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Wounded Empire Roars with ATACMS for Ukrainem & Sanctions for Iran

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ATACMS for “Ukraine”

Outgoing US President Biden earlier today has given the green light for the use by “Ukraine” (= Ukraine directed by NATO, with weapons, NATO personnel and NATO satellite data) of Western precision-guided missiles on targets deep inside Russia.

General skepticism has met the claim that this is retaliation for the alleged but as-yet-to-be-proven deployment of North Korean troops in Kursk. As I noted yesterday, this is an absurd argument, given the presence of NATO personnel in Ukraine since the beginning of the SMO, the utter dependence of Ukraine on NATO for the firing of precision-guided missiles, the dependence of the entire war on the provision of weapons to Ukraine by NATO, and the fact that even if Russia decided to deploy North Korean troops in Kursk to help it push out Ukrainian troops that have invaded the Russian oblast of Kursk, it would be entirely in its rights to do so.

A more compelling explanation for Biden’s decision could be that in the light of Russia’s sudden escalation of attacks on the Ukrainian mainland including, especially, on the cusp of bitter winter, attacks on Ukrainian

energy systems, Biden felt the US was compelled to act in order to maintain the facade that the US is capable of supplying Ukraine with the aid necessary to stop Russia from winning the war and thus seeming to fulfill its unfillable promises. Within the past 24 hours Russia has reportedly fired 120 missiles of all descriptions (including Kalibers, KH101s, supersonic strategic bombers, Iskander Ms, and hypersonic Zinzhals), together with 90 Geran2 drones. Given the poor state of Ukrainian air defenses it is inevitable that a large number of these would have hit their targets.

Another explanation for green-lighting precision-guided missiles on targets deep in Russia is that Biden and his administration simply want to make life as difficult as they can for incoming President Elect Trump, who does appear to be very sympathetic to those who have argued that the war is a reckless and unnecessary drain on US resources. There is no doubt that personnel in the coming Trump administration are extremely critical of Biden's decision, all the more so given that the decision was clearly not communicated to Trump in his recent 90 minute session with Biden in the White House.

On the other hand, one can argue that in two months' time Trump will have the capability of rescinding Biden's order, and that even the Pentagon has advised Biden that the addition of ATACMS will make no difference anyhow to the current imbalance of power on the battlefield very much in favor of Russia, and certainly not in the space of two months.

The Biden decision is a bad one. It not only applies to US supply of ATACMS but it will give the green light to Britain and France to allow

“Ukraine,” or rather, allow NATO powers, to directly hit Russian mainland targets with Scalps and Storm Shadows. Additionally, the likely incoming new Chancellor of Germany, Friedrich Merz, has said he will send German Taurus missiles to Ukraine and he is keen to sustain European support for Ukraine.

In addition to continuing the flow of US aid to Ukraine into the very final weeks of his Administration and knowing that his successor will adopt an entirely different policy, Biden has taken further measures to prolong the war and kill a lot more people.

Further, there is no action that NATO can take in the next two months that is going to deter Russia; on the contrary, NATO actions involving Scalps, Storm Shadows, ATACMS and Taurus missiles will enflame Russia and gravely endanger the entire world. If the Supreme Court hadn't already conferred (foolishly) on the Presidency virtual immunity for criminal acts undertaken in office, one might hope that Trump on his first day in office would lock Biden up and throw away the key. But of course US presidents have rarely needed Supreme Court cover for committing criminal acts (viz. Obama's drone warfare murder of unproven “terrorists” and for every such “terrorist” scores more civilians).

Besides, to put things into further perspective, we see that after two years' of Russian missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian air defense, military, transport and energy systems, deploying weapons for which Russia has a greater production capacity than the entire Western world combined, Ukraine still survives, sort of.

Russia, a far larger country, is not going to be crippled in two months by

a motley crew of entitled NATO countries whose own weapons stocks are very badly depleted (see below).

This is not to say that serious mischief is inconceivable: Ukraine is really, really, really keen on the idea of strikes on nuclear power facilities. 7 out of 9 of its own nuclear reactors are now inoperable so Russia has less scope for retaliation in that regard, but there is no doubting its capability in actual nuclear weapons, deployable in far greater number and in a far shorter span of time than Zelenskiy can cook up with his threatened Nagasaki-style plutonium bomb.

And since Russia will now be at war with NATO, its potential targets, with whatever weapons, whether fired direct or supplied indirectly to third parties such as Iran, or the Houthis, North Korea or even Cuba or Venezuela for that matter, are now liberally scattered around the world.

The Iranian Trigger

In West Asia, meanwhile, The Financial Times has reported that the incoming Trump administration is favorably disposed to reintroducing maximalist sanctions on Iran, a major escalation of Trump's economic war with Iran following his wanton destruction for no good reason of the the JCPOA agreement during his first administration. If the Financial Times is correct, and we should not assume that it is, then this fully exposes the naivete of the pro-Western faction in Tehran led by the new President, Pezeshkian, in seeking better relations with Washington (along lines doubtless explored in a meeting last week between Elon Musk and the Iranian ambassador to the UN).

