraine. A motivated new generation in power moved the democratisation agenda forward swiftly and substantially, with an end goal of full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community via accession to both NATO and the EU. A modern, free and democratic Ukraine on Russia's borders was not only abhorrent to Vladimir Putin, but also something he was convinced was a direct threat to his regime in Moscow. As Ukraine moved more toward the light of democracy in the post-2014 years, Russia descended further into the darkness of authoritarianism with an increasingly unconstrained Vladimir Putin at the helm.

127. As Ukraine fights for its freedom today, it is standing up for all democracies' right to self-determination, in its political organisation at home and in the alliances and partnerships it makes internationally. Russia has made no pretense to hide its views of the legitimacy of the tyranny of great powers over what they determine to be their rightful spheres of influence.

128. Faced with such a monumental challenge, Allies have a twofold, pressing agenda. **First**, they have *an immediate duty to increase and sustain Ukraine militarily and financially* as it presses forward with its legitimate self-defense; and **second**, they must find the ways and means to *ensure Ukraine's democracy thrives* for the long term, eventually *helping it reach its goal of full Euro-Atlantic integration*.

129. **Sustained and substantial military and financial assistance supporting Ukraine's legitimate self-defence is essential.** Ukraine's military forces have defied expectations in their defence of their country. In-time military assistance, matched to meet the most pressing battlefield needs, alongside effective training, has allowed Ukrainian forces not only to halt Russia's early full-scale invasion, but also even reverse a significant portion of Russia's early advances. Continued, sustained and increased Allied military assistance to Ukraine is therefore at a critical juncture as Ukraine looks to continue its drive to recapture all its sovereign territory. To this end, the following should be considered:

- Increase and sustain the deliveries of the most critical weapons systems to **sustain Ukraine's defence and counter-offensives to recapture Russian-seized territory**, including (among others):
 - the air-defence systems necessary to protect Ukrainian skies;
 - cannon and rocket artillery (and their ammunition) to protect forces' advances and disrupt Russian supply lines;
 - tracked and wheeled vehicles (tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and APCs) for effective troop manoeuvre;
 - to contribute to and expand the ongoing training efforts to ensure Ukrainian forces can use, and repair when needed, the range of Allied donated systems; and,
 - the donation of non-lethal support necessary to protect soldiers in the field and help sustain them as they enter the cold winter months.

130. Allies must consider shifting to **multi-year contracts in their defence orders to provide their defence industrial producers the security needed to make long-term investments** to surge production during crises. These demand signals will allow for a fundamental rewriting of defence sector planning and provision. In turn, **this longer-term security will allow Allies the defence industrial base to provide for today's potential crises, but also allow it the capital and insurance to focus on aligning itself for future defence force imperatives.**

- a) **Allies must also absorb the war's lessons about vulnerable supply chains.** Supply chain resilience is intrinsically linked to military industrial capacity and the war in Ukraine has brought the issue into sharp focus. Access to subcomponents is particularly important, and Allies have thus, in close coordination, targeted key sectors of the Russian economy such as the metal and mineral sectors with sanctions. These sanctions hinder the Kremlin's ability to sustain its defence industrial base and more broadly, its war of aggression against Ukraine (US Department of the Treasury, 2023).

Foreign involvement in strategic supply chains risks limiting the capacity of national industrial bases. Throughout this period of war, Allies will have drawn the lesson that they cannot build weapons systems which rely on adversaries – or potential adversaries – for critical supplies and subcomponents: China's massive supply of rare earth minerals should be noted in this context. Access to subcomponents and key material as part of a wider Allied industrial base must therefore be brought into Allies and trusted partners only.

131. Allies and partners' **sanctions on Russia are impactful: this will increase over the long-run, but they must be tightened.** The sanctions on Russian individuals and financial institutions are important and must be maintained. The third layer of sanctions, however, involving trade restrictions and export controls is the most impactful, but can still be improved through finding the ways and means to restrict parallel imports into Russia. Without imported technology, advanced goods and Western expertise, Russia's defence industry has a declining ability to regenerate the equipment and ammunition needed to sustain Russian forces' operations. If Allies and partners can curtail Russia's revenue from its sale of raw materials on the global markets, particularly oil, this will cripple Russia's ability to finance its war machine. All three layers of sanctions work in concert, and they can, if successful, at the very least grind Russia's ability to make war to a halt.

