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**UKRAINE UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF THE SECOND YEAR
OF EXISTENTIAL WAR IN ANALYSTS' REFLECTIONS
OF THE WARSAW CENTRE FOR EASTERN STUDIES**

Abstract. The purpose of the article is to elucidate the reflection of the main aspects of the full-scale stage of the Russo-Ukrainian war by analysts of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies.

The research methodology is based on the principles of objectivity, scientificity, systematicity and historicism, as well as the application of an interdisciplinary approach. Structural functional and comparative historical methods have been used. **The scientific novelty** of the article consists in an attempt to elucidate the current stage coverage of the Russian aggression against Ukraine by analysts of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies. **The Conclusions.** Thus, during the second year of the Russo-Ukrainian war, the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies analysts followed all the events (both in foreign and domestic arenas) quite carefully. According to them, the withdrawal of the Armed Forces from Avdiivka (February 19, 2024) was the symbolic date of the end of the second year of war. In their publications, the analysts focus on combat operations at the front, political processes, socio-economic, information security, environmental, educational, cultural, religious problems, the policy of Western countries regarding war and security in Europe in general. During this year, the chief focus of analysts was on the battles for Bakhmut, the counteroffensive launched by the Armed Forces of Ukraine on June 4, the restoration of the transport corridor through the Black Sea, achieved owing to strikes on the ships of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, grain exports, attacks by the Ukrainian drones on military, energy and oil facilities on the territory of the Russian Federation, Ukraine's entry into the EU, the signing of security agreements and internal processes within it, etc. At the same time, in their publications, analysts also mention a number of negative factors that directly affected the front – corruption scandals, political competition, which reached its peak with the dismissal of Valery Zaluzhnyi from the post of Commander-in-Chief, etc. In this way, the reader can get a holistic view of the main aspects of the war. Perhaps the main conclusion is the opinion of the director of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies, Wojciech Kononchuk, that Ukraine needs weapons for defense and victory, and, accordingly, the political will and quick decisions of Western countries.

Key words: Russo-Ukrainian war, reception, Ukraine, Marek Karp Center for Eastern Studies, hostilities.

УКРАЇНА В УМОВАХ ДРУГОГО РОКУ ЕКЗИСТЕНЦІЙНОЇ ВІЙНИ В АНАЛІТИЧНИХ РЕФЛЕКСІЯХ ВАРШАВСЬКОГО ЦЕНТРУ СХІДНИХ СТУДІЙ

Анотація. Мета статті – розкрити відображення основних аспектів повномасштабного етапу російсько-української війни аналітиками Центру східних студій імені Марєка Карпа. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на принципах об'єктивності, науковості, системності та історизму, а також застосуванні міждисциплінарного підходу. Використано структурно-функціональний та порівняльно-історичний методи. **Наукова новизна статті** полягає у спробі розкриття особливостей висвітлення сучасного етапу російської агресії проти України співробітниками ЦСС імені Марєка Карпа. **Висновки.** Отже, оглядачі ЦСС упродовж другого року російсько-української війни досить ретельно стежили за усіма подіями (як на зовнішній, так і на внутрішній арені). На думку аналітиків ЦСС, символічною датою завершення другого року війни став вихід ЗСУ із Авдіївки (19 лютого 2024 р.). У своїх текстах аналітики ЦСС найбільше уваги приділяють бойовим діям на фронті, політичним процесам, соціально-економічним, інформаційно-безпековим, екологічним, освітнім, культурним, релігійним проблемам, політиці західних країн щодо війни та загальному безпеці в Європі. Упродовж цього року основна увага оглядачів була прикута до боїв за Бахмут, розпочатого ЗСУ 4 червня контрнаступу, відновлення транспортного коридору Чорним морем, досягнутого завдяки ударам по кораблях Чорноморського флоту, експорту зернових, атаки українських дронів на військові, енергетичні та нафтові об'єкти на території Російської Федерації, вступ України у ЄС, підписання безпекових угод та внутрішніх процесах у ній тощо. Водночас аналітики у своїх публікаціях виявляють й цілу низку негативних чинників, які безпосередньо впливали на фронт – корупційні скандали, політична конкуренція, яка досягла піку звільненням Валерія Залужного з посади Головнокомандувача тощо. Отже, читач має змогу отримати цілісне уявлення про головні аспекти війни. Мабуть, основним висновком є думка директора Центру східних студій Войцєх Конончук, що Україні для захисту та перемоги необхідне озброєння, а відповідно – політична воля та швидкі рішення західних країн.

Ключові слова: російсько-українська війна, реценція, Україна, Центр східних студій імені Марєка Карпа, бойові дії.

The Problem Statement. Over the past two years, various aspects of the Russo-Ukrainian war have been actively discussed on various world platforms. At the same time, the circle of people who join such discussions is quite wide. First of all, let's name those who elucidate these issues professionally. In this context, it is necessary to mention the work of analysts of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies during the second year of the war. Compared to the first year, the number of reviewers has slightly increased. Among them are Andrzej Wilk, Piotr Żochowski, Jakub Ber, Jacek Tarociński, Sławomir Matuszak, Krzysztof Niecypor, Jakub Gratsa, Justyna Hotkowska, Witold Rodkiewicz, Lidia Gibadlo, Tadeusz Ivanski, Philip Rudnik, Iwona Wisniewska, and the others.

