

# Amid “massive casualties,” Washington vows to fight to the last Ukrainian

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On Thursday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin traveled to Ukraine to pledge to fight Russia to the last Ukrainian, cheering on an offensive that US forces quietly warn will lead to “massive casualties.”

“More than six months” into the war, Blinken boasted, “your counteroffensive is now underway and proving effective.”

Blinken was referring to a US-instigated offensive to retake portions of Russian-occupied territory, which has already resulted in a horrendous bloodbath. Ukrainian forces have claimed that hundreds of Russians are being killed each day, while Russian military spokesman Igor Konashenkov said: “During two days of unsuccessful attacks on the Nikolaevo-Krivoy Rog and other directions, Ukrainian troops lost ... more than 1.7 thousand Ukrainian servicemen.”

Speaking on condition of anonymity, one of the Americans on the ground coordinating the Ukraine war effort as part of the “Mozart group” paramilitary force told *Newsweek* that Ukraine’s planned offensive will be “very bloody.”

“There’s a lot of casualties, it doesn’t matter how well trained you are,” he said. “No matter how well prepared your people are and your troops are, nobody’s ever prepared for the massive number of casualties.”

In fact, the Pentagon and their underlings in Kiev are indifferent to the loss of Ukrainian lives. The much publicized counter-offensive involves assaults on well-fortified Russian defensive positions. The Ukrainian soldiers are exposed to massive bombardment from Russian artillery and aircraft.

Even before this offensive, the war in Ukraine has been a disaster for the populations of both Ukraine and Russia. Many thousands of soldiers have been killed on both sides. Some 6.6 million people have been

displaced, while over 5,500 Ukrainian civilians have been killed, according to the United Nations.

Human life means nothing to the Washington warmongers or their stooges in Kiev. The same people warming their hands over the fires of Ukraine have presided over a COVID-19 policy that has killed over 1 million Americans and plunged US life expectancy by nearly three years. The lives of Ukraine’s youth, many of them conscripted, are being squandered, mere cannon fodder, or to use the phrase favored by Leo Tolstoy, “cannon meat.”

The recklessness of the US in escalating the war was summed up earlier this month by *The Hill* in an article titled “Why the US is becoming more brazen with its Ukraine support.” It concluded: “The Biden administration is arming Ukraine with weapons that can do serious damage to Russian forces, and, unlike early in the war, US officials don’t appear worried about Moscow’s reaction.”

In July, Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov openly declared that the country should be viewed as a “testing ground” for US defense contractors. “We are inviting arms manufacturers to test new products here,” he said.

Indeed, US defense contractors are not only “testing” their products in Ukraine, they are raking in money hand over fist. Despite the eight percent decline in the US stock market over the past year, shares of Lockheed Martin, the largest defense contractor, are up by 20 percent over the same period, as are the share prices of General Dynamics and Northrop Grumman.

US arms manufacturers are not only cashing in directly on the thousands of missiles, drones and other weapons being sent to Ukraine, but also on the massive rearmament of the NATO allies, who have all vowed to expand their military spending to record levels.

And they are not the only American companies enjoying record profits. As Russia has dramatically curtailed its gas deliveries to Europe as a result of the war, US natural gas exports to Europe have tripled, while the prices paid by European consumers have surged ten-fold over the past year.

US energy companies posted their largest profits ever last month, with ExxonMobil posting a record \$17.85 billion in quarterly profits and Chevron a record \$11.62 billion.

Throughout the US economy, corporate profits have surged to 15.5 percent, the highest figure reported since 1950 and double what they were 10 years ago, amid rampant corporate price-gouging and a collapse in workers' living standards.

American companies are benefiting from a war that was deliberately provoked by Washington and a pro-NATO Ukrainian government that emerged from a US-orchestrated 2014 coup in Kiev. For all the winged phrases of "democracy" and "national sovereignty," the real meaning of Ukraine to US imperialist strategists was spelled out bluntly by US Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch, who called the country a "battleground for great-power competition."

Speaking at Ramstein Air Force base in Germany, US officials pledged to "put the Russians back on their heels." US Defense Secretary Austin boasted of the range of weapons systems provided by the US to Ukraine.

Over the past three months, Austin said, the US has sent over 126 M77 howitzers, adding, "We've increased the number of howitzer systems for Ukraine's defenders by more than 18-fold." He added that 25 long-range missile launchers have been sent to Ukraine, including the HIMARS. Mark Milley, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, bragged that "the Ukrainians have struck over 400 targets