

Sweden and Finland Set to Join NATO

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Geopolitical Update: Historic Shifts In Europe’s Balance Of Power As NATO Expands North With Sweden And Finland Joining The Military Alliance

Sweden’s ruling party dropped the country’s historic military nonalignment on Sunday and agreed to join NATO, shortly after Finland’s leaders officially announced they would do the same.

Media reports from Europe and other places said:

The moves were major steps in ending decades of military neutrality for the two Nordic nations, as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine continued to dramatically shift security considerations in Europe.

NATO **Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg** said their accession would be a “turning point for security” in Europe. “Their membership in NATO would increase our shared security, demonstrate that NATO’s door is open, and that aggression does not pay.”

“We are now facing a fundamentally changed security environment in Europe,” Swedish **Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson** said.

Swedish **Foreign Minister Ann Linde** said:

While the country’s “200-year-long standing policy of military nonalignment has served Sweden well,” the nation now faced a “fundamental change,” she said. “As a member of NATO, Sweden not only achieves more security, but also contributes to more security.”

Speaking at a news conference earlier in Helsinki alongside **Prime Minister Sanna Marin**, [Finnish President Sauli Niinisto](#) described Sunday as a “historic day.”

Image on the right: Niinistö with US President Joe Biden in the White House in 2022 (Licensed under public domain)



Sweden had been closely coordinating with Helsinki on its decision to join the military alliance.

Once formal requests are submitted, each of NATO's 30 member nations must approve, a process that could take months or longer.

At the heart of NATO is Article 5, which says that "an armed attack against one or more" members "shall be considered an attack against them all."

Among Russia's preinvasion demands was a rollback of NATO's "open door" policy, under which countries once part of the Soviet Union have joined the alliance. Instead of a rollback, the Russian invasion appears to be producing further expansion, right on Russia's roughly 800-mile border with Finland.

Both decisions represent a seminal shift in military thinking on the continent.

Finland's leaders said Thursday that the countries should join NATO without delay, but the formal decision came Sunday after the president and a committee on foreign and security policy finalized a report on Finland's accession to the alliance. The report will be submitted to Parliament on Monday.

Sweden's course was also advanced last week, when the ruling party leadership presented a paper exploring the pros and cons of NATO membership. "Finland will maximize its security," Niinisto said.

"In Finland, we still have the parliamentary process ahead of us," Marin said, "but I trust the Parliament will debate this historic decision with determination and responsibility."

The announcements came as NATO foreign ministers and those of Finland, Sweden and Ukraine met in Berlin to discuss the Nordic countries' path to membership and military assistance to Kyiv.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he was "very confident" that NATO would reach consensus on admitting Sweden and Finland to the military alliance. "I heard almost across the board very strong support" for adding the Nordic countries, he said.

Blinken did not offer a timeline for their accession, noting that the organization has a

“process.”

When NATO was formed with the intention of balancing the security threats from the Soviet Union and its allies, Finland and Sweden chose instead to [adopt a position of neutrality](#) and nonalignment.

NATO requires unanimity on the approval of new members, and Turkey has expressed skepticism over admitting Finland and Sweden to the alliance. **President Recep Tayyip Erdogan** has [criticized the countries](#) as “home to many terrorist organizations.”

The comments — referring mainly to the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, a militant organization known as the PKK — were seen as a threat by Turkey to veto any NATO expansion.

U.S. officials are hoping to smooth out differences within the alliance, and Blinken spoke to Turkey’s foreign minister on Sunday but said he did not want to “characterize” those discussions.

In response to questions about whether Turkey will block or significantly delay membership for the Nordic countries, Stoltenberg expressed confidence that NATO would move swiftly.

“Turkey has made it clear: Their intention is not to block membership. Therefore, I am confident we’ll be able to address the concerns that Turkey has expressed in a way that doesn’t delay the accession process,” he said, without offering a specific timeline.

Baerbock also said the two countries could join “very quickly” if they made that decision.

“Our doors are more than open, and if their parliaments and their societies are going to decide to join NATO, this will make us even stronger,” she said. Germany is prepared to do everything it can for a “quick ratification process,” she added.

During the Berlin meeting, Blinken also met with Ukrainian **Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba** to discuss military aid for Ukraine and the continuation of food exports to the developing world.

