

# NATO's Factor in Ensuring the National Security of Modern Ukraine

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## Summary

The study is based on the elaborated normative and legal documentation regulating the national security of modern Ukraine and the normative and legal documents adopted by NATO in the responding policy to the challenges that arose after 2014. The main advantages of cooperation with NATO are ensuring military security, developing army standards, improving the country's investment climate, and reducing expenditures on the army. The disadvantages of cooperation with NATO in hostilities with Russia are not highlighted. Still, defined obstacles show that Ukraine is not ready to realize entry into NATO in the short term. Such factors include weak information support, corruption, and unclear diplomatic decisions.

## Key words:

*NATO, national security, hybrid warfare, strategy.*

## 1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, the problem of ensuring national security in the face of various threats is becoming increasingly urgent. It is especially true for threats formed by hybrid warfare and aggressive nonmilitary actions to damage national security and stability. Thus, with the rapid development of information technology, it is no longer necessary to resort to open-armed aggression to inflict tangible losses on the enemy. Sometimes it is enough to disable some infrastructure or core social, economic, or military resources of the state.

The Russian Federation's hybrid aggression since 2014 has demonstrated the imperfection of the global and regional security system. It has changed attitudes toward security and questioned the established world order at the end of the Cold War. At the same time, the Russian Federation's actions became a powerful incentive for some countries and international organizations to revise their conceptual approaches to state and society sustainability considering the new conditions (Misiura, et al., 2018).

Activation of the relevance of the topic of the NATO factor in ensuring the national security of modern Ukraine has gained significant momentum since 2014. Since that time, Ukraine has shown active requests to initiate closer cooperation with the Alliance, trying to adapt the political-economic sphere to increase its chances of joining NATO and the EU. Moreover, NATO's policy of developing and reorganizing its activities has become more active in the context of the escalating conflict between Ukraine and Russia (Khavarivska, 2020).

Before 2014, Ukrainians had believed that Ukraine should remain non-aligned and remain neutral on participation in international military organizations. This decision allowed to keep a balance between East and West, but only by the time when this neutrality led to the loss of part of Ukraine's territory. In addition, the loss of state territories was accompanied by daily deaths of military personnel defending the border with the occupied territories. Today, both the population and the authorities have firmly established strategic directions for developing national security in the future membership of NATO and the EU. Many experts say that accession to NATO will escalate the conflict and make the beginning of full-scale hostilities impossible, which will allow Ukrainians to feel safe. To date, politicians and experts believe that the possibility of joining NATO should make a historical chance, Ukraine must take (UkrInform, 2019). But on the way to this goal, Ukraine faces many threats, problems, and incompatible conditions that require urgent solutions. On the one hand, NATO in ensuring national security serves as a positive factor in preserving national security. On the other hand, NATO is a factor of complex, multi-stage, long-term actions, which should be started as soon as possible. This fact makes the relevance of the research and its *practical value*, as identification of the main problems and development of directions of their solution allows to provide the national security of modern Ukraine by joining NATO.

The study aims to determine the positive factors and problems of Ukrainian national security forming through accession to NATO.

## 2. Literature review

There are many works devoted to general issues of national security in Ukraine. The main place among them belongs to the co-author of the National Security Strategy of Ukraine, many draft laws, conceptual scientific strategies, and political programs in the field of national security of Ukraine Sytnyk, G. et al. (2016), as well as the works of Tsiganov, V. (2004), Gorbulin, V. et al. (2009), Bogdanov, V. et al. (2007).

The concept of "national security" scientists understand as the protection of the vital social and state interests from internal and external threats, which ensures sustainable and progressive development of the country. A definition of concept "national security" modern researchers base on understanding of security as a condition, degree of protection of national values; absence of threats; primary condition of vital activity of an individual, society and the state; set of measures of security; the ability of a particular security object to keep its features and properties in the conditions of potential or actual threat; system consisting of elements and constructed on principles of integrity, stability, the interaction of the whole system of national security.

