



Curtiss P-40 in AVG Flying Tiger nose art in China circa 1941

ALL'S FAIR IN PROPAGANDA..

BUT NOT IN WAR

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The United States Government is playing a very nasty and dangerous game.

During the build-up to the Russian invasion, the White House made daily pronouncements about Russia's intent to invade. President Biden's response to the build-up was that the West would not act strongly to a "[minor incursion.](#)" Exactly what defined a minor incursion was never clarified, although the White House tried to walk back the comment afterwards.

When the invasion actually began, the White House offered President Zelensky a flight out of Ukraine to safety; an offer that he refused, saying "[I need ammunition, not a ride.](#)" Most likely the Biden White House, expecting that Kiev would fall in a matter of weeks, was caught flat-footed by Zelesky's response, and the discrepancy between expectations and actual events accounts for the different narratives emanating from Washington.

From the outset of the invasion we have been given different messages, depending upon whether the messages come from Milley, Kirby, Blinken, Jean-Pierre or Biden. They have said or implied that we either will support a Korea style settlement to the war, in which some unspecified, amount of Ukrainian land will be ceded to Russia, or we will support Ukraine in its efforts to retake possession of all of its land pursuant to the pre-2014 Crimea annexation and the Clinton signed Budapest Memorandum.

Obviously, the goals of concession and total victory are not complimentary. But, as of this writing the message is still mixed.

In January, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reiterated his pledge to regain the Russian-controlled peninsula, telling [the World Economic Forum in Davos](#) it was "our land, our territory." This is a position with which NATO's Stoltenberg publicly agrees.

Still, Secretary of State Blinken has expressed reluctance at Kyiv trying to retake the peninsula any time soon, saying that such an attempt could risk a wider response from Moscow. Blinken has said that "[Crimea is a 'red line' for Putin](#)", and that might trigger Putin resorting to nuclear weapons. The Secretary added that retaking Crimea wouldn't "be wise at this time."

If logically followed, Blinken's remarks rule out Ukraine ever taking back Crimea, since Crimea is a red line, which one might therefore assume, the US will not support Ukraine in crossing. In spite of Kiev's progress and their ability to strike the Kerch Bridge and many military targets in Crimea, Joint Chiefs Chairman Milley said it would be "very, very difficult" [to militarily eject Russian forces](#) from all of Moscow-occupied Ukraine.

Contrary to these public statements from Administration officials, Biden has said that the US would support Ukraine in its efforts to retake all of its territory. Unless Ukraine has been given private insight about the US policy towards Ukraine, the contradiction presents a problem for Ukraine - and their European allies - as the US has thus far been the largest supplier of weapons.

While, confusion regarding the end game that the US would support in Ukraine is of a strategic nature, on any given day tactics are being developed by the Ukrainian Military as to how they will proceed - and this involves people fighting and dying. Whether or not Ukraine stops in one place or another depends upon how much equipment and supplies they expect to have at some given point. How they will expend the lives of their soldiers depends on how they structure their fight in Strategic terms. Washington's public statements don't seem to factor this into the equation.

The failure to make a firm commitment to the end game and what type of war the US will allow Ukraine to fight, has resulted in a very inconsistent policy regarding how the Ukrainian's have been equipped for the war. In place of making a definitive statement based on defined goals, the Administration has based their plans on how Putin would react to what type of weapons Ukraine will be given, and how and where it can use them. Of course, we don't know exactly what Washington has told Kiev privately regarding the support Washington will give.

Thus far, American citizens have been told over and over again that there are certain types of military equipment, which, were they supplied to Ukraine, would be escalatory; these weapons would run the risk of causing a wider and more dangerous war with Russia. Yet, each red line has been crossed again and again. It might be supposed that the declarations of the increased danger of a full scale war are more so excuses for a failure to act swiftly rather than out of a true concern for the imminent start of WW3,

The United States and its Western Allies have been generous in their supply of weapons to Ukraine. But, in spite of all the aid given to Ukraine, Ukraine has been denied the full range of weapons it needs to deal decisively with the Russian invasion. The West has continued to hold back these weapons, and the denial of these weapons, as mentioned, has been couched in terms of caution; the very message that should not be given to an adversary. It is one thing to make points in a war of words. In a shooting war it is the use of bombs and

bullets that leaves an impression upon your opponent. Holding back in a fight does nothing but encourage your opponent.

Without being overly harsh on the administration, retired General Petraeus has acknowledged Washington has been too risk averse and that Ukraine needs Western jet fighters. It is not difficult to discern that as long as Putin believes that his threat of an escalated war as a response to any attacks on 'Mother Russia' is inhibiting Ukraine's ability to fight, he will continue to strike at Ukraine as devastatingly as he can.