“More weapons and other aid is on the way to Ukraine,” Kuleba tweeted after the meeting. “We agreed to work closely together to ensure that Ukrainian food exports reach consumers in Africa and Asia.”

The State Department said Blinken discussed “details regarding the latest tranche of U.S. security assistance to bolster Ukraine’s defenses” and potential solutions to exporting Ukraine’s grain to international markets. The ongoing fighting in Ukraine, a major food exporter, has been linked to rising food prices and inflation in the developing world.

Putin-Niinisto Talk

Niinisto told Russian **President Vladimir Putin** by phone about Helsinki’s plans to join NATO, Interfax news agency cited Bloomberg as saying on Saturday.

According to TASS, Putin and Niinisto had a “sincere exchange of views over the announced decision by Finland’s leadership to apply for NATO membership,” the press service of the Kremlin said.

“Putin stressed that rejecting the traditional policy of military neutrality would be wrong since there are no threats to Finland’s security. Such a change in the country’s foreign policy course could have a negative effect on Russia-Finland relations, which have been built over the course of many years in the spirit of neighborliness and partnership cooperation and have a mutually beneficial nature,” the Kremlin noted.

Uncertainty Added To Europe, Say Chinese Analysts

Chinese analysts said that this could add new uncertainty to the security of Europe, but it does not mean there will be new military conflicts in the continent as they believe Russia can solve its concerns with these two countries in political ways, otherwise they will fall into a U.S. trap to further worsen the security situation of Europe.

The U.S. can deploy missile defense systems and other military equipment in the territories of NATO members, to weaken the nuclear deterrence of Russia and maximize the military advantage against Russia, said analysts, noting that this is the fundamental reason why the tensions between Russia and some other European countries cannot be effectively resolved, and also a reason that causes the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

No Stationing Of Nuclear Weapons, NATO Bases On Sweden’s Territory, Says Ruling Party

The ruling Social Democratic Workers’ Party of Sweden supported the country’s entry into NATO with one reservation: the alliance must not station nuclear weapons and permanent bases on the territory of the kingdom. The relevant statement has been posted on the website of this political force.

“The party board has at its meeting on May 15, 2022 decided that the party will work toward Sweden applying for membership in NATO,” the Social Democrats said in a statement.

At the same time Sweden expressed “unilateral reservations against the deployment of nuclear weapons and permanent bases on Swedish territory.”

On May 13, a cross-party parliamentary report was released in the country, which concluded that NATO membership would increase the security level of the kingdom. The debate on this document will be held in Parliament on May 16, on the same day the Swedish government will hold an additional meeting to make a formal decision on the application to join the alliance. According to the Svenska Dagbladet newspaper, the kingdom can send documents to Brussels on May 17.

U.S. Ready To Provide Military Support To New NATO Hopefuls

The U.S. is prepared, if needed, to provide Sweden and Finland with military support as these countries await NATO’s response to their membership applications, Pentagon spokesman **John Kirby** has said.

In a BBC interview which was recorded on Friday and broadcast on Sunday, Kirby said that Russia’s warnings are “clearly concerning.”

“But it is not up to Russia to determine whether Finland and Sweden become NATO allies, it’s up to the people of Finland and the people of Sweden,” the US military

spokesman said.

When asked if the U.S. would send troops to defend Finland and Sweden if they were attacked, Kirby first said that he would not want to speculate on a hypothetical scenario but nevertheless gave a detailed response.

“If in the period of their application to NATO and their accession to NATO they would need some additional capabilities or support ... we will be able to provide some additional support if needed,” he said.

NATO Confident Of Overcoming Turkey’s Objections

NATO **Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoana** has said he is sure the organisation will be able to overcome Turkey’s objections to Finland and Sweden becoming new members.

“Turkey is an important ally and expressed concerns that are addressed between friends and allies,” Geoana told reporters during an informal NATO foreign ministers’ meeting in Berlin on Sunday.

“I am confident if these countries [Finland and Sweden] decide to seek membership in NATO we will be able to welcome them, to find all conditions for consensus to be met,” he added.

Finland and Sweden stayed out of NATO during the Cold War.