The Review of Recent Researches. The problems of the Russo-Ukrainian war (2014 – 2024) in general and its full-scale stage, in particular, were covered both in scientific and popular science texts. Scholars analyzed various aspects of this more than a decade-long war. First of all, there should be mentioned thorough researches by Larysa Yakubova (Yakubova, 2023) and Serhii Plokhii (Плохий, 2023). The origins of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict and Moscow's purposeful anti-Ukrainian policy were elucidated by Oleksiy Pokotylo and Oleksandr Nashyvochnikov (Pokotylo, & Nashyvochnikov, 2021). The main prerequisites, means and methods of conducting a hybrid war against Ukraine by the Russian Federation were analyzed by Olena Bilinchak, Anatoly Huz (Bilichak, & Huz, 2024). Continuing the study of the issue of information warfare, Vasyl Ilnytskyi, Volodymyr Starka and Mykola Haliv focused on the main propaganda measures used by Russia in preparation for armed aggression against Ukraine (Ilnytskyi, Starka & Haliv, 2022). The formation of civil society institutions through the prism of challenges that arose under the conditions of the Russo-Ukrainian war (2014–2022) was researched by Nataliya Kravets, Vitaly Barvinenko (Kravets, & Barvinenko, 2024).

The issue of the Russo-Ukrainian war was analyzed by Antonina Boichuk, Nataliya Ilnytska and Nazariy Zadorozhnyi on the pages of the scientific publications “Eastern European Historical Bulletin” and “Military Scientific Bulletin” (Boichuk & Ilnytska, 2023; Zadorozhnyi & Boichuk, 2023). Various aspects of the Russo-Ukrainian war were covered in the columns of The New York Times newspaper. It was Yuriy Ofitsynskyi who conducted an analytical review of the publication and singled out the main thematic areas (Ofitsynskyi, 2018). The issues of the Russo-Ukrainian war were analyzed in modern dissertation studies by Yuriy Ofitsynskyi and Liliya Hrynyk (Ofitsynskyi & Hrynyk, 2023). Borys Drohomiretskyi made an attempt to study the historiographic research of the modern Russo-Ukrainian war comprehensively (Drohomiretskyi, 2022).

The Polish reception of the Russo-Ukrainian war was the object of many historiographical studies (Masnenko, Telvak, Yanyshyn & Telvak, 2021). Analysis of the reflection of the beginning of the full-scale stage of the Russo-Ukrainian military conflict by the Polish journalists was studied by Oksana Medvid (Medvid, 2022). The authors of this article found out the peculiarities of understanding of the first year of the full-scale stage of Putin's aggression by analysts of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies in Warsaw (Telvak & Ilnytskyi, 2023).

The purpose of the article is to elucidate the reflection of the main aspects of the full-scale stage of the Russo-Ukrainian war by analysts of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies.

The Research Results. Carefully observing the events of the second year of Russia's war against Ukraine and analyzing them, the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies prepared a

significant number of texts during the period from February 24, 2023 to February 20, 2024. In their analytical comments, they focus on combat operations at the front, political processes, socio-economic, information security, environmental, educational, cultural, religious problems, the policy of Western countries regarding war and security in Europe in general.

First of all, in their publications, the analysts of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies made detailed reviews of military operations at the front. The majority of the publications are on combat actions (defensive and offensive). In the publications there is actually conducted a day-by-day review of the course of the war, analyzed the most important events (battles for Bakhmut, Avdiivka, counteroffensive in Zaporizhzhia direction) in detail. Emphasis is also placed on the Ukrainian attacks on the Crimean and Chonhar bridges. Publications of the second year of the war begin with information about the defensive battles for Bakhmut. Probably, the largest number of texts belongs to the author tandem of Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski. Their review opens the research of the second year of the war (February 24, 2023). In the review there is noted the tenacious defense of the Ukrainian military, which slowed down the enemy's advance, while at the same time providing the opportunity to fight back in certain areas of the front successfully, push back the occupiers to previous positions, and seize the initiative. In general, the losses on both sides were determined to be numerous. Breakthroughs of the Ukrainian defense were local in nature (mostly several hundred meters, less often – kilometers), and it was not considered appropriate to write about a large-scale breakthrough at the front and the deployment of a wider Russian offensive in Donbas (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023b). On March 3, 2023, the same observers continued to write about a difficult situation of the Bakhmut defenders (destroyed and broken communication routes, complicated food supply and evacuation of the wounded), taking a defensive position, they were constantly pushed to other positions (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023p). On March 6, Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski confirmed the slowing down of the offensive in order to rest and probably reduce their own losses, emphasizing the exhaustion of the Ukrainian forces. The above mentioned authors wrote about the main direction of the Russian offensive – Chasiv Yar and the towns located to the north of it (in fact, the natural defensive line of the north-western part of Donetsk region) (Wilk, Żochowski, 2023o). Monitoring the withdrawal of the Russian troops to the northwest of Avdiivka, the reviewers emphasized as early as March 20, 2023 that the withdrawal created a threat to encirclement of Avdiivka and a repetition of the operation to occupy Bakhmut (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023j). In the next publication (May 12, 2023), the purpose and goals of the Ukrainian counterattacks near Bakhmut are analyzed (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023s).