132. In addition to immediate financial and military aid, and the maintenance of economic sanctions, Allies and partners must also throw their **political and diplomatic weight behind Ukraine's cause globally**, via international organisations, such as the UN, or through other bilateral or multilateral initiatives. Importantly, this includes:

- a) supporting the ongoing initiatives to hold the Russian Federation accountable under international law, international human rights law and international criminal law, particularly the investigations launched by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the European Union member states. Allies and partners must continue to **advocate for the establishment of a special ad hoc international criminal tribunal** to investigate and prosecute the crime of aggression against Ukraine and bring perpetrators to justice;
- b) maintaining Allies and partners' enduring commitment to Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity and their policies of not recognising Russia's illegal annexations of Ukrainian territory;
- c) Allies reiterating their commitment to NATO's "open door" policy and to the principle that no third country has a power of veto on NATO membership, while recognising the sovereign right of Ukraine to choose its alliances or other security arrangements;
- d) continued support for diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict, with a clear-eyed understanding of the current Russian regime's track record of deceit and renegeing on its international commitments:
 - i. as such, Allies must push Russia to engage constructively in credible talks with Ukraine to achieve credible results. Such talks necessarily start with a sustainable ceasefire and a complete withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukrainian territory with respect to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity;
 - ii. any decisions on the termination of this war will be taken either by or with Ukraine, as only Ukraine decides its own future, rather than any external power;
- e) continuing to hold the current Belarusian regime accountable for its part in the Russian aggression against Ukraine;
- f) seeking the ways to engage with Russian civil society, wherever possible, in support of all initiatives trying to resist and end the Kremlin's aggressive policies.

133. **Ensuring the strengthening of Ukrainian democracy and assisting with its future Euro-Atlantic integration** is a longer-term project but planning and implementing it can start now. Ukraine's Allies and partners will have a significant role in assisting with not only all phases of the reconstruction of Ukraine, but also with its parallel steps along the way to European integration. Throughout, **Allied assistance and oversight** will help not only anchor the already significant democratic gains Ukraine made prior to Russia's invasion, but also help further strengthen the democratic institutions of Ukraine to guarantee its future integration into the EU and NATO.

134. Finally, the Allies must consider wider, global implications of this war. Strategies of other global actors, such as China and India, will also be shaped to a significant degree by the outcome of the Russo-Ukrainian war. This war will affect the hitherto prevalent notion that the strategic landscape of the 21st century will evolve around the US-China competition. This landscape is likely to be much more complex. On the rhetorical level, Beijing has been siding with Russia and subscribing to its narrative of shifting responsibility for war on the US and NATO. At the same time, in practice, China has not provided significant support to Russia's isolated economy nor to its military and reiterated its commitment to the principle of territorial sovereignty. It has also signaled readiness to serve as mediator between Kyiv and Moscow. While China is challenging the current global order, and while it has no interest in Russia's defeat and the triumph of Ukraine and its Western Allies, Beijing also has a stake in global stability. In this regard, NATO's noticeable intensification of contacts with like-minded partners in the Indo-Pacific is highly relevant and strategically important.

135. The ramifications of Russia's aggression against Ukraine will shape regional and global politics for years to come. In these historic times, NATO must stay the course of solidarity and remain the beacon of democratic values. NATO and Ukraine are on the right side of history. They need to be

prepared for a long struggle in Ukraine. With the Euro-Atlantic community's diplomatic, military, economic and technological clout behind it, Ukraine cannot but prevail.

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ANNEX 1 –UNITED STATES SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE (as of 22 August 2023).

Since Russia launched its premeditated, unprovoked and brutal war against Ukraine, the United States has provided Ukraine with more than USD 43 billion in direct security assistance.

This assistance targets the equipment and training needed to help Ukraine defend its territorial integrity, and increase its interoperability with NATO Allies; it is broken down by category in the following list:

Air Defense

- One Patriot air defense battery and munitions;
- 12 National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS) and munitions;
- HAWK air defense systems and munitions;
- AIM-7/RIM-7 missiles for air defense;
- More than 2,000 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles;
- Avenger air defense systems;
- VAMPIRE counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (c-UAS) and munitions;
- C-UAS gun trucks and ammunition;
- Mobile c-UAS laser-guided rocket systems;
- Other c-UAS equipment;
- Anti-aircraft guns and ammunition;
- Equipment to integrate Western launchers, missiles, and radars with Ukraine's systems;
- Equipment to sustain Ukraine's existing air defense capabilities; and
- 21 air surveillance radars.