German **Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock** told reporters at the meeting that Berlin “has prepared everything to do a quick ratification process” of the Finnish and Swedish bids, adding that NATO ministers agreed that the process, which usually takes a year, should be accelerated.

However, those plans could be derailed by Turkey’s opposition to Finland and Sweden’s membership.

On Friday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan slammed the two Nordic nations as “guesthouses for terrorist organizations,” referring the separatist Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) and the Revolutionary People’s Liberation Front (DHKP/C), which have been outlawed in Turkey. “At this point, it is not possible for us to have a positive approach” to their bids, he said.

Erdogan’s top adviser **Ibrahim Kalin** clarified to Reuters on Saturday that Ankara was “not closing the door” for Helsinki and Stockholm, but was “basically raising this issue as a matter of national security for Turkey.”

Ukraine Can Defeat Russia, Says NATO Sec. Gen.

Ukraine can score a victory in its fight against Russian forces, as the situation on the battleground is not developing according to Moscow’s plans, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg claimed on Sunday.

Speaking to the reporters after informal meetings of the military bloc’s foreign ministers, Stoltenberg revealed that the main topics of the discussions were “strong support for

Ukraine, the further strengthening of NATO's deterrence and defense, and the longer-term implications of the war," including the alliance's future stance towards Russia.

"Russia's war in Ukraine is not going as Moscow had planned. They failed to take Kiev. They are pulling back from around Kharkiv, their major offensive in the Donbass has stalled. Russia is not achieving its strategic objectives," Stoltenberg said.

He added that, contrary to the alleged wishes of the Russian President Vladimir Putin, Ukraine continues its fight, "NATO is stronger than ever" and the US and Europe are "solidly united."

"Ukraine can win this war. Ukrainians are bravely defending their homeland," the NATO SG said, adding that weapons supplies and other support from its backers are "making a real difference on the battlefield."

Therefore, Stoltenberg argued, the bloc should continue supporting Ukraine.

The SG revealed that the June NATO summit in Madrid will see members making "important decisions," including measures aimed at reinforcing the bloc's deterrence posture.

No Capitulation

Russia insists that it is fulfilling all its objectives in Ukraine and will not turn off its intended path. During a TV broadcast on Saturday, the Russian Ambassador in the U.S. said there would be no "capitulation."

"We will never give up, we will not step back," he claimed.

Earlier this month, Kremlin spokesman **Dmitry Peskov** said that the Russian "*military operation*" in Ukraine was going "according to plan."

Moscow has consistently warned the West against "pumping up" Ukraine with weapons, claiming that it would only lead to prolongation of the conflict and create long-term problems. It has also stressed that any foreign weapons on Ukrainian territory would be considered as legitimate targets.

EU Candidate Serbia Accuses West Of Hypocrisy



Serbian **President Aleksandar Vucic** has said his "guts turn" when he hears Western countries talk about their respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, while simultaneously insisting on the independence of the Serbian breakaway region of Kosovo.

During a Sunday broadcast on Prva TV, Vucic claimed there were no principles in modern international politics and accused the West of double standards and hypocrisy when it comes to the Ukraine and Kosovo conflicts. Serbia is a candidate for EU membership.

Belgrade does not recognize Kosovo's 2008 self-declaration of independence and considers the territory to be a Serbian province. Nearly 100 countries, including the U.S. – but not Russia – have recognized the independence of the region.

“My guts turn when I hear about the principles and respect for territorial integrity. They (the Western countries) ask us to respect someone's integrity, and what about ours?” said Vucic.

As the G7 pledged that it would never accept the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity, the Serbian government will continue to insist on the same principle for its own country, Vucic argued.

“For Serbia to give up its integrity, it can only happen with a gun to the forehead, and not to us but to our children,” he stressed.

The Serbian leader also questioned why, if Russia is really committing terrible crimes in Ukraine, NATO is not bombing it as it did in former Yugoslavia in 1999.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said last month that Moscow's move to recognize the breakaway republics of Donetsk and Lugansk was based on the Kosovo precedent.

Belgrade has taken a neutral stance in relation to the conflict, with Vucic vowing to punish Serbs if they attempt to fight on either side.