In the context of hostilities, a significant number of publications are on the preparation and conduct of the Ukrainian counteroffensive. For example, Andrzej Wilk, Jakub Ber, Kamil Kłysiński note the softening of the statements regarding a probable counteroffensive, which they directly associate with the supply of weapons (primarily heavy and aviation). At the same time, the number of casualties is also mentioned, citing data from the Pentagon (ratio 1 to 1.66 in favour of the Ukrainians) and representatives of the Ukrainian government O. Danilov, H. Maliar (1 to 7–10 occupiers) (Wilk, Ber & Kłysiński, 2023a). Instead, Andrzej Wilk, Piotr Żochowski, and Jakub Ber write about the Ukrainian counteroffensive on June 4, which began with the breakthrough of the defense lines in the direction of Mariupol and intensification of operations in the north-east of Donetsk region (such actions were considered a diversionary maneuver for the success of operations in the south) (Wilk, Żochowski, Ber, 2023). The main goal of the counteroffensive was seen as the interruption of Russia's land

corridor with the Crimea (at the same time, nine brigades trained and armed by partners remained in reserve) (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023q). Continuing to analyze the possibilities of conducting hostilities (June 20, 2023), the Polish reviewers note a significant lack of artillery and aviation, which there was nothing to compensate for, however, the worst thing was that the military units suffered irreversible losses in the battles, believing that even if broke through the first line of defense of the russians, the losses incurred would not allow them to develop a further offensive and would cut off the Crimea from land communication with russia (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023n).

The Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies analysts followed the course of the counteroffensive. In particular, on July 4, 2023 Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski concluded that the month of hostilities in general did not make it possible to break through the first line of defense in the south. Instead, in the area of Velyka Novosilka, it was possible to advance 8 km and regain control over seven towns, and further military operations entered the phase of a positional war. Attacks took place with much smaller forces than at the beginning of the offensive (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023h). Therefore, these authors, referring to V. Zaluzhnyi's article, write about the first official confirmation of the failed Ukrainian counteroffensive, emphasizing at the same time, that in the publication V. Zaluzhnyi took responsibility for its improper preparation and implementation, admitting underestimation of the russian forces potential. The general also noted other factors that influenced this failure – the lack of fighter jets and long-range missiles, a slow supply of offensive weapons, weather conditions (rain, mud). The emphasis was on the need for a regular supply of weapons in order to continue the “war of maneuver” (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023k).

The above-mentioned analysts attached a particular importance to the new opportunities for the Ukrainian forces to strike deep into the russian territory with the help of drones made by the Ukrainian engineers using foreign components (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023r). There was also the discussion on the issue of the first use of ATACMS missiles with a cluster warhead (for the destruction of manpower and lightly armored targets), however, the older model M39 by the Ukrainians. Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski emphasize that the Ukrainians, in addition, received missiles with a range of 250 km from Great Britain (Storm Shadow) and France (SCALP) (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023m).

Analysts analyzed the russian offensive on the border of Kharkiv, Luhansk and Donetsk regions. They emphasized the stability of the Ukrainian defense line and determined the main goal of the russians – to reach the line of the Oskil River in order to gain an advantage in natural obstacles, and then, having strengthened this section, transfer the military forces and proceed to the offensive in other areas (Ber, Żochowski & Tarociński, 2023).

In a new publication, Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski emphasized Ukraine's preparation for the next stage – a war of position. It is noted that the winter significantly slowed down the intensity of hostilities, small groups of servicemen were involved in attacks, without the use of armored vehicles. Instead, although slow, the advance of the russians, in their opinion, showed the fatigue of the Ukrainian servicemen from the war and absence of long rotations (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023l). Continuing to analyze russia's war in Ukraine, Andrzej Wilk, Jakub Ber (December 28, 2023) note the restraint of comments by the Ukrainian military at the end of 2023 (as opposed to December of 2022). In particular, in their statements, theses about another difficult year of the war stand out, and as the main goal – preservation of the held territorial positions. Such a change in narratives was explained by the authors as the failure of counteroffensive, the loss of servicemen, and a significant reduction in the military

support of the West. That is, the messages were adapted to the real situation at the front. At the same time, it was written about the need to make changes to the mobilization rules. It was also written that the President, as the guarantor of the Constitution, responsible for planning and decisions on mobilization, avoided responsibility and did not explain to the public the complexity of the situation and a critical need to strengthen military reserves. Instead, General V. Zaluzhnyi made a positive impression on the analysts, who clearly defined the priorities and needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine for the third year of the war, without hiding the problems from the army and society (of course, as much as it is allowed to talk about it publicly) (Wilk & Ber, 2023).

Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski consider February 19, 2024, when the russian troops occupied Avdiyivka, which had not only a symbolic meaning (the fighting for it began back in 2014, and since then it has become a pillar of defense north of occupied Donetsk) as a kind of end to the second year of the war, but also strategic (the main fortified area of the first line of defense in Donetsk region). As a result, an operational space was opened for the further advance of the russian invaders to the west (Wilk & Żochowski, 2024c).