The "national security" category is closely connected with the "system of national security" category. This concept includes a set of state and non-state bodies ensuring the security of an individual, society, and the state at different levels (Tsiganov, 2004). The use of this concept contributes to the disclosure of the essence and content of the state policy process to ensure national security as a direct function of the state. Ensuring national security is the main task of state policy (Gorbulin, et al., 2009). The main conceptual approaches, identifying ways to ensure national security, are coordinating the authorities' activities, creating the necessary structures in the system to ensure national security, initiating and conducting public discussions on national security, and the legislative approach.

The issue of the NATO factor in the national security of modern Ukraine began to be actively researched by domestic scientists Zamana, V. (2013), Silaev, N. (2018), Brieznieva, T. (2017), and many others. The issue became particularly relevant in 2014 when Ukraine took several steps to cooperate with NATO and accelerate the possibility of accession to the Alliance.

Another impetus to the activation of scientific research in this area is the approval in 2020 of the National Security Strategy of Ukraine (2020) with the name "Human Security – Security of the Country." The primary strategy is based on the protection of rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of Ukraine. The document reveals the current and projected threats to the national security and interests of Ukraine. It determines that the Russian Federation as an aggressor state is a source of long-term systemic threats to Ukraine's national security.

In addition to military threats, it identifies corruption, inconsistency, and low efficiency of state authorities as the main threats to overcome, which the National Security Strategy is aimed at. This strategy defines priorities of national interests, among which is the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Furthermore, European and Euro-Atlantic integration in line with EU and NATO membership is a priority.

At the same time, modern scientific research relevant to the newly adopted strategic approaches of national security formation in the conditions of cooperation and membership in NATO is insufficient. This fact confirms the relevance of this study and its scientific value.

## 3. Research Methods and Methodology

In order to determine the scientific and theoretical support of the national security of modern Ukraine, a study of scientific works defining the concept of national security, the essential theoretical foundations of the national security of modern Ukraine was carried out. Also, interviews and reports of Ukrainian and international politicians, officials, and experts were analyzed concerning the preconditions, potential threats, prospects, and the current state of Ukraine's cooperation with NATO.

The chronology of relations between Ukraine and NATO was investigated through literature analysis and systematization of information. By grouping data, the main problems and prospects of current and further cooperation were identified. The use of deductive and inductive methods developed directions for accelerating Ukraine's integration into the Alliance.

The research also used the results of surveys conducted by the Razumkov Center to collect information about Ukrainians' attitudes toward NATO membership. The results of information collection allow for confirming the relevance of the study. In addition,

graphical methods and infographics were used to present the results of the study visually.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

Since 2014, full-scale aggression by the Russian Federation has continued in Ukraine, which has all the typical manifestations of so-called "hybrid warfare. The beginning of hostilities was characterized by the inability to respond adequately to the existing threats. So, at the beginning of March 2014, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine appealed to NATO for help. The deputies appealed to the North Atlantic Alliance to use all opportunities to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

2014 became the starting point when Ukraine abandoned its neutral status and changed its governance towards NATO. The reaction of NATO and the EU was swift. In September 2014, during the Wales Summit, the North Atlantic Council approved the "NATO Readiness Action Plan" to respond to changes in the global environment.

The document consisted of "Safeguard Measures" and "Adaptation Measures," which called for an immediate increase in military presence and activity to ensure security and deterrence on the Alliance's eastern flank. The document also called for long-term changes in NATO to enable a more rapid response to emergencies, wherever they might arise. Specifically, the proposed measures were aimed at:

- strengthening the defense capabilities of the Alliance by increasing the number of military equipment and personnel of military units, including land, air, and sea components;
- increasing the mobility and responsiveness of units;
- improving troop management by establishing appropriate command (headquarters) structures, enhancing cooperation and coordination between Alliance structures and national armed forces, and reviewing and updating defense plans concerning the Eastern European region;
- increasing the number of exercises and drills aimed at practicing crisis management and collective defense measures;
- increased protection of national infrastructure of eastern allies;
- increasing the intelligence capabilities (NATO, 2014).

It should be noted that preparedness to respond to threats of all origins is essential for the national resilience system. That is why the Alliance is paying

special attention to the changes that have taken place in the security environment.