Serbia Will Fight Sanctions Pressure

Despite suffering “enormous damage,” Serbia will fight to maintain its policy of not joining the Western sanctions introduced against Moscow over the conflict in Ukraine, its president has insisted.

“We have lasted eighty days” without restricting Russia and “the price we pay is huge,” Alexander Vucic told local broadcaster Prva on Sunday. Serbia lacks access to the capital market and can't service its foreign loans, which affects the well-being of the population, he complained.

“They say: ‘Vucic is announcing the introduction of Russian sanctions.’ No, we will fight as long as we can. We suffered enormous damage, but we aren't looking for ‘a thank you’,” the president insisted.

Serbia is acting this way because it is “a sovereign and independent country” that is well aware of “how unfair and unnecessary” the sanctions are, he said.

The issue of restrictions against Moscow is also closely linked to the supply of Russian gas and oil, on which Serbia is entirely dependent, Vucic said, expressing hope that Belgrade will be able to agree a “good price” on energy at the upcoming talks between the sides.

Last month, the Serbian president claimed that he was blackmailed into placing restrictions on his country's ally Russia, with Belgrade being threatened with energy sanctions of its own

if it refused.

Zelensky Bans Ukrainian Opposition Parties

Ukrainian **President Volodymyr Zelensky** on Saturday signed into law a bill establishing a mechanism to outlaw political parties, who oppose his policies on western integration. The legislation is aimed at political parties deemed to be engaging into “anti-Ukrainian” activities.

The list of wrongdoings which can be used as a pretext to ban a faction suggests that challenging the official position of the Ukrainian authorities on the ongoing conflict with Moscow can lead to a ban.

Specifically, it outlaws denial of the “aggression against Ukraine,” calling it an internal conflict, a civil war and so on. Any positive remarks about those deemed to be perpetrating “aggression” are prohibited as well, including referring to the forces of the breakaway Donetsk as Lugansk republics as “insurgents.”

The new legislation also outlines a simplified procedure to ban a political party. It now requires a court ruling, with all related cases – including pending ones – transferred to a court in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv for as long as the country is under martial law. A ruling on such cases is final and cannot be appealed.

In March, Ukraine’s national Security Council suspended multiple political parties it deemed to be “pro-Russian.” The list included assorted minor, primarily left-wing parties, as well as Ukraine’s second-largest group ‘Opposition Platform – For Life’, led by Viktor Medvedchuk, a businessman with alleged ties to Russia. Having previously been placed under house arrest, in April of last year the politician ended up in custody of the country’s security services.

His initial incarceration came after his faction passed out Zelensky’s Servant of the People in terms of popularity, according to polling.

Pentagon Chief And Ukraine’s counterpart Talk About Phone Call With Russian Defense Minister

Pentagon Chief **Lloyd Austin** told Ukrainian **Defense Minister Alexei Reznikov** in a phone conversation on Sunday about his conversation with Russian **Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu** on May 13, US Defense Department spokesman John Kirby said in a written statement following the talks.

According to him, Austin and Reznikov discussed the situation in Ukraine and the needs of Kiev in armaments.

“Secretary Austin provided an update on his May 13th phone call with Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu in which he urged an immediate end to the conflict in Ukraine and emphasized the importance of maintaining lines of communication. Secretary Austin reiterated the unwavering U.S. support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and security assistance efforts to bolster Ukraine’s capacity to counter Russian aggression. The leaders pledged to remain in close contact,” Kirby said.

Oil Prices Drop On Profit-Taking, Supply Fears Linger

A Reuters report from Tokyo said:

Oil prices slipped on Monday, giving up earlier gains as investors took profits after a surge in the previous session, but global supply fears loomed with the European Union preparing to phase in a ban on imports from Russia.

Brent crude futures were down 64 cents, or 0.6%, at \$110.91 a barrel at 0137 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures dropped 60 cents, or 0.5%, to \$109.89 a barrel.

Both benchmarks, which jumped about 4% last Friday, earlier increased by more than \$1 a barrel, with WTI reaching its highest since March 28 of \$111.71.

“Oil markets are expected to gain this week as a pending ban by the European Union on Russian oil will further tighten global supplies of crude and fuels,” said Kazuhiko Saito, chief analyst at Fujitomi Securities Co Ltd.

