

# McCain Appointed to Ukraine “Reform Advisory Team” Headed by Fugitive Georgian Leader Saakashvili

By [RT](#)

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*Georgia’s fugitive ex-president Mikhail Saakashvili and hawkish US Senator John McCain have been approved as members of the newly-formed International Advisory Group that will help Ukraine’s president in “conducting reforms.”*

Saakashvili has been [appointed](#) as head of the new advisory group, says the statement on Ukraine’s presidential website.

The list of members included in the advisory group mostly includes current and former European politicians. Among them are the German member of the European Parliament and the current Chairman of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs Elmar Brok, Sweden’s former Prime and Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, former Prime Minister of Slovakia Mikulas Dzurinda, and Lithuania’s former Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius.



Back in February Saakashvili was appointed as a non-staff adviser to Poroshenko. The ex-Georgian president, who was in power from 2004 to 2013, faces numerous charges at home, including embezzlement of over \$5 million, corruption and brutality against protesters during demonstrations in 2007. Georgia’s Chief Prosecutor’s Office launched proceedings to indict Saakashvili and place him on the international most wanted list, but Kiev refused to hand over the fugitive president, despite an existing extradition agreement between Ukraine and Georgia.

Saakashvili is known for his strong anti-Russian stance, which garnered heavy US support. In August 2008 during his term in office Georgia launched an offensive against South Ossetia, killing dozens of civilians and Russian peacekeepers stationed in the republic. Georgia’s shelling of Tskhinval prompted Russia to conduct a military operation to fend off the offensive. Despite Saakashvili’s claims that the conflict was “*Russian aggression*,” the 2010 EU Independent Fact Finding Mission Report ruled that Tbilisi was responsible for the attack.



Image from Facebook (Mikheil Saakashvili's Page)

Meanwhile Senator John McCain, for years spearheading the anti-Russian and particularly anti-Putin crusade, said that while he *"would love to do anything"* to help Ukraine, he has not yet cleared his new appointment under the US Senate rules.

*"I was asked to do it both by Ukraine and Saakashvili and I said I would be inclined to do it but I said I needed to look at all the nuances of it, whether it's legal under our ethics and all that kind of stuff,"* McCain told BuzzFeed.

At the onset of the Ukraine's Maidan protests against former president Viktor Yanukovich, McCain appeared in Kiev to support the uprising that months later culminated in a coup.

*"We ... want to make it clear to Russia and Vladimir Putin that interference in the affairs of Ukraine is not acceptable to the United States,"* the US Senator told a crowd of some 200,000 anti-government protesters in the central square of Ukraine's capital.



Image from Facebook (Mikheil Saakashvili's Page)

Following the new Kiev authorities' attempt to suppress dissent in the east of the country and Crimea's ascension into the Russian Federation, McCain became the main engine of lobbying for lethal arms supplies to Ukrainian forces to *"defend themselves"* and Europe from *"Russian aggression."*



"The Ukrainian people don't want US or Western troops to fight for them; they are simply asking for the right tools to defend themselves and their country," he said late last month at a hearing on US security policy in Europe. "Russia's invasion and dismemberment of Ukraine should remind everyone of the true nature of Putin's ambitions and the fragility of peace in Europe."

McCain's statements following the Minsk II ceasefire agreement make it clear that peace in Ukraine is not something the hawkish politician supports. Despite the general agreement that Minsk Accords is the only way forward for a political resolution to the crisis, McCain rejected the agreement as *"solidifying the gains of Russian aggression."*

In addition, the Senator is a strong supporter of the NATO buildup on Russian borders. McCain insisted recently that the Baltic allies should help secure eastern borders of the alliance as they cannot *"continue with business as usual"* claiming that Russia poses a *"geopolitical challenge... to our entire vision of Europe."*

McCain has also been hinting at starting a new nuclear arms race with Russia. *"Negotiating further strategic nuclear reductions with Russia would be a dangerously naive non-starter with the US Senate. It simply defies common sense to negotiate nuclear reductions with Vladimir Putin,"* he said last month following US administration's call for further strategic nuclear reductions.

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