



The Russo-Ukrainian War Continues to Kill, Maim, and Destroy: Is the Biden Administration Fueling the Conflict?

By Doug Bandow

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Last week the US and its allies were busy. Both the G7, an exclusive club for Western industrialized states, and NATO, whose 30 members include military midgets like Montenegro, met in Europe. Both gatherings included ostentatious promises of continuing robust military support for Ukraine.

Indeed, taken at their word, there is nothing America and Europe would not give Kyiv to achieve its military ends. At least, that is what senior US and European Union officials declared last week.

Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman [was asked](#) if the administration supported Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's objective to reclaim all territory occupied by Russia, including that seized in 2014. That would mean a longer and more intense war, noted the interviewer. Sherman, too practiced a government official to give a clear answer to any question, wouldn't exactly say yes, but she suggested that Washington would do whatever Kyiv asked of America.

Explained Sherman: "Nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine. It's not our judgment that matters here. It's Ukraine's judgment about what it wants for itself and for its own future." When pressed, she replied: "our goal is really straightforward. We want to see a democratic independent sovereign and prosperous Ukraine that needs to deter and defend itself against further aggression. That's our goal, our objective." The US will support Kyiv so it can "decide its own future."

Stefano Sannino, the European Union's European External Action Service Secretary-General, took a similar position alongside Sherman. He explicitly echoed Sherman: "this is for Ukrainians to decide what they want to do. And this is really a very strong sense that we have that this is not our choice. We are supporting Ukrainian objectives, that they want to achieve. And for us it will remain so till the very end." He noted that the European Council, one of the EU's many governing institutions – how the Eurocrats love duplicative bureaucracy! – was "not even making any reference to any kind of peace settlement because we want to make it clear that we are not pushing in any possible way."

Frankly, this is an idiotic policy.

The US and EU should support objectives that are sensible and advance the interests of the American and European peoples, not those held by Zelensky. What if he announced plans to invade Russia, raze Moscow, and hold St. Petersburg hostage until reparations were paid? That might be a sensible objective for Kyiv – though perhaps a tad ambitious, even if receiving an endless supply of US weapons – but that would be a terrible goal for Europe and America. Nevertheless, would Washington back Ukraine militarily, politically, and financially in the latter's plan to ravage Russia so Kyiv could "decide its own future," as Sherman said? Would the Europeans go along, insisting, as did Sannino, that they "are supporting Ukrainian objectives, that they want to achieve."

The US, EU, and European governments should respect the Zelensky government's policy preferences. Kyiv is an independent state, free to make its own decisions. However, it is not entitled to dictate allied policy, which appears to be the case today. Rather, Washington and its allies should base their actions on their peoples' interests, not Zelensky's wishes.

Kyiv warrants support against aggression and Zelensky warrants praise for leading up close rather than from afar. However, neither changes the fact that Ukraine was not a vital interest to America warranting war before February 24. Ukraine did not become a vital interest to America warranting war after February 24.

Thus, the West's first objective should be to *stay out of the conflict*. The second should be to end the war swiftly: the conflagration is causing enormous hardship to Ukraine, threatening to escalate and spread, acting as a wrecking ball to the international economy, driving Moscow more deeply into Beijing's embrace, and making Europe [even more dependent](#) on America for its security. As for Washington promoting Kyiv's geopolitical wish list, not so much.

Perhaps the Biden administration is setting limits to its commitment in private communications with Kyiv, but that seems unlikely. President Joe Biden and his aides have carelessly indicated an expansive anti-Russian agenda and have spent far more money on and sent many more weapons to Ukraine than have the Europeans. Indeed, seemingly oblivious to rising debt and other economic problems at home, Washington already has devoted nearly as much money to Kyiv as Russia spends annually on its military. And last week the president [told the American people](#) to suck it up, that they just had to put up with raging energy prices "as long as it takes" because he was putting the Zelensky government first – without setting any limits on means or ends.

Nor is Ukraine the only beneficiary of America's military largesse. Since February Washington has added 20,000 troops to Europe, pushing the US total up to 100,000. And [more are on the way](#), along with billions in cash, after the NATO summit last week, despite European governments supposedly upping their game. NATO remains North America and The Others and will forever be so as long as US officials subordinate the interests of this nation to cheap-riding Europeans. President Donald Trump's manners might have been lacking, but he at least understood the urgency of getting the Europeans to act like they cared about their own security.

Sympathy the West should have for Ukraine in abundance. However, that doesn't mean US officials should subordinate the interests of the American people to Kyiv's ambitions, however understandable. Just as Washington shouldn't try to control Ukraine's actions, the Zelensky government shouldn't expect to direct US policy. The Biden administration's judgment *does*

matter. And the president should put the safety, well-being, and future of the American people first.

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