On the other hand, this story could be a neocon false flag intended to harden the resolve of those in Tehran who want now, right away, to see an Iranian retaliation against Israel for Israel's attacks on Iran on October 25-26, in the expectation that Israel and the US would use this as the necessary pretext for an all-out regional war that would likely bring in both Russia and China in defense of Iran, a war which the neocons either think the US can win (it cannot, see below), or because the neocons simply don't care so long as they can continue to revel a bit long in the loot directed their way for their services by the incubus of the for-profit US National Security State.

Planning the Apocalypse

neocon war against Russia has been very long in the making. At the very least it begins with the West's rejection of Putin's warnings in 2008 that a continued insistence by NATO in continuing to spread eastwards, contrary to the understandings reached between Bush senior and Gorbachev around the time of the implosion of the Soviet Union, would destabilize geopolitical relations.

Preparations for war carried on through the US-instigated, financed and directed *coup d'état* in Kiev in 2014, and the Western sabotage of the subsequent Minsk agreements that would have kept Eastern Donbass within Ukraine only with greater autonomy (which, yes, might have given Russia more influence, indirectly, in the RADA, probably a very healthy thing).

They were then sustained through a string of major, carefully

orchestrated, Western propaganda operations that included (1) the false allegations that Russia had ordered the shooting down of MH17 over eastern Ukraine in 2014, and (2) that Russia had ordered and executed the attempted murder of the Skripals in Salisbury, Britain, in 2018 with the use of the laughable “novichok” (see a report of the latest botched investigation of this preposterous fable here - Kit Klarenberg’s [The CIA/MI6 Skripal Conspiracy Exposed](#)). Then (3) there was Russiagate, of which I have had much to say in this space. And a long string of comparable official fantasies (remember Bucha).

Depleting the West

Klarenberg has visited a recent RAND appraisal of the state of the Pentagon’s 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS), and current US military readiness, which finds that the US is “not prepared” in any meaningful way for serious “competition” with its major adversaries - and vulnerable or even significantly outmatched in every sphere of warfare.” RAND finds the NDS hazardously defective in its assessment of the threats to the US and its proposals for countering them. It was particularly irresponsible in its assessment of the threat of an alliance between Russia and China - precisely the kind of alliance, incidentally, that in 2016 Trump wanted to preempt by his wish, unrealized in practice, to cultivate better relations with Russia.

Of particular interest in the context of my post today:

“The RAND Commission found Washington’s “defense industrial base” is completely “unable to meet the equipment, technology, and munitions needs” of the US, let alone its allies. “A protracted conflict, especially in multiple theaters, would require much greater capacity to produce,

maintain, and replenish weapons and munitions” than is currently in place, the report observes. Rebuilding that capacity “requires greater urgency and resources,” and “should remain a top priority” for the Pentagon.

For decades, the US military “employed cutting-edge technology to its decisive advantage for decades.” This “assumption of uncontested technological superiority” on the Empire’s part meant Washington had “the luxury to build exquisite capabilities, with long acquisition cycles and little tolerance for failure or risk.” Those days are long over though, with China and Russia “incorporating technology at accelerating speed,” and “even relatively unsophisticated actors” such as Yemen’s Ansarallah “able to obtain and use modern technology (e.g. drones) to strategic effect.”

Klarenberg concludes:

“We have entered a strange, late-stage Empire era, comparable to the Soviet Union’s Glasnost, in which elements of the US imperial braintrust can see with blinding clarity Washington’s entire hegemonic global project is stumbling rapidly and irreversibly towards extinction, and announce so publicly - but their insight does not translate into evasive governmental action at home”.

For *Mint Press News*, Robert Inlakesh ([Inlakesh](#)) discusses the related issue of western stocks depletion while weapons manufacturers profiteer.

“American military aid to Israel since the beginning of the war has exceeded [\\$17.9 billion](#). This figure does not account for weapons bridges

set up to supply Israel. In August alone, President Joe Biden approved a [\\$20 billion](#) weapons package. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, Washington has authorized [\\$64.1 billion](#) in military assistance, much of which remains undisclosed...

“Focusing on U.S. weapons supplies to Israel, air defenses have emerged as a significant concern for security officials. Although the U.S. had an annual budget of [\\$500 million](#) for anti-air systems, this past year saw a dramatic surge, with air defense aid totaling [\\$5.7 billion](#)...

“In April, during Iran’s retaliatory strikes against Israel under Operation True Promise, reports indicate that Israel and the U.S. spent at least [\\$1 billion](#) to intercept around 300 projectiles. Following a second wave of Iranian strikes on October 1, which Israel failed to counter effectively, the U.S. deployed its THAAD missile system to bolster future defenses. However, the U.S. possesses only seven of these billion-dollar systems, each equipped with 48 interceptors costing \$13 million per missile. If Tel Aviv received even a few reloads, this could account for up to a quarter of the U.S.’s total THAAD missile [stockpile](#)...

“In the Red Sea operation, defending Israel has come at a steep price. The U.S. has deployed [\\$2 million](#) interceptor missiles to shoot down Yemeni drones reportedly constructed for just \$2,000—an imbalance that illustrates the mounting economic burden of a naval mission that has yet to yield clear success”.