It is common knowledge that war takes place not only in the form of hostilities, but also in the form of information and propaganda operations. And it is precisely these issues the focus is in the publications of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies analysts. Thus, in the article (February 24, 2023) Andrzej Wilk, Piotr Żochowski also explain the russian information and propaganda operation (about a possible escalation on the northern border of Ukraine, in Transnistria), which was aimed at spreading misinformation, psychological influence, and therefore distraction the Ukrainian Defense Forces. The authors believe that the russians would not be able to attack Moldova from Transnistria due to a small military contingent (1,500 people). Although local armed provocations were not excluded (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023b). At the same time, Witold Rodkiewicz (June 23, 2023) writes about intensification of discussions regarding the possible use of nuclear weapons and war with NATO. The main goal of such information is seen as the desire to deprive Ukraine of Western support, convincing of its ineffectiveness and impracticality (Rodkiewicz, 2023). In this context, another author – Maria Domańska (February 9, 2024) quite correctly characterizes V. Putin's interview with T. Carson as “a large-scale propaganda operation of Russia”, which has both internal and external goals (Domańska, 2024).

The second, closely related to combat operations, is the issue of providing various types of support. Thus, Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski consider the decision to transfer MiG-29 fighters to Ukraine (more than 30 units in total) from Poland and Slovakia as an important political and military act. Nevertheless, they state that they will not change the situation at the front (although they will be able to shoot down the planes and missiles of the aggressors), primarily due to the limited ability to counter, for example, the modern Su-27 (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023g). The same authors reflect on the approval of the EU's seven-year programme of joint procurement and production of artillery (Wilk, Żochowski, 2023t). They write about the transfer of Patriot air defense systems to Ukraine, which will certainly increase the effectiveness of repelling missile attacks (individual russian missiles could not be shot down by the previously transferred NASAMS and IRIS-T systems) (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023d).

The issue of a regular and full supply of weapons to Ukraine by the allies is updated. It was the supply of weapons that made it possible not only to stop the russian aggressors, but also to recapture the occupied territory. However, in the spring of 2023, a shortage of artillery shells,

rockets, cartridges for bomb throwers and portable firearms began to be felt. It is noted that the supply of weapons at the level of 2022 covered only limited use – three times less than by the russians. The formation of a reserve necessary in the event of an increase in attacks by the russians seems urgent to the authors. The lack of a reserve could lead to the impossibility of waging an equal war (this motivated the need for a constant supply of all types of weapons – from cartridges to tanks and air defense). One of the main difficulties is determined by the reduction of stocks of the soviet weapons, the only way out is the rearmament of the Armed Forces with used and new models of Western weapons (Tarociński & Wilk, 2023). Andrzej Wilk's and Piotr Żohowski's next publication is about the creation of an air defense coalition, which was to be led by Germany and France (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023c).

In the next publication, well-known analysts emphasize the ever-increasing shortage of ammunition, especially artillery shells. At the same time, they claim that the EU does not have the technical ability to produce the necessary amount of ammunition, and the USA provides Israel with it. It is predicted that only in 2025, manufacturers will reach an average monthly capacity of 90-100 thousand missiles per month (russia increased production to 2 million units in 2023 and additionally purchased 500 thousand units from North Korea) (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023i).

One of the most relevant issues – the transfer of F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine – is considered by Jakub Ber, Jacek Tarociński, and Krzysztof Nieczypor, noting generally significant shifts in the West's self-restraint. However, they state that the number of units and the delivery schedule will not be able to make a noticeable impact on the battlefield. An important problem will be the maintenance of a proper technical condition of planes, as they are made many years ago, and wear and tear, the training of technical and flight personnel (a pilot training takes about six months, skill improvement takes two years, improvement to the instructor level takes five years) (Ber, Tarociński & Nieczypor, 2023). The same analysts continue (January 9, 2024) to consider the issue of the timing of the transfer of F-16. Referring to the Danish newspaper "Berlingske", they write about the postponement of the transfer of the first fighter jets for six months (the summer of 2024). In the publication, for its part, citing its own sources, there is explained this situation by the infrastructure's unpreparedness for the use of F-16 (Wilk & Żochowski, 2024b).

A significant number of publications are on foreign policy aspects. For example, Michal Bogusz and Krzysztof Nieczypor analyze China's game around the peaceful settlement of the Russo-Ukrainian war, which, in their opinion, is aimed at achieving its own interests. At the same time, a number of arguments are noted: the absence of demands to withdraw the russian troops from Ukraine, the appeal to a specific addressee in the demands to cease fire (thereby creating the impression of equal responsibility of the parties for the war), not using the term "war", but only "crisis", etc. Instead, analysts consider Beijing's initiatives aimed at splitting the Western coalition and not only in the context of the war in Ukraine, but also in the light of the China-American rivalry. Even more, with such demands, China indirectly provides political support to Russia (calling for the cancellation of "unilateral sanctions" imposed on the decision of the UN Security Council, "not to inflame the conflict", i.e. to stop supplying weapons). The authors correctly conclude that the Chinese peace plan is congruent with the russian propaganda (with the exception of references to NATO), an interest in its failure for a further use in propaganda against the US and in political interests in the global South (primarily due to the problem with sanctions, disruption of logistics in the supply of grain, which affects many developing countries) and seeking to change the established international

order and become the basis of a new international world order. For its part, Kyiv is trying (albeit unsuccessfully) to involve Beijing in ending the war, offering to act as a guarantor of Ukraine's security (Bogusz & Nieczypor, 2023).

Continuing to consider the issue of the peace treaty, the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies analysts analyze (June 21, 2023) the ideas of the African delegation regarding the settlement of the Russo-Ukrainian war, which are of an informal, general character, and because of this they believe that it cannot be called a peace plan, because it is not aimed at solving the main issues (withdrawal of troops, payment of reparations, bringing those guilty of armed aggression to justice, etc.). In addition, they admit that the mission had little chance of success, also because the Ukrainian counter-offensive began, each of the parties placed the main bet on a military solution to the war (Bartosiewicz & Nieczypor, 2023).

