NATO Summit in Vilnius and future Ukrainian membership in NATO

The forthcoming NATO Summit in Vilnius represents a pivotal moment for Ukraine, casting the nation's ambitions and position into the global spotlight. It is a significant opportunity for Ukraine to rearticulate its stance, aspirations, and current challenges to the broader Western community. The Ukrainians are hopeful that the summit will yield positive outcomes, particularly in terms of securing support from NATO members in the face of the ongoing Russian full-scale invasion.

In addition to bolstering Ukraine's military with extensive and sustained weapon supplies, the Alliance should provide a clear roadmap towards Ukraine's NATO membership at the earliest feasible date.

The Allies should realize that Ukraine's membership will bring added value to NATO and will breathe life into its raison d'être. The fear of hypothetical Russian escalation doesn't have to stop NATO from fulfilling its mission of ensuring security across the North Atlantic region.

For over nine years, Russia has been occupying Ukraine's Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, for more than 500 days Russia has been waging a full-scale war against Ukraine. Throughout this tumultuous period, Ukraine has safeguarded Europe, as Russia obviously lacks the capacity to combat on multiple fronts. Ukraine's firm stance inhibits Russian expansionist objectives in the region, giving NATO an opportunity to bolster Europe's defense in the meantime.

Inviting Ukraine to NATO means strengthening the Alliance in the future. Ignoring the potential of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, which are among the world's most potent and seasoned, would be imprudent.

The Ukrainian society definitely supports the country's Euro-Atlantic course as more than 80% of citizens would now vote for Ukraine to join NATO. It's the highest figure in history. What is more, the people in NATO members states also support inviting Ukraine into the alliance.

For the sake of peace, NATO must stay a strong geopolitical actor in the Euro-Atlantic region and globally. Any attempts to appease the aggressor hark back to the pre-war period of 1938-1939. We all know that such placatory stances by Western leaders had already pushed Europe into World War II for six terrible years. Only a firm position against the aggressor and the re-establishment of a rules-based order and international law can ensure global peace in the future.

Every day of Western equipment supply, and soldier training aligns Ukraine closer with NATO standards. Ukraine is poised to meet all prerequisites for NATO membership, now having Finland and Sweden as a brilliant example of a fast-track accession to NATO.

The NATO summit in Vilnius could be the start of Ukraine's invitation process. Since 2014, Ukraine has been diligently working towards meeting membership criteria, and the summit serves as a perfect platform to highlight its progress and commitment. This effort should not be overshadowed by the ongoing war, thus giving Putin veto power over NATO enlargement.

Ukraine's journey towards NATO membership demands unanimous support from all Allies, with 23 countries having already declared their stance. The latest endorsement came from Turkish President Erdogan, asserting that Ukraine deserves to be a NATO member.

The Allies are now tirelessly striving for the best solution to ensure Ukraine's security. But Ukraine's admission into NATO, honoring the promise made at the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, would be the best way to achieve that.