



The Price for Western Aid is Ceding Russia More of Ukraine

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Zelensky will inevitably declare to his people that they have been sold out by the West, that they gave up their nuclear weapons for nothing - that Ukraine will be broken up, and may eventually lose its independence, regardless of how much Ukrainians are willing to fight.

This is in spite of Zelensky's current position that: "There can be no compromise on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and will not be"

Neo-Conservative voices are seemingly fixated on how Putin is losing the war in Ukraine; that Putin underestimated Ukrainian resistance.

That is not true.

While Putin may have considered that he might be able to take Kiev fairly quickly, and that resistance in other areas would then falter, those outcomes are not the presumption upon which he based Russia's military invasion.

He continues to call the invasion a "Special Military Action." Whether or not that is akin to a "Police Action", as the US and the West called the defense of South Korea, is left to be decided in another discussion. News meant for domestic

consumption is very particular to the country in which it is being disseminated, and Putin still has large domestic support for Ukraine coming back under Russian control.

From the outset, Putin's obvious goal was to replace his subversive support for Donetsk and Luhansk with overt military action, ally with them officially and connect them to Crimea. Putin acts as if the two breakaway territories' declared independence is to be considered worthy of divine intervention, and he is merely responding to their cries for help.

Putin could at this point reorient his forces to the Western edge of the Donbass or even to the Eastern shore of the Dnieper River, and hold the ground he has taken; leaving large areas of Ukraine in ruins without occupying them.

Once Putin got the green light from Biden for a "minor incursion," Putin, felt he could expand his immediate goal, that of converting the South Eastern portion into the edge of the Russian Sphere of influence.

Russia's strategy was obvious from the beginning. The forces he placed in Belarus, at the most North Western border with Ukraine, served two tactical purposes. Placing his soldiers in such manner as to threaten Ukraine on three sides, allowed him to judge NATO's possible response, which was nothing but words until he actually crossed Ukraine's borders. Then, after the invasion began, the West slowly ramped up economic sanctions, which are still being increased incrementally. The military aid from NATO countries, while substantial, is limited to "defensive" equipment. Ukraine has received nothing from NATO that would allow them to bring the war to Russia.

The WW2 equivalency to not allowing Ukraine to attack Russia, would have been only fighting Germany outside of Germany - leaving heartland Germany free to continue the war with nothing more lost than men and equipment, which they

could continue to replenish. Recall that the US bombed Tokyo in a mostly symbolic raid in early 1942, as a way for the Americans to put all their cards on the table and let Japan clearly see the extent of American intentions in the war.

Once Ukraine showed greater resistance to the Russian Special Military Operation than might have been expected, Putin understood that taking all of Ukraine might not be cost effective if Kiev didn't fall quickly. His military made some attempts to enter Kiev, but it quickly understood the scope of the street fighting that would ensue, and while Russia will continue to bombard Kiev, Russia will fully concentrate on land to the East and South. So, the attack on the North / West, while it didn't bring about the quick capitulation of the Ukrainian government, served as a means to split the limited Ukrainian military, while Russia continued its main thrust into the area between Donetsk and Luhansk and the Crimea. Whether Russian forces can encircle Ukrainian forces in the East, as they did to Hitler outside of Stalingrad in late 1942, remains to be seen. Ukraine doesn't have the air power to allow for a breakout if encirclement were to occur. At that point, Russia would control the deck.

Connecting Crimea to Donetsk and Luhansk was always Putin's main objective. Had he been able to easily take all of Ukraine that would have been a windfall; but it was not to happen - or at least not happen at this time. The conquest of Ukraine remains a distinct future possibility as long as NATO refuses to commit to Ukraine's territorial defense, which they are not now willing to do, and most probably will not be willing to do in the near or distant future.

It is now up to Putin to decide if he will temporarily settle for the land that connects Crimea to Donetsk and Luhansk, the entire Donbass region, or the entire Eastern Dnieper River valley - from Belarus to Crimea.

Donetsk and Luhansk is now Russian, and the land around Mariupol is also now Russian. Whether Putin will settle for that at this point depends upon his mood.

Probably nothing more than that - as NATO has already laid its cards on the table in this very bloody poker game.