Michał Bogusz and Kamil Kłysiński consider in detail the arrival of O. Lukashenko (February 28 – March 2) and his reception in Beijing, which they consider to be a serious signal for Russia about the increasing influence of China in the post-Soviet space (Bogusz & Kłysiński, 2023). Special focus is on the visit of O. Scholz to the USA on March 2, 2023. This visit was defined as confirmation of Germany's role as a key partner of the USA in the European Union and American security guarantees for Europe. During the meeting of J. Biden and O. Scholz, a chief focus was on the Russian aggression in Ukraine (Gibadło, 2023). At the same time, Michał Bogusz and Witold Rodkiewicz focus on the analysis of Xi Jinping's trip to Moscow, noting the creation of an ever deeper coalition between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China in opposition to the West. This coalition is considered as a form of survival of authoritarian regimes and ruling groups (Bogusz, Rodkiewicz, 2023). An equally important publication (June 6, 2023) by Andrzej Wilk, Piotr Żochowski, and Witold Rodkiewicz, in which they emphasize that NATO's lack of reaction to the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus was perceived as an unequal treatment of the security of the countries on the eastern flank and will contribute to further aggressive Russia's actions not only against Ukraine, but also against Western countries (Wilk, Żochowski, Rodkiewicz, 2023). The legal and practical consequences of the international criminal court issuing a warrant (March 20, 2023) for V. Putin's arrest are also considered (Rodkiewicz & Menkiszak, 2023).

V. Zelenskyi's business trips abroad became important events in the foreign policy. For example, Lidia Gibadło, Krzysztof Nieczypor, and Jacek Tarociński in an article (May 16, 2023) focus considerable attention on his visit to Germany and meeting with O. Scholz (the eighth foreign meeting since the full-scale invasion). They explained the late trip as a delay in providing military aid to counter the Russian aggression. The visit proved the versatility of Germany's support for Ukraine in the political, economic, military, humanitarian, and financial spheres (Gibadło, Nieczypor & Tarociński, 2023). In foreign policy activities, V. Zelenskyi's visit to Bulgaria was of great importance. The main achievement is the agreement to support Ukraine's accession to NATO after the end of hostilities. In addition, the establishment of cooperation in nuclear energy (the parliament decided to sell to Ukraine the necessary equipment for installation at the Khmelnytsky NPP) (Kobeszko, 2023).

In the context of a foreign policy activity, Justyna Gotkowska, Krzysztof Nieczypor, Jakub Graza (January 16, 2024) consider Ukraine's agreement with Great Britain, quite correctly predicting that its content will become the basis for similar agreements with other countries (Canada, France). At the same time, it is noted that there were no clear "security guarantees" in the agreement, but President V. Zelenskyi, according to the analysts, "exaggerated the nature of the British obligations". This exaggeration was explained by a kind of appeasement

of the public and at the same time encouraging the signatories to make more ambitious promises, as well as disappointment due to the lack of an official invitation to NATO at the Vilnius summit and levelling of the Budapest memorandum of 1994. (Gotkowska, Niecypor & Graca, 2024). The analysts Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski write about the same agreements “on security and cooperation” with Germany and France, signed by President V. Zelenskyi on February 16 (February 20, 2024). There were primarily the following issues discussed: the allocation of a financial assistance and determined long-term support through the provision of military aid, deepening of economic cooperation, assistance in restoration of critical infrastructure, etc. (Wilk & Żochowski, 2024c).

The issue of Ukraine’s movement towards joining the European Union gained active consideration. In particular, Krzysztof Niecypor and Kamil Całus focused on Ukraine’s implementation of the recommendations of the European Commission regarding the start of negotiations on EU accession. It is believed that the task of reforming the procedure for selecting judges of the Supreme Court was the most important among the seven recommendations (introduction into legislation of the provision of opinions on the judges by the Consultative Group of Experts, in which the members selected by the international organizations will have a decisive vote). The reforms were also supposed to relate to deoliharchization (the introduced changes were criticized for violating the rights guaranteed by the European Charter of Human Rights) and reforming the legislation on the national minorities (the norm on quotas for the use of the national minority languages in education and mass media was criticized). The Polish analysts highlighted that the above-mentioned issue would continue to increase the tension in Ukraine’s relations with the neighbouring countries, for example, with Hungary, which for a long time insists on granting broad rights to the Hungarian minority as a precondition for Ukraine’s accession to the EU and NATO (Niecypor & Całus, 2023).

Furthermore, Krzysztof Niecypor and Ilona Gizińska turn to the analysis of Ukraine’s compliance with the requirements of the European Commission regarding the introduction of diverse legislative changes. The amendments to legislation on the national minorities was the first issue, which was considered as well as the most controversial one. According to the authors, there is one issue among the discriminatory ones that is the rule on the liquidation of schools for the national minorities and they should be supeseded by classes for the national minorities, with a full instruction in the language of the national minorities only at the primary level of education (grades 1–4). At the same time, they present the main arguments of the authorities that language plays an important role in protection against the separatist movements and provides an opportunity to deconstruct the myths of “Ruskyi myr”. There were also mentioned the obstacles created by Hungary on Ukraine’s path to NATO and the EU without the implementation of these measures (Niecypor & Gizińska, 2023). The above-mentioned issue was analyzed thoroughly by the analysts of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies (December 13, 2023). In particular, it covered the introduction of amendments to numerous normative acts regarding the national minorities, which mainly corresponded to the recommendations of the Electoral Commission and became a prerequisite for the opening of membership negotiations at the EU summit (December 14–15). These changes turned out to be the most difficult of the seven demands of the European Commission, as they related to the language of instruction of the national minorities in secondary education – it was not an obligation to teach the subjects “Ukrainian Language and Literature” and “History of Ukraine” in the state language. By taking the above-mentioned steps, it was possible to