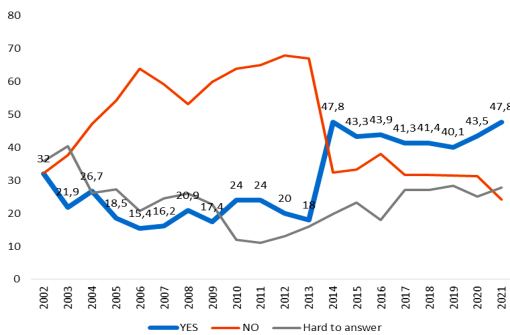
In the context of implementing the NATO Readiness Action Plan, in December 2015, Alliance foreign ministers adopted a new Hybrid Warfare Response Strategy, the main provisions of which include:

- improved intelligence sharing and early warning mechanisms for predicting and recording hybrid military activities (primarily by the Russian Federation);
- the use by state and non-state actors in countering hybrid threats of large-scale and closely linked traditional and non-traditional means, overt and covert military force, paramilitary formations, and civilian measures;
- developing a set of early warning indicators to elaborate different crisis response options;
- the possibility of a NATO North Atlantic Council decision to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty to counter hybrid warfare within the framework of collective defense;
- continuing effective cooperation and coordination with its partners and relevant international organizations (in particular the EU), following agreements aimed at countering hybrid warfare (NATO, 2016).

In June 2016, at a meeting of NATO defense ministers, Alliance defense leaders agreed on new measures to strengthen NATO's defense and deterrence capabilities and endorsed "Guiding Principles for Resilience," which are as follows:

- assured effectiveness of government and critical government services;
- a sustainable supply of energy;
- the ability to effectively deal with the uncontrolled movement of people;
- sustainable sources of food and water;
- the ability to deal with significant loss of life;
- sustainable civilian communications systems;
- sustainable transportation systems (NATO, 2016).

– The people of Ukraine also supported the government's actions to establish closer cooperation with NATO. At the same time, we should note that before 2014 the residents of Ukraine had their own opinion on cooperation and accession to NATO for quite a long time. By 2014 the population of the country was categorically against joining NATO. Still, the emergence of the escalating conflict in the East of Ukraine radically changed the population's attitude to the development of the national security of modern Ukraine (see Fig. 1).

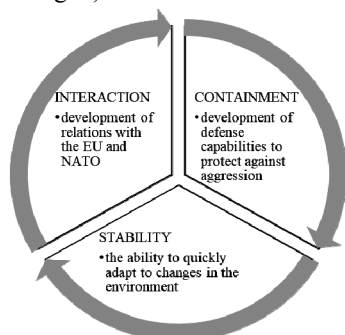


**Fig. 1.** Opinion of the Ukrainian population on Ukraine's accession to NATO

According to the Razumkov Center survey of 2021, which was published in the journal Word and Deed, we can see that in 2021 47.8% support Ukraine's accession to NATO (Word and Deed, 2021). At the same time, understanding the changes in the population's attitude to the formation of national security, the Ukrainian government has created a legislative basis for such accession to become possible.

Thus, on December 14, 2020. The President of Ukraine put into effect the National Security and Defense Council "On the National Security Strategy of Ukraine" (2020). This document is approved with the title "Human Security – Security of the Country. However, the Strategy structure is very different from the previous versions, adopted in 2007, 2012, and 2015. In particular, the Strategy is the primary document of long-term planning, which defines the current threats to the national security of Ukraine, appropriate goals and objectives, and mechanisms for the protection of its national interests. It is the basis for the planning and implementation of state policy in the field of national security.

The new National Security Strategy of Ukraine is based on coherence, sustainability, and cooperation principles (see Fig. 2).



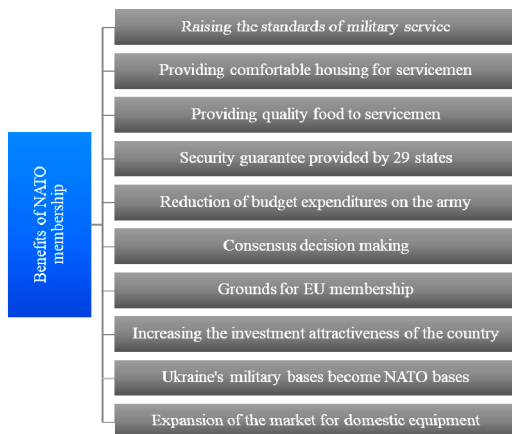
**Fig. 2** Main principles of the National security strategy of Ukraine

According to this strategy, Euro-Atlantic integration is a priority of Ukraine's national interests and a method of ensuring national security. At the same time, it is determined that this priority's implementation is ensured by developing a unique partnership with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to obtain full membership of Ukraine in NATO.