Some of the delay in giving Ukraine what it needs to fight to win might be ascribed to what underlay Washington offering Zelensky a taxi ride out of Ukraine; Washington's expectations of a quick Russian victory. The enunciation of an acceptance of a "minor incursion," might, though be looked at as reflective of a secret agreement to yield some Ukrainian territory. Somewhere in that morass of known facts, unknown facts and falsehoods, lies the basis for the confused response from the Biden White House. Much of what has and has not happened vis a vis supplying Ukraine with military aid is reflective of how the US views the end game in the war.

While trying to fathom what may be the causes of the reticence to fully arm Ukraine, it is important to put a few things into perspective regarding America's policy towards Ukraine since the break-up of the USSR. Firstly is the fact that the US did have a hand in the 2014 EuroMaidan revolution that unseated Yanukovich. Yanukovich's policies regarding relations with the EU and with Russia are not as simple as the portrayal of him being pro-Russian. Rather, he was to a great degree, more neutral, neither fully oriented to the European Union nor to the Russian Federation. Describing his leanings depends on whether one is discussing his economic policies, his social policies or his defense policies. While, the 2014 change of government was an obvious concern for Russia, Yanukovich's policy decisions were mostly economically based; and, while he was much friendlier to Russia than many other Ukrainian politicians, in essence, his concerns about the EU were no more radical than those of the UK, which led

the UK to pull out of the EU. In any event, the coup, and America's involvement in it, did not present a military threat to Russia, and did not demand a Russian invasion of Crimea as a response. Russia's grab of Crimea was out and out territorial expansion as part of Putin's stated goal of reassembling the USSR, especially uniting Ukraine with Russia, as Putin doesn't believe in an independent Ukraine.

Putin's willingness to resort to militarism as a means to re-constitute the Soviet Union presents a clear danger to any and all of the states that were formerly part of the Soviet Union. This threat demands an unambiguous response to Putin's invasion, which thus far has been generous, but lacks a solid backbone. The fact that some of the former Soviet states have joined NATO, may or may not present itself as a future deterrent to Putin if he feels that his threat of using nuclear weapons is limiting the West's military response. And, in fact, America's continually raising the issue of escalation allows Putin to consider that he has achieved a certain impunity.

The second point to consider is the possibility that Russia's 2022 invasion could have been prevented by a timely insertion of a large number of US, UK, French and possibly Polish, Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian troops into Ukraine during the pre-invasion build up. Also needing to be considered is the possibility that the entire conflict could have been prevented had there been a strong response by the US and the UK when Russia made its advance into Crimea in 2014. The fact that there was a very limited response, almost entirely economic, to the Crimea invasion, had a direct influence on Putin's support for the separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk and his plan to overthrow Kiev. While historical analogies can only go so far - the Crimea annexation and the response to it is similar to the NAZI annexation of Czechoslovakia and the Austrian Anschluss - the weak response to those actions only whetted Hitler's appetite.

Underlying the justification for the defense of Ukraine is the 1991 Budapest Memorandum assuring the territorial integrity of Ukraine in exchange for their nuclear disarmament. There is much to be said in support of any action that

gives efficaciousness to the Memorandum. In short, the Memorandum, part of a larger Nuclear Disarmament Agreement, signed by Russia, the UK and the US, ostensibly prohibited the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States from threatening or using military force against Ukraine, in exchange for Ukraine giving up its nuclear weapons. This was no small deal, as Ukraine had the third largest arsenal of nuclear bombs and delivery systems in the world. Belarus also gave up its Nuclear weapons, although it is now considering to renounce that decision as Putin says he may place nuclear weapons in Belarus.

Of some irony is the fact that the American signer to the Budapest Memorandum was the US Ambassador to Hungary, Donald Blinken, father of current US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The background to the War yields only a look at what could have been done. But, now that there is a war, it becomes obvious that much more can be done, and much that has been done could have been done much sooner. While the desired end game for the War will determine which weapons are supplied; in turn, which weapons are supplied will determine how and when the war ends.

The US and NATO are fighting what is generally termed a proxy war - getting someone else to do the fighting while non-combatant third parties supply the military equipment.

This type of war is not new to the world, especially to Russia and the US. Russia was heavily involved in supplying weapons to North Korea during the Korean War and to North Vietnam during the War in Vietnam. Many years later it was US supplied weapons that aided the Mujadeem to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Today, while the US and many other nations around the world are sending military supplies to Ukraine, American rhetoric that condemns Iran and North Korea for violating some rules by supplying Russia only serves to cloud valid American criticism of the invasion. All of the rhetoric about "good guys and bad guys" in the war is expected and not unusual. The reality is that China, India and

the UAE abstained in condemning the Russian invasion in the UN Security Council.