settle a long-standing dispute, primarily with Hungary and Romania (Jędrysiak, Niecypor, Całus & Gizińska, 2023). In addition, they write about the opening of EU negotiations on the accession of Ukraine and Moldova. However, the adoption of the negotiation framework (requires unanimity) with Ukraine and Moldova is indicated as an important next stage, followed by the verification of internal regulatory documents for their compliance with EU legislation. In parallel, the EU countries must agree on the basic rules for accepting new members by June of 2024 (Niecypor, Szpala & Sadecki, 2023).

The Polish analysts did not omit mentioning the meeting between V. Orban and V. Putin, which they assess as Hungary's further departure from pro-Western policy and, accordingly, isolation in the EU and NATO. It is stated that V. Orban is the only leader from the EU countries, who met with V. Putin after the International Criminal Court warrant for his arrest, the second after the Chancellor of Austria since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. It is also noted that the Hungarian letterer consistently puts forward demands favourable to Russia: the lifting of sanctions, the termination of aid to Kyiv, the repetition of Moscow propaganda, the blocking of unfavourable decisions (Sweden's entry into NATO, a veto on the start of Ukraine's negotiations on joining the EU, etc.) (Sadecki & Rudnik, 2023). An analyst Lidiya Gibadło (February 13, 2024) focused on O. Scholz's visit to the USA. She stressed out that it took place at an extremely difficult time – discussions in Congress regarding the allocation of financial assistance to Ukraine. The Chancellor of Germany supported the policy of J. Biden, strengthened the image of a key ally in the European Union and supported Ukraine in the fight against Russia. Although the author believed that O. Scholz's trip was aimed at supporting J. Biden during the Presidential campaign (Gibadło, 2024).

There are numerous publications, which focus on economic issues. In this context, the following ones are important: harvest, export, etc. Thus, Slawomir Matuszak explains the decrease in harvest by a number of factors: occupation and mining of part of the fields, deterioration of weather conditions, etc. At the same time, the fall in productivity affected cheap types of export products (for example, corn), the cultivation of which was on the verge of profitability. On the contrary, expensive crops increased (for example, canola, soybeans, etc.). The expert predicted that foreign sales of grain would slow down even more significantly in 2023. However, after the cessation of hostilities and restoration of logistics lines, the growth of exports was naturally predicted (Matuszak, 2023c).

A significant array of publications is on the export of grain products. Thus, analysts clearly assess Russia's refusal to extend the grain agreement as an attempt to destabilize the world agricultural market and contribute to the growth of prices, and thus to the increase of its own income from the export of agricultural products (the market immediately reacted by raising prices). At the same time, these actions are evaluated from a political point of view – this is how the Russian Federation tests the unity of the Western coalition in the matter of sanctions policy and tries to aggravate the internal problems of the EU through the transit of Ukrainian grain by land routes. It was also emphasized that withdrawing from the agreement significantly undermined Turkey's position as a guarantor (Rudnik, Matuszak, Michalski, 2023). The same issue is continued to be researched by Slawomir Matuszak and Jakub Ber (December 22, 2023), who wrote about the launch of a new corridor (through Ukrainian territorial waters towards Romania), intended primarily for the export of Ukrainian agricultural products. At the same time, they note that this route, unlike the previous one, is not limited to the export of food, but is also actively used for the sale of other goods abroad (iron ore, metal products, etc.) (Matuszak, Ber, 2023).

Ivona Wiśniewska analyzes the economic situation, its future changes in Russia and the impact of the war it started (predicting an increase in inflation, an increase in costs, an increase in a domestic debt, cancellation of mortgage subsidy programme, an increase (by 10%) in utility payments, an increase in business taxes). The author is convinced that, despite everything, one should not expect protests from the Russians that could change this policy, on the contrary, deterioration of social conditions may even encourage young people to join the army (in order to receive high wages and benefits) (Wiśniewska, 2023a). On the anniversary of the full-scale invasion, this author writes about the expansion of sanctions against Russia by Western powers as an element of solidarity (along with a financial and military aid) with Ukraine and continued unity in its support. However, he states that with each subsequent package it becomes more and more difficult to reach a consensus among the allies (the economy of the EU countries also suffers an increase in losses) (Wiśniewska, 2023b). Sławomir Matuszak (March 24, 2023) calls the success of Ukrainian negotiators the achievement of agreements with the IMF (the approval of the programme of a country in which a full-scale war is ongoing) (Matuszak, 2023b).

An important component is the energy sector. The analytical publication focuses on the study of reflection in the German and American press of the investigation on the sabotage of the gas pipelines NS1 and NS2. It is noted that the majority of analysts are restrained in their assessments, however, they note the strengthening of the split in society and the use of this information to weaken military support for Ukraine (Kędzierski, 2023).

