

“Breaking the back” of Russia: US war aims emerge in Ukraine

Andre Damon
24 April 2022

On Sunday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin traveled to Kiev to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in the highest-level US official visit to Ukraine’s capital city since the war broke out.

Their trip comes as, in the span of just 10 days, President Joe Biden has announced \$1.6 billion in additional US weapons to Ukraine, including aircraft, drones, artillery and armored vehicles.

Blinken and Austin went to Kiev to give Zelensky his marching orders. The US is calling the shots in the war, with Zelensky’s government serving as a puppet. Ukraine’s oligarchs have been bought off with billions of dollars to supply the Ukrainian people as cannon fodder in a conflict with Russia.

Fighting a “hot war on Ukrainian territory” has been a central goal of US imperialist planning since at least the 2014 Ukrainian coup, and likely as far back as the 2004 “Orange Revolution.” So vital were the US military preparations for this conflict that they led to what was then only the third impeachment of a president in US history, over allegations that then-President Donald Trump had withheld weapons from Ukraine.

On February 24, the years-long buildup of Ukraine as a US/NATO fortress against Russia prompted Washington’s desired outcome—Russia’s invasion of the country—in what US strategists hoped would become “Russia’s Afghanistan,” which would “bleed” the country “white.”

Now, two months since the outbreak of the war, US officials are stating publicly what they previously admitted only in secret: The United States is the driving force in a war aimed at crippling and subjugating Russia and overthrowing its government, no matter the cost in Ukrainian lives.

In an interview with CBS, former US Army Europe Commander Ben Hodges declared, “You know, we’re not just observers cheering for Ukraine here.” The United States, Hodges said, should declare, “We want to win.”

He continued, “that means all Russian forces back to pre-24 February... a long-term commitment to the full restoration of Ukrainian sovereignty—that means Crimea and Donbas—and then finally breaking the back of Russia’s ability to project power outside of Russia to threaten Georgia, to threaten Moldova, to threaten our Baltic allies.”

In other words, the goal of the United States must be not only to retake Crimea—territory that Russia claims as its own—but to destroy the fighting capacity of the Russian military.

On Friday, the *New York Times* used the phrase “bring Russia to its knees” in an editorial, declaring, “Sanctions alone—at least any sanctions that European countries would be willing to now consider—will not bring Russia to its knees any time soon.”

The deliberate use of these phrases—“bring Russia to its knees” and “breaking the back” of Russia—exposes as fraudulent the official narrative of the war presented for public consumption in the media: Namely that it is an unprovoked onslaught by powerful Russia against poor and helpless Ukraine.

The clear implication of these statements is the expansion of the war to Russian territory, potentially including the deployment of US forces either in Ukraine, in Russian territory, or both.

In a recent statement on CBS’s “Face the Nation,” Senate Democrat Chris Coons, referred to by *Politico* as Biden’s “shadow secretary of state,” effectively doubled down on his demand for a discussion about sending US troops to Ukraine.

Coons was asked, “In some public remarks this week, you said the country needs to talk about when it might be willing to send troops to Ukraine.” To this, Coons replied, “Putin will only stop when we stop him.”

In an interview Sunday on NBC’s “Meet the Press,” US Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finer was asked point blank: “Is the US policy objective right now for Ukraine to defeat Russia? Can you say that definitively?” Finer effectively answered yes, saying, “Russia is more isolated in the world. Its economy is weaker... And our objective is going to be to continue that trend.”

This is not just a war that Washington wanted. It is a war that the United States provoked. The billions of dollars in arms funneled to Ukraine under the last three presidents, Biden’s declaration that he does not recognize Russia’s “red lines,” the refusal to negotiate over Ukraine’s potential membership in NATO—all were calculated to provoke the present war.

Since the outbreak of the war, the United States has done everything possible to prevent a diplomatic settlement. Along with goading US officials to openly declare the US policy to be the military defeat of Russia, the talk shows Sunday were dominated by condemnations of the efforts of the United Nations to broker a diplomatic settlement of the war.

US newscasters poured scorn upon efforts by UN Secretary-General António Guterres to find a peaceful settlement of the war by meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Asking a leading question, Kristen Welker of NBC demanded, “Does the UN secretary general, is he authorized to speak on behalf of the Ukrainian government?”

Igor Zhovkva, deputy head of the office of Ukrainian President Zelensky, replied by condemning Guterres’s efforts. “This is not good idea to travel to Moscow. We did not understand his intention to travel to Moscow and to talk to President Putin.”

In order to drum up public support for the war, the US media is carrying out a campaign of incitement, accusing Russia of war crimes, massacres and genocide. This propaganda blitz is aimed at creating hatred of Russians, with increasingly racist overtones.

The liberal and pseudo-left apologists for US capitalism, including disoriented layers of academics, incapable of viewing anything in historical context, have been swept up in the militarist hysteria against

Russia.

A warning must be made: The aims being pursued increasingly openly by the United States in the war inevitably involve the expansion of the conflict. There is nothing left of the fiction that the United States and NATO are not at war with Russia. In pursuit of regime-change, the dismemberment of Russia and the plundering of its vast resources, American imperialism is risking nuclear war.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact