The Imperative of Inviting Ukraine to NATO: A Call for Action at the Washington Summit

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As leaders of the 32 NATO member nations gather this month to commemorate the alliance's 75th anniversary, the world will be watching whether this meeting will genuinely contribute to the enhancement of global peace and security. The agenda is primarily focused on addressing the current threats to Euro-Atlantic security. For the third year running, the spotlight is on Russia's all-out war against Ukraine and the substantial threat it poses to NATO members.

The humanitarian toll of Russia's war on Ukrainians and negative impacts on the global economy escalates daily. A 29% decrease in Ukrainian grain supply in 2023, indicative of falling food production, could exacerbate the global food crisis and disrupt supply chains. The recent strategic partnership agreement between Russia and North Korea has amplified the 'axis of evil', posing a global threat to democracies. This situation heightens expectations for the Allies to take decisive action at the Washington Summit to restore global order. The Allies are acutely aware that China is observing their response. A tepid reaction to Russia and NATO's hesitation to make a bold move could jeopardize Taiwan's future.

There are five compelling reasons to invite Ukraine to join NATO:

1. Ending Russian Ambitions: By formally inviting Ukraine to join NATO and announcing the commencement of accession talks, the Alliance sends a clear message to Moscow that its aspirations to subjugate Ukraine and restore the Russian empire are futile.

2. Strengthening NATO: Ukraine boasts one of Europe's largest, most capable, and innovative armies. They have successfully resisted the world's second most powerful army. By initiating the accession process, Ukraine would bolster Europe's security with its unique combat experience and advanced technologies.

3. Deterring Russian Aggression: An invitation to Ukraine would deter Russia from further aggression and malign actions in other parts of Europe. The security of Ukraine, eventually guaranteed by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, will ensure stability and peace in the Euro-Atlantic space.

4. Ukrainian Commitment: With 77% of Ukrainians supporting NATO membership, the Ukrainian state and society understand the responsibility that joining NATO entails. Ukraine has demonstrated a high level of financial responsibility for its security and defense, complying with NATO's guideline of 2% of GDP spent on security and defense. Approaching a full interoperability with NATO and pursuing an aggressive reform agenda, Ukraine is on track to further its integration with the European Union.

5. Sending a Global Message: Ukraine's membership in NATO not only strengthens Euro-Atlantic security but also sends a message about the allies' unity and resolve to other autocracies in the world.

It would be a tragic 75th anniversary NATO Leaders Summit of the world's most powerful military alliance if the results were strong words and weak action. Ukraine is not asking to join NATO now and demanding article 5 protection while Russia continues to attack. They are asking for an invitation that will make Ukraine’s eventual membership non-negotiable. Ukraine, through its bitter experience, has proven that strength, defiance, and bravery are the only actions that are heard and recognized in the Kremlin. Without an invitation to join NATO, the Alliance will prolong the most horrific war and humanitarian catastrophe in Europe since World War II. An invitation to join NATO will demonstrate that NATO is committed to stopping Russia from ever waging war on another country.