The EU still aims to agree a phased embargo on Russia oil this month despite concerns about supply in eastern Europe, four diplomats and officials said on Friday, rejecting suggestions of a delay or watering down proposals.

Last week, Moscow slapped sanctions on several European energy companies, causing worries about supplies.

U.S. Gasoline Futures Set A Fresh All-Time High The Reuters report added:

Meanwhile, U.S. gasoline futures set a fresh all-time high again on Monday as falling stockpiles fuelled supply concerns.

“Oil prices remained bullish, especially WTI’s near-term contract, as U.S. gasoline prices continued to rise amid weaker imports of petroleum products from Europe,” Fujitomi Securities’ Saito said.

On the supply side, U.S. energy firms in the week to May 13 added oil and natural gas rigs for an eighth week in a row as high prices and prodding by the federal government prompted drillers to return to the wellpad.

Elsewhere OPEC+ – the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and allies including Russia – has been undershooting previously agreed plans for output increases due to under-investment in oilfields in some OPEC members and, more recently, losses in Russian output.

The latest monthly report from OPEC showed its output in April rose by 153,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 28.65 million bpd, lagging the 254,000 bpd rise that OPEC is allowed under the OPEC+ deal.

Saudi Aramco Net Profit Soars 82% In Q1 On High Oil Prices

Another Reuters report from Dubai said:

State-owned oil producer Saudi Aramco on Sunday reported an almost 82% rise in first-quarter net profit, broadly in line with analyst forecasts, helped by strong oil prices.

Aramco, which is at par with Apple Inc as the world's most valuable company, reported a net income of \$39.5 billion for the quarter to March 31 from \$21.7 billion a year earlier.

The world's top oil exporter was forecast to post a net income of \$38.5 billion, according to a median estimate from 12 analysts provided by the company.

Aramco, which listed in 2019 with the sale of a 1.7% stake mainly to the Saudi public and regional institutions, said its earnings were the highest in any quarter since it went public, boosted by crude prices, volumes sold and improved downstream margins.

The Reuters report said:

Earnings by global energy companies such as BP and Shell have risen to their highest in at least a decade on the back of rising commodities prices, even as many of them incur mostly write-downs from exiting Russia.

Brent crude prices ended the first quarter up almost 70% to \$107.91 a barrel from end of March 2021.

OPEC+ agreed this month to another modest increase in its monthly oil output target, arguing it could not be blamed for disruptions to Russian supply that have driven up prices. It also said China's coronavirus lockdowns was threatening the outlook for demand.

"Our view is Brent will end up lower in the second half of the year and so we are expecting (Aramco) earnings to pull back and for the second quarter to be a peak," said Yousef Hussein, associate director for equity research at EFG Hermes.

The company declared a dividend of \$18.8 billion to be paid in the second quarter, in line with market expectations, and approved the distribution of one bonus share for every 10 shares held in the company.

Aramco said it saw improved downstream margins in the first quarter and is looking to develop opportunities in the downstream sector.

"During the first quarter, our strategic downstream expansion progressed further in both Asia and Europe, and we continue to develop opportunities that complement our growth objectives," Aramco CEO Amin Nasser said in a statement.

Shares of the company have risen 37% since the start of the year, outperforming the Saudi index which is up nearly 14%.

German Industry Issues Warning Over Impact Of Cutting Russian Gas Deliveries

Media reports from Germany said:

The cessation of Russian gas deliveries would have a catastrophic effect on the German economy, according to Siegfried Russwurm, president of the country's biggest industry association BDI.

“The consequences of cutting off Russian gas supplies would be catastrophic,” he told tabloid Bild am Sonntag in an interview published on Saturday evening.

Russwurm added that such a step would deprive the country’s businesses of the fuel, forcing them to shut down production lines.

“A host of companies in this case would be completely cut off from gas supplies,” he said. “In many cases, the affected firms will be forced to stop production, some enterprises may never be able to start it again.”

Berlin believes Russia may stop gas supplies over sanctions imposed on Moscow and the supply of weapons by Germany to Ukraine. Earlier this week, German vice-chancellor and economy minister, **Robert Habeck**, said the country was not yet ready for a total embargo on Russian gas.