Analysts focus on the Russian missile attacks on the energy system of Ukraine and effectiveness of their repulsion. In particular, after the attack on March 9, 2023, Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski write about a change in the tactics of the Russians – a simultaneous use of several “Kynzhal” missiles to hit one target (they consider this to be indirect evidence of the problem of the Russians due to Western aid to Ukraine). The release of information about low effectiveness of the shooting down (34 missiles (36%) out of 95 were hit) is considered a pressure on partners to increase and accelerate the supply of air defense systems (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023f).

Writing about the Russian terrorist attacks on March 10, 2023, Sławomir Matuszak notes that since October 2022, Russia has carried out 15 massive missile strikes. Despite everything, the analyst believes that the missile terror did not succeed – there was no energy collapse, the energy system continued operating. Among favourable factors, he singles out the support of Western countries with equipment, a relatively warm winter, precipitation that contributed to a greater production of electricity at hydroelectric power stations, reconstruction of the power unit at the Rivne NPP, etc. (Matuszak, 2023a).

Ecological losses became some especially acute problems, which were reflected by the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies analysts. In particular, writing about the destruction of valuable (June 13, 2023) ecosystems on the territory of the Nyzhniy Dnipro National Park, Jakub Ber, Sławomir Matuszak note that the ecology has suffered colossal losses (the Dnipro was polluted by sewage, dead animals, construction debris, chemicals washed from the fields, mass death of fish was observed), the problem of providing towns with drinking water (for example, Berdiansk, Melitopol, Kryvyi Rih), the loss of capacities in the power system and the loss of necessary water resources in the production processes of metallurgical enterprises (Ber & Matuszak, 2023). Separately, Jakub Ber refers to the consequences of the Russian aggression on the natural environment in Ukraine as “ecocide” and “war against nature”. And the lack of access to the occupied territories and the territories where hostilities are taking

place makes it impossible for experts to make a real calculation of the losses, and they will become known only after a long time (flooding of mines in Donbas causes land collapse and salinization of groundwater), expansion of the “dead water zone” in the Black Sea, the death of endemic plant and animal populations, a decrease in the number of certain animal species, etc. He sees the only positive impact on nature through the destruction of large industrial enterprises that used outdated cleaning technologies, and the cessation of their work allows the environment to recover (Ber, 2023c). The publications raised the issue of demining the territory of Ukraine in the western part of the Black Sea basin (Nieczytor, 2023).

The issues of personnel changes in the Armed Forces were reflected in the publications of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies analysts. For example, about the resignation of the commander of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in Donbas Moskaliov. Writing about the difficult military situation in Donbas, Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski consider this personnel rotation to be a manifestation, on the one hand, of a loss of trust in him by the leadership, and on the other hand, an attempt to make him guilty in the case of Bakhmut's capture. Leaving the position of the commander of the United Forces vacant was received as an alarming signal (Wilk & Żochowski, 2024a). Other personnel changes in the defense sector were considered, first of all, the dismissal of O. Reznikov and the appointment of R. Umerov, as well as officials of the Ministry for Defense of Ukraine. Emphasizing the main reasons – numerous scandals related to the purchase of products, equipment, inventory for the army and the mobilization process (Ber, Żochowski, 2023b). In another long article (February 9, 2024), authoritative Polish commentators Jakub Ber, Piotr Żochowski, and Tadeusz Iwański emphasize the misunderstanding and even criticism (of a large part of the military, volunteers, and the public) of V. Zelenskyi's decision to dismiss V. Zaluzhnyi from the post of Commander-in-Chief. At the same time, they note that such a decision was not properly substantiated, since V. Zaluzhnyi had the highest rating of trust and support in society, even despite the counteroffensive failure, he became a symbol of the struggle of the Ukrainian people against the Russian aggression. They even write about the massacre of a political opponent: “The President systematically undermined the positions of the Commander-in-Chief, violating the principle of a unified command and hierarchy in the Armed Forces”, giving orders directly to V. Zaluzhnyi's subordinates, carrying out personnel rotations without his approval, etc. As a result, such actions led to the formation of “competing factions that have a high degree of autonomy and direct ties to the Office of the President” in the army. Instead, they emphasize that V. Zaluzhnyi avoided an open conflict with the President (Ber, Żochowski & Iwański, 2024).

In the publication (February 13, 2024), Jakub Ber describes personnel changes in administrative, organizational and planning positions. He notes that they were received in the army well, especially considering that several junior officers who enjoyed considerable authority and had previous combat experience in the Russo-Ukrainian war were promoted, made their way from commanders of battalions in 2014 – 2015, and thus, to commanders of brigades or operational groups in 2022 – 2024. In addition, they participated in foreign missions, international exercises, obtained military education diploma or completed training courses in the armies of NATO countries. However, the issue of staffing command positions at the front (operational strategic groups and operational groups) remained acute. The appointment of junior officers to higher positions is considered a skillful move by V. Zelenskyi, aimed at reducing dissatisfaction with the resignation of V. Zaluzhnyi in the army and society (Ber, 2023b).

A number of other equally important events related to the Russo-Ukrainian war were also reflected in the reviews of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies analysts. In particular, the special features of the Kremlin's "regulation" of the status of residents of the occupied territories through the forced granting of the Russian citizenship, and those who did not agree to receive it, were planned to be deported to remote areas of Russia, instead of which the territory would be populated by poor Russians from the remote areas. In this way, it was planned to clear the occupied territories from possible resistance of "disloyal" Ukrainians, reducing resistance to the Russification policy (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023e).