What is unusual and potentially fraught with danger is the American rhetoric about certain weapons being offensive rather than defensive, and that any weapon that would allow the Ukrainians to reach out and touch Russian military production and supplies in Russia proper is off the table. If the use of this narrative is an excuse for the US's desired end game for the war, it is truly dangerous because, using the US's own words, it gives Russia justification to strike back harshly if Ukraine reaches out to destroy Russian Military targets in Russia; something which, by all accounts, it has already done.

The effect of this ratcheted supply policy has been a delay in the ability of Ukraine to capture more Russian occupied Ukrainian territory, cost the lives of thousands of Ukrainians and allowed Russia to destroy a tremendous amount of Ukrainian infrastructure.

This, though, is not the first time an American Administration has limited the scope of a fight, even when American lives were on the line in combat. During the Korean War, President Truman wouldn't allow American planes to bomb targets in China after more than 200,000 Chinese troops had crossed into North Korea and were the main fighting force opposing the UN forces, and the USSR supplied T-34 tanks to face American Sherman and Pershing tanks.

In Vietnam, during the entirety of that War, the US prevented the ARVIN forces from crossing into North Vietnam, even while the NVA and the Viet Cong were actively fighting in the South. This prohibition remained a major bone of contention between the Vietnamese military and the US, and was a major cause of the ultimate fall of South Vietnam. Washington was so controlling of the war that when US planes were bombing Hai Phong harbor, American pilots were prohibited from bombing Russian ships offloading military supplies for the North; and often had to dump their bombs into the ocean before returning to their carrier or air base.

In Ukraine, certain types of long range artillery shells were off the table. Then, American tanks were off the table, claiming the Abrams are too complicated for the Ukrainian battlefield. But, America has hundreds of upgraded and stored M-60's, which have the same caliber gun as the German Leopard 1, which it seems will make their way to Ukraine. Both tanks, while not the newest, are more than a match for most of the Russian tanks, and at a minimum, could be used as needed highly mobile close range field artillery, among other tactical uses.

Then, with a sudden change of policy, the US decided to send artillery with an increased range and then announced it would send a small number of the complicated and expensive Abrams tanks. Other countries are now sending their own current MBTs; Leopard 2's, Challenger 2's and the Leclerc - and maybe others. Possibly, had there been less corruption throughout Ukraine over the past few decades, the country might have been able to rely on its own domestically designed Oplot-M tanks. But, then again, had there been less American tolerance of Ukrainian corruption over the years, Ukraine would not have been such an inviting target for Russia.

Most importantly, what is still off the table are planes; exactly what is needed for an effective counter-offensive. The US policy is hinged on statements which say that the US is giving Ukraine what it needs most at the current time, and not giving Ukraine anything that is capable of reaching Russia. That would be like telling WW2 Marines and Soldiers that they didn't need air cover during their offensives, and that Allied planes couldn't attack Japanese and German production sites and supply routes wherever they were located.

As part of American aid given in WW2, not only did the US provide munitions to England, they loaned England 50 American destroyers, and American sailors were on convoy patrol before Germany declared war on the US. Two US destroyers were actually torpedoed by NAZI Germany before the US entered the War. And, before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, 100 American P-40s with American pilots, some of whom took leave from the US Army and were then

secretly hired on as civilians, were already in China eventually fighting as the lauded Flying Tigers.

This entire concept of differentiating between offensive and defensive weapons is basically bogus, based on some premise that there is a differentiation because you are only a supplier of military aid and not a combatant.

There is no historical precedent that would prohibit the US and the West, let alone individual nations, from supplying aircraft to Ukraine - or for that matter, to Russia.

During the Korean War, the USSR not only supplied N. Korea with tanks and other equipment, they also supplied the North with the most advanced jets in the world at the time, (the MiG 15); and there were Russian pilots flying many of them.

A more telling possibility for the reticence might be that the West was unprepared militarily for an extended war and is doing a "time step" to play catch up, or else Ukraine is expendable as long as Russia is weakened. That, though, is ridiculous logic, as Russia will be able to mobilize its manufacturing to a war footing and build up a very large army with better and more modern weapons in a relatively short period of time. Assuming Russia was also unprepared for a prolonged war, the more delay there is in allowing Ukraine to develop an effective offensive, the better it is for Russia.

Additionally, Russia will ultimately gain more allies - including economic helpers like India and Saudi Arabia, via [the destruction of the Petro Dollar](#).

One has to question if the stated policy of "non escalation", is truly the determinant of US policy, or if not sending planes to Ukraine ASAP, and earlier not having allowed MiG 29s to be shipped to Ukraine, is reflective of a policy that doesn't ultimately care about Ukraine, and is one that might ultimately accept a Korean style peace in which Ukraine is divided. Over the long run, the current policy will be more costly, and the longer the war drags on, the greater the

potential for some incident to cause the fighting to spread and spiral out control, and the world will be no less free from the threat of global conflict that it was before the invasion.