Fires

- 38 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems and ammunition;
- Ground-Launched Small Diameter Bomb launchers and guided rockets;
- 198 155mm Howitzers and more than 2,000,000 155mm artillery rounds;
- More than 7,000 precision-guided 155mm artillery rounds;
- More than 20,000 155mm rounds of Remote Anti-Armor Mine (RAAM) Systems;
- 72 105mm Howitzers and more than 500,000 105mm artillery rounds;
- 10,000 203mm artillery rounds;
- More than 200,000 152mm artillery rounds;
- Approximately 40,000 130mm artillery rounds;
- 40,000 122mm artillery rounds;
- 60,000 122mm GRAD rockets;
- 47 120mm mortar systems;
- 10 82mm mortar systems;
- 67 81mm mortar systems;
- 58 60mm mortar systems;
- More than 400,000 mortar rounds;
- More than 70 counter-artillery and counter-mortar radars; and
- 20 multi-mission radars;

Ground Maneuver

- 31 Abrams tanks;
- 45 T-72B tanks;
- 186 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles;
- Four Bradley Fire Support Team vehicles;
- 189 Stryker Armored Personnel Carriers;
- 300 M113 Armored Personnel Carriers;
- 250 M1117 Armored Security Vehicles;

- More than 500 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs);
- More than 2,000 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs);
- More than 100 light tactical vehicles;
- 200 armored medical treatment vehicles;
- 68 trucks and 124 trailers to transport heavy equipment;
- More than 600 tactical vehicles to tow and haul equipment;
- 131 tactical vehicles to recover equipment;
- 10 command post vehicles;
- 30 ammunition support vehicles;
- 18 armored bridging systems;
- Eight logistics support vehicles and equipment;
- 239 fuel tankers and 105 fuel trailers;
- 58 water trailers;
- Six armored utility trucks;
- 125mm, 120mm, and 105mm tank ammunition;
- More than 1,800,000 rounds of 25mm ammunition; and
- Mine clearing equipment.

Aircraft and Unmanned Aerial Systems

- 20 Mi-17 helicopters;
- Switchblade Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS);
- Phoenix Ghost UAS;
- CyberLux K8 UAS;
- Altius-600 UAS;
- Jump-20 UAS;
- Hornet UAS
- Puma UAS;
- Scan Eagle UAS;
- Penguin UAS;
- Two radars for UAS;
- High-speed Anti-radiation missiles (HARMs);
- Precision aerial munitions;
- More than 6,000 Zuni aircraft rockets;
- More than 10,000 Hydra-70 aircraft rockets; and
- Munitions for UAS.

Anti-armour and Small Arms

- More than 10,000 Javelin anti-armor systems;
- More than 80,000 other anti-armor systems and munitions;
- More than 7,000 Tube-Launched, Optically-Tracked, Wire-Guided (TOW) missiles;
- More than 35,000 grenade launchers and small arms;
- More than 300,000,000 rounds of small arms ammunition and grenades;
- Laser-guided rocket systems and munitions;
- Rocket launchers and ammunition; and
- Anti-tank mines.

Maritime

- Two Harpoon coastal defense systems and anti-ship missiles;
- 62 coastal and riverine patrol boats;
- Unmanned Coastal Defense Vessels; and
- Port and harbor security equipment.

Other capabilities

- M18A1 Claymore anti-personnel munitions (configured to be compliant with the Ottawa Convention);
- C-4 explosives, demolition munitions, and demolition equipment for obstacle clearing;
- Obstacle emplacement equipment;

- Counter air defense capability;
- More than 100,000 sets of body armor and helmets;
- Tactical secure communications systems and support equipment;
- Four satellite communications (SATCOM) antennas;
- SATCOM terminals and services;
- Electronic jamming equipment;
- Commercial satellite imagery services;
- Night vision devices, surveillance and thermal imagery systems, optics, and rangefinders;
- Explosive ordnance disposal equipment and protective gear;
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear protective equipment;
- Medical supplies, including first aid kits, bandages, monitors, and other equipment;
- Field equipment, cold weather gear, generators, and spare parts; and
- Support for training, maintenance, and sustainment activities.

(Source: US Department of State, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, US Security Cooperation with Ukraine (Fact Sheet) 22 August 2023.)

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