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Biden Slouches towards Catastrophe in Ukraine

Д. Байден схиляється до катастрофи в Україні

. Президент Росії В. Путін направив президенту США Д. Байдену ультиматум, фактично вимагаючи від НАТО відмовитися від розширення в Східну Європу, зокрема стосовно входження в НАТО України. Д. Байден повідомив В. Путіну, що якщо він продовжить вторгнення в Україну, він зіткнеться з сильними економічними санкціями з боку США та європейських партнерів. В. Путін відповів, що такі санкції призведуть до «повного розриву відносин» між Росією та США.

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On December 17, Russian dictator Vladimir Putin sent U.S. president Joe Biden an ultimatum, effectively demanding that NATO abandon Eastern Europe or face military action. Biden agreed to a phone conversation with Putin to talk it over, giving the Kremlin what it sought: The affected countries were now on the table instead of at the table. When the two then talked on December 30, according to the White House, Biden rejected the ultimatum and informed Putin that if he proceeded to invade Ukraine, he would face strong economic sanctions from the U.S. and its European partners. Putin then countered by saying that such sanctions would result in a “complete rupture in relations” between Russia and the U.S.

The Russian ultimatum was outrageous, so much so that it is clear that it was designed to be rejected, giving Russia a pretext for war. Furthermore, in promising to cut off relations in response to any new Western sanctions, Putin was threatening retaliation for Western actions that would only occur in the event of an invasion. In other words: The invasion is on. Putin is planning to take Ukraine, or the bulk of it, because he thinks he can. Putin looks at Biden and his European counterparts and sees weakness. And why wouldn't he? In July 2014, when Russia-backed fighters shot down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine, killing all 298 passengers and crew aboard, the Obama–Biden administration refused to hold them responsible for it; instead, the White House called for a prolonged “investigation” to defuse the issue. A month later, when Ukrainian forces were advancing into Donetsk to retake the city from Russian-backed separatists, Russia massed armored forces on the Ukrainians' flanks. These tank concentrations could not have escaped observation by U.S. reconnaissance satellites. But rather than “provoke” Russia by warning the Ukrainians of the impending envelopment, the Obama–Biden administration shamefully kept quiet, allowing the Ukrainian forces to be surprised, surrounded, and defeated. The economic sanctions imposed on Russia in response to its seizure of Ukrainian territory and its killing of over 14,000 Ukrainian citizens were a joke, limited to reducing a few secondary Kremlin figures' opportunities to shop and enjoy the sites in Western countries. Meanwhile, the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project was allowed to proceed apace. More than five years later, Russia is mobilizing troops on the Ukrainian border, and the Biden administration seems to be taking the Russian seizure of Ukraine as a fait accompli. Rather than warn Putin that he will be held responsible for any harm that might come to the 15,000 American citizens currently in Ukraine, the administration has announced that it is

developing plans for their evacuation. Biden has threatened to impose more serious sanctions in the event of an invasion, but Putin is betting that any sanctions with real teeth will be temporary in nature, and well worth the pain if he can take Ukraine and discredit the Western alliance in the bargain. Taking Ukrainian defeat as a given, hawks on Team Biden and in the Washington foreign-policy establishment are drawing up plans for the worst kind of war possible. In a December 19 Washington Post article, foreign-policy expert David Ignatius reports that the administration has considered allowing Putin to conquer Ukraine and then afterwards supplying Ukrainian insurgents with weapons, thereby trapping Russia in a bloody quagmire: The Biden administration is studying whether and how the United States could support an anti-Russian insurgency inside Ukraine if President Vladimir Putin invades that country and seizes substantial territory.

The planning, described Sunday by a knowledgeable official, includes ways to provide weapons and other support to the Ukrainian military to resist invading Russian forces — and similar logistical support to insurgent groups if Russia topples the Ukrainian government and a guerrilla war begins. The weapons the United States might provide include shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles. The CIA's delivery of such weapons, known at the time as "Stingers," had a devastating effect on Soviet forces during their 10-year war in Afghanistan, from 1979 to 1989. The administration task force, which includes the CIA and other key agencies, has been studying how insurgencies were organized against the Soviets in Afghanistan and Russian-backed forces in Syria — and also against the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's an ironic example of turning the tables, weighing whether and how to inflict harm similar to what U.S. forces have suffered in recent years. The madness and sheer immorality of this policy defies polite description. As historian John Keegan writes about the partisan conflict in Yugoslavia in his book *The Second World War*, while glorious tales of heroic resistance fighters stoically accepting retaliatory massacres of civilians by occupation forces in order to carry on with their raids "read well on the page," the reality of such cases was simply horrific. Ukraine has endured such circumstances before, both during the Nazi occupation and the Holodomor of the 1930s, when Soviet occupiers sought to crush Ukrainian aspirations by brutally enforcing the starvation of millions of people. It should never have to endure them again. Ukraine is a civilized European nation comprising people of talent and good will who wish to, and deserve to, become part of the free world. They are also a people that the United States has pledged its solemn word to protect. Those who propose to feed them to Russia so that once devoured they give the Kremlin indigestion should have no place in the U.S. government. Putin desires to wreck Ukraine so that it can't serve as an example to the Russian people of the benefits of freedom. Turning it once again into a wasteland of massacres and starvation would suit his purposes perfectly. To make sure that doesn't happen, the U.S. needs to help Ukraine draw the line at its border.

This can only be accomplished by *arming Ukraine to the teeth*. Russian forces won't be in position to invade for several more weeks. We can and must take advantage of this time to ship the Ukrainians massive caches of weapons, especially the anti-aircraft missiles that will be so critical in neutralizing Russia's air superiority. Unless Russia's aerial advantage can be offset, the Ukrainians will stand no chance of holding their own on the ground. So Ukraine needs these weapons, and it needs them *now*, not after the Ukrainian army is destroyed by Russian air attacks. Once the invasion begins it will be too late. Ukraine is a country of 44 million people; if properly armed, it could repel an invasion by the 175,000-man expeditionary force Putin has assembled. Overcoming a well-armed

Ukraine would cost far more resource-wise than Putin is currently willing to spend. By arming the Ukrainians, we can prevent a war. Good fences make good neighbors; deterrence is much better than war. By showing the enemy our back in Afghanistan, the Biden administration took down the fences that have secured general peace in Europe and Asia for the past seven decades.