Ukraine's NATO Membership 'Will Not Take Place': German Chancellor

Description

UKRAINE: Ukraine's membership is not on The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)'s agenda, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Friday.

"I also made it clear in Moscow and in my visit that this option [Ukraine's membership of NATO] is not on the table and will not take place," he said during an interview with German public broadcaster ZDF.

"I said publicly that we all know that Ukraine's NATO membership is not on the alliance's agenda today," he added. "That was understood by the American president, that [was] also understood by the French president."

Scholz said he shares Russian President Vladimir Putin's security concern and clarified to Putin that Ukraine will not be allowed to join NATO.

"The Russians were worried about the control issue of their security. [Putin was worried] that NATO has a military setup and rockets in Ukraine targeting Russian territory. That is why we tried to make it clear that this will not occur," he elaborated.

The Epoch Times has reached out to NATO's press office for comment.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg speaks during a press conference ahead of a two-day meeting of the alliance's Defence Ministers at the NATO Headquarter in Brussels on Feb. 15, 2022. (Kenzo Tribouillard/AFP via Getty Images)

Ukraine's pursuit of NATO membership appeared to be one of the core disputes that caused the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

In February 2019, then-Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko signed a constitutional amendment committing the country to becoming a member of NATO and the European Union after the parliament passed the bill.

Poroshenko told the leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine days after he signed the amendment that joining NATO was a guarantee of security for Ukraine.

On the Russian side, Putin says Russia needs to lay down "red lines" to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO saying that Ukraine's growing ties with the alliance could make it a launchpad for NATO missiles targeted at Russia.

The United States and other Ukraine alliances have tried to avoid war by deescalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine.

However, the Kremlin criticized the United States and NATO for failing to address the fundamental security concerns of Moscow, demanding that NATO stop its eastward expansion and that strike weapons not be deployed near Russia's borders.

Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 after the efforts to deter war failed.

Russian armed forces made rapid progress and had reportedly encircled several Ukrainian cities or facilities in the first week.

They also reportedly gained control of Kherson, a port city in Ukraine's south.

However, the Russian forces were met with strong resistance from the Ukrainian military, especially on the outskirts of the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv.

The resistance from Ukrainian forces and Russia's own logistical difficulties have slowed down the Russian military's speed of the advance, the UK's Ministry of Defense said.

People walk past a destroyed Russian military vehicle at a frontline position in Irpin, Ukraine, on March 3, 2022. (Chris McGrath/Getty Images)

A United Nations official said around 1.2 million people have fled Ukraine as the war entered its ninth day.

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi confirmed the staggering figure in a tweet on March 4.

Grandi said on Thursday that in his four decades of work in refugee emergencies, he had rarely seen an exodus as rapid as the one in Ukraine.

"Hour by hour, minute by minute, more people are fleeing the terrifying reality of violence. Countless have been displaced inside the country," he said in a statement.

This image made from a video released by Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant shows bright flaring objects landing on the grounds of the nuclear plant in Enerhodar, Ukraine Friday, March 4, 2022. (Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant via AP)

The U.N. also said that, as of March 3, they had recorded 1,006 civilian casualties in the context of Russia's military action against Ukraine, mostly caused by shelling and airstrikes.

The agency said that 331 civilian deaths have been recorded, including 19 children, while 675 have been injured, including 31 children. The U.N. says, however, that the "real toll is much higher."Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Friday that, to date, 9,200 Russian soldiers have been killed in the war. Russian authorities have reported that 498 of its service members have been killed.

Julia Mira and Tom Ozimek contributed to the report.

by Allen Zhong

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