A chaotic nature of mobilization, lack of a proper digital database with registers of conscripts, and obsolescence of existing paper database, which makes it impossible to track the internal movement of the population (lack of information on conscripted men with military experience), were not overlooked by the Polish analysts of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies. As a result, a chaotic nature of mobilization caused summonses which are served in the streets and at workplaces (Ber, 2023a).

The Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies analyst Jadwiga Rogoża focuses on the important problem of an extremely rapid population decline, which in a short term, in her opinion, actualizes the need to attract labour from immigrants from African and Central Asian countries. At the same time, European countries, where a significant number of the Ukrainian refugees are located, are interested in keeping them, primarily because of their own demographic problems. Such circumstances may lead to tension in relations between Kyiv and other countries. Among the factors that will contribute to the return of the Ukrainians, serious transformations and progress on the way to the EU are mentioned. Instead, the lack of prospects for reform, jobs, infrastructure restoration, and opportunities for personal and professional development will lead to a further outflow of citizens abroad (Rogoża, 2023).

Religious processes in Ukraine do not go unnoticed. In particular, Jadwiga Rogoża, Katarzyna Chawryło (April 14, 2023) analyze efforts to weaken the influence of the UOC-MP on the Ukrainians (Rogoża & Chawryło, 2023).

A significant part of the publications is dedicated to the review of socio-political and economic processes in Russia. In particular, Jakub Ber and Piotr Żochowski write (April 14, 2023) about the difficulties of the mobilization campaign in Russia (first of all, the lack of up-to-date data on conscripts, attempts to avoid military service), as a consequence of conducting it in a hidden format (Ber & Żochowski, 2023a).

Analyzing the drone attacks on the Kremlin (May 5, 2023), Andrzej Wilk and Piotr Żochowski do not reject the version that this could have been an insinuation by the FSB (as a basis for an internal strengthening of military rhetoric, for an external one – justification for refusing negotiations, spreading propaganda narratives and increasing nuclear blackmail) (Wilk & Żochowski, 2023a).

There are a number of publications on the rebellion of E. Prigozhin. A thorough analysis of its beginning was made by Marek Menkišak (June 24, 2023). In particular, he considers it the culmination of a long conflict between the leadership of Wagner's group and the highest military command (S. Shoigu, V. Gerasimov). The author considered the main goal in the attempt to subordinate Wagner's units directly to the Ministry for Defense and the desire of Ye. Prigozhin to take advantage of the minimal success from the capture of Bakhmut to obtain greater political and business opportunities. Marek Menkišak admits that there are few chances to achieve changes in the military and civil administration, primarily due to the disproportion of forces and means. Therefore, he predicted the of the uprising suppression,

and Prigozhin should either be killed or arrested. Although the author suggests that if there are no clashes with regular army units and no resistance from larger military units, then moral spirit may drop and the decay of Putin's regime will accelerate, causing a "palace coup". In this case, he assumes that control could be taken over by Prime Minister Mykhailo Mishustin and Moscow Mayor Serhii Sobiakin, who will negotiate with Ye. Prigozhin on the division of power (Menkiszak, 2023). Piotr Żochowski develops this issue, analyzing Ye. Prigozhin's refusal to continue the offensive on Moscow. Highlighting several main theses – weakness of Putin's position, who did not give the order to destroy the "rebels", weakness of the state security system, hence the loss of Ye. Prigozhin's control over his group and departure to Belarus (control passed to the Ministry for Defense) (Żochowski, 2023). Maria Domańska and Piotr Żochowski consider this issue in detail, calling the death of Ye. Prigozhin a special operation of V. Putin to eliminate the rebels, rejecting the version that Ye. Prigozhin staged his own death. The authors considered this a signal sent to all potential opponents of the regime and in this way strengthening V. Putin's positions, which were shaken. There are also mentioned secret spot repressions against security forces (primarily the armed forces) and representatives of radical movements who had relations with Wagner's group (Domańska & Żochowski, 2023).

The Conclusions. Thus, during the second year of the Russo-Ukrainian war, the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies analysts followed all the events (both in foreign and domestic arenas) quite carefully. According to them, the withdrawal of the Armed Forces from Avdiyivka (February 19, 2024) was the symbolic date of the end of the second year of war. In their publications, the analysts focus on combat operations at the front, political processes, socio-economic, information security, environmental, educational, cultural, religious problems, the policy of Western countries regarding war and security in Europe in general. During this year, the chief focus of analysts was on the battles for Bakhmut, the counteroffensive launched by the Armed Forces of Ukraine on June 4, the restoration of the transport corridor through the Black Sea, achieved owing to strikes on the ships of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, grain exports, attacks by the Ukrainian drones on military, energy and oil facilities on the territory of the Russian Federation, Ukraine's entry into the EU, the signing of security agreements and internal processes within it, etc. At the same time, in their publications, analysts also mention a number of negative factors that directly affected the front – corruption scandals, political competition, which reached its peak with the dismissal of Valery Zaluzhnyi from the post of Commander-in-Chief, etc. In this way, the reader can get a holistic view of the main aspects of the war. Perhaps the main conclusion is the opinion of the director of the Marek Karp Centre for Eastern Studies, Wojciech Kononchuk, that Ukraine needs weapons for defense and victory, and, accordingly, the political will and quick decisions of Western countries.

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