On Wednesday, Russia imposed sanctions on Gazprom’s European subsidiaries including Gazprom Germania, an energy trading, storage and transmission business that Germany placed under trusteeship last month to secure supplies. The sanctions list also includes Gazprom Schweiz AG, Gazprom Marketing & Trading USA, Vemex, Wingas, and EuRoPol GAZ.

Earlier, Ukraine suspended the flow of Russian natural gas to Europe, while blaming Moscow for the disruption. Russian gas had previously been flowing uninterrupted through pipelines across Ukraine despite tensions between the two countries.

Egypt Assesses Impact Of Ukraine-Related Crisis

Egypt’s economy has sustained losses of up to 130 billion Egyptian pounds (\$7 billion) amid the Ukrainian crisis, according to the country’s **Prime Minister Moustafa Madbouly**.

“The aftermath of the war has placed a huge financial burden on us and we have invested 130 billion pounds to cover rising prices for strategic goods,” Madbouly said on Sunday, pointing out that the indirect consequences of the events in Ukraine are estimated at another over \$18 billion.

According to the PM, the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine has sent prices for vital produce soaring, having posed enormous challenges to the Egyptian economy.

“In May 2021, the price of a barrel of oil was \$67, now it has reached \$112, while a ton of wheat cost \$270 a year ago, now we pay for the same volumes based on a price of \$435 per ton,” Madbouly explained.

“Previously, we had imported 42% of grain, while 31% of tourists were from Russia and Ukraine, and now we have to look for alternative markets.”

The PM also said that Egypt had managed to restore tourism after the Covid-19 pandemic and “achieve budget profitability of \$5.8 billion ahead of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis.”

He added that despite Covid-related crisis and turmoil in the movement of world trade, the nation saw an unprecedented increase in income from the Suez Canal.

Egypt’s unemployment rate dropped to 7.2% in January-March, down from 7.4% in the

previous quarter, the state statistics agency CAPMAS said on Sunday.

The agency also reported that Egypt's annual inflation rate surged to 14.9% in April, significantly higher than the previous month's 12.1%.

In March, Egypt's Central Bank raised its key interest rate for the first time since 2017, citing inflationary pressures triggered by the coronavirus pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which hiked oil prices to record highs.

Germany Warns Of Brutal Global Hunger

Skyrocketing food prices worldwide are the result of Russia pursuing a hybrid war strategy, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock claimed on Saturday following a G7 meeting.

However, Moscow immediately hit back by blaming Western sanctions for the spike.

"Russia made a conscious decision to turn the war against Ukraine into a 'grain war,'" the German minister insisted. This, she alleged, is now affecting a wide range of states, especially those in Africa.

"There is a threat of brutal hunger," she said.

"We must not be naive about this," Baerbock warned. "It's not collateral damage, it's a perfectly deliberate instrument in a hybrid war that is currently being waged."

She said the countries of the G7 wanted to look for alternative ways of delivering grain from Ukraine to the world.

Earlier in the week, the US State Department tweeted: "While Ukraine used to export up to five million tons of grain per month, shipments have all but stopped due to the Kremlin's blockade of Ukrainian ports." Washington claimed that such actions put "millions at risk of famine."

Ukraine is currently unable to export about 90 million tons of agricultural products, as Russia has blocked Ukrainian ports, its Prime Minister Denys Shmygal told local media. The country produces a significant share of world food – about 27% of its sunflower seeds, 5% of its barley, 3% of its wheat and rapeseed, and 2% of its corn.

Russia is the largest exporter of wheat in the world. Although it has the ability to export grain, it also faces problems due to sanctions and its own requirements.

Russia's Response To German Accusation

Responding to the German foreign minister's comments, Moscow accused the West of causing the spike in food prices.

"Prices are rising due to sanctions imposed by the collective West under pressure from the United States. This is if we talk about the direct reason. Failure to understand this is a sign of either stupidity or deliberate misleading of the public," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman **Maria Zakharova** wrote in her Telegram channel.

According to the diplomat, the threat to Ukraine's statehood is also the work of the

West. “Ms. Baerbock’s predecessors are also involved in it, who not only interfered in the situation in this country, but modeled Ukraine’s domestic and foreign policy in manual mode,” she wrote.

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