To date, there are disagreements in society regarding Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration. However, given the strategic goals of Ukraine's national security development, one should realize the inevitability of this integration, which will radically change all approaches to the formation of national security as a result. At the same time, experience shows that for most countries that have joined NATO and the EU, the consequences of such cooperation are positive. For example, during sociological polls, in Poland, quite recently, the country's public was not very enthusiastic about NATO membership. Thus, according to the report of the German Marshall Foundation, in 2012, only 45% of Polish citizens believed that the North Atlantic Alliance was important for Poland's security. The invasion of Iraq was supported by only 26% of Poles (at least in EU countries), the military intervention in Afghanistan was supported by 27% (Wiadomosci, 2012). However, integration happened, and all the worries of the population, inspired by pro-Russian media, did not materialize.

Similarly, for Ukraine, membership in NATO would have benefits, as reflected in Figure 3.

Professor of Political Science of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy Olexiy Haran noted that the main advantages of Ukraine's membership in NATO are ensuring military security, which no other military alliance in the world can provide by the alternative offer. Moreover, NATO is a military and a political-military bloc, the membership in which allows reforming armed forces, strengthening civilian control over military forces and intelligence services. In addition, as a member of NATO, Ukraine receives the protection of capital, which will attract more investment in the development of the state. Decreased defense spending will also be necessary, as only Ukraine's government funds are used to develop the army, while NATO membership involves joint military budgeting.

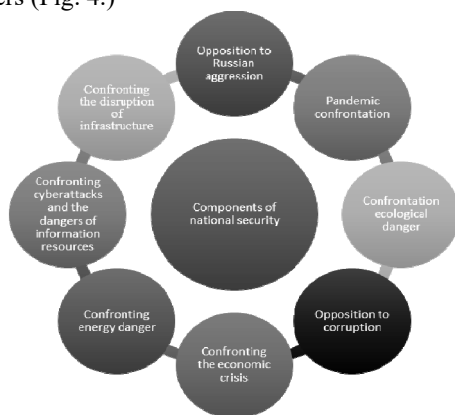


**Fig. 3** Advantages of Ukraine's membership in NATO

Abstracting from the military context, we can note that Ukraine faces questions not only about defense sufficiency (Zamana, 2013). The number of troops, their quality, and the configuration of the entire military organization of the state are also relevant issues. However, the advantages of NATO membership are not only about military security. It also allows to solve many other global problems:

- civil-military planning;
- cyber defense;
- information sharing;
- analysis and coordinated strategic communication to identify disinformation and transmit truthful information.

It should be noted that the National Security Strategy of Ukraine provides for the practicality of cooperation with the EU and NATO to ensure military security and ensure the interests of the population. In 2021 the Strategy must consider the recent changes related to the crisis phenomena in the world economy, the spread of COVID-19 disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, and the increased danger of natural and man-made disasters (Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4.** Components of national security in the context of NATO integration

In general, the Strategy considers all possible global risks – from external aggression to climate change and pandemic coronavirus. That is why it is important that with the implementation of the Annual National Programs under the supervision of the Ukraine-NATO Commission, the implementation of the Association Agreement with the EU remains on hold.

This Strategy sends a clear signal to all state authorities to accelerate all reforms required by Western partners and which are conditions for EU and NATO accession (Stefanishina, 2020).

### 5. Discussion

To date, the issue of integration into NATO and its impact on national security remains quite debated in both political and academic circles. Note that scholars Skachko, L. (2020), Avtushenko, I. (2018) believe that NATO is the only option to solve the unstable military situation in the country and the national development of Ukraine. At the same time, the issue of the possibility of joining NATO has lost its relevance because, at the NATO summit in Brussels on June 14, 2021, members of the Alliance confirmed the decision of the Bucharest summit of 2008 that Ukraine will be a member of NATO under certain conditions (Prizova, 2021).

These conditions of accession to NATO represent the main problems, which cannot be solved promptly in the current economic and political situation in Ukraine. In particular, the issue of information security is vital for NATO. Zajkivskij & Onistrat (2020) highlight the prospects of cooperation between Ukraine and NATO in the context of intellectual property, particularly concerning the protection of intellectual property in the military.

Silaev (2018) defines the current relationship between Ukraine and NATO as an illustration of the alliance dilemma. He believes that there will be no real integration into NATO in Ukraine in the short term, despite the membership action plans received. Today, NATO can establish broader political support for Ukraine, but the Alliance will be reticent to act in practical support. Cooperation between Ukraine and NATO is possible on partnership terms. The Partnership for Peace project stipulates that a signatory state will develop an individual partnership program. Participation in the program implies cooperation with NATO in military, military-technical, military-political fields, science, ecology, defense economy, etc. (Turchak, & Nadraga, 2021).

Kudlai, & Tsebro (2020) believe that the problem of building cooperation between Ukraine and NATO is the communication component, on which depends the level of diplomatic negotiations and the result of the implementation period of Ukraine's membership in NATO.

After the summit at a press conference, U.S. President Joe Biden confirmed the possibility of Ukraine's accession to NATO but noted that this is a matter of distant prospect because it is necessary to eradicate corruption (Prizova, 2021).

In his study, Yushchenko, A. (2016) believes that today's prospects of Ukraine's accession to NATO have become somewhat blurred. And even considering population supports, the possibility of a quick acquisition, which existed in 2005 after the Orange Revolution, is lost. Therefore, the closest possible cooperation is more realistic than the accession to NATO. More geopolitically realistic is considered the cooperation of a new regional Northeast European Defense Alliance under the U.S. and British protection. Still, such an idea requires comprehensive study and international consultations.

At the same time, given that Ukraine has already chosen its own way for developing national security, it is necessary to make every effort to implement the NATO membership action plan. Under such conditions, Ukraine's accession to the Alliance cannot be considered unrealistic. Still, it requires political, economic, and military reforms, which in their time were successfully carried out by Ukraine's neighbors from Eastern Europe. Among them are the Baltic countries, which, like us, were part of the USSR.

At the same time, the current military actions in Ukraine are also not an obstacle to NATO membership, as there is no such statement in any of the founding documents of the Alliance. In addition, the U.S. president has stated that Russian aggression in Donbas is not an obstacle to Ukraine's accession to NATO (Dudka, 2021).

## 6. Conclusions

Despite the fact that Russian aggression has lasted for seven years, the threat of a full-scale military invasion is still accurate. In such a situation, the NATO factor, since 2014, plays a core role in ensuring the national security of modern Ukraine, as entry into the military Alliance will guarantee the exclusion of such a situation. In addition, NATO has many other positive factors of influence on the national security formation. Moreover,

these factors concern not only military but also social, ecological, and informational standards.

Based on the results of legal and regulatory documentation development and foreign experience of countries joining NATO, there are positive factors of NATO in ensuring national security:

- NATO army support standards will significantly improve Ukraine's level of defense;
- NATO is the most significant military Alliance, which guarantees peacekeeping and the impossibility of full-scale deployment with Russia;
- cooperation with NATO allows to reduce funding for the army;
- NATO security guarantee allows to improve Ukraine's investment climate;
- NATO membership is a favorable condition for EU membership.
- Analysis of scientific publications, political statements, and the current state of national security of Ukraine allowed us to highlight several problems that hinder the rapid implementation of Ukraine's accession to NATO.
- The high level of corruption of the authorities does not meet the standards of the countries that are members of the Alliance;
- For today, Ukraine is not able to provide a sufficient level of information security, which raises the problem of information security as the essential NATO standard;
- Insufficient level of diplomacy in Ukraine does not allow to use of all possible arguments and ensures the implementation of reforms, which are a condition for NATO membership.

Thus, we can conclude that the solution to all these problems will allow Ukraine to accelerate its national security through integration into NATO. But, at the same time, these actions cannot actually be implemented in the short term due to the authorities' low level of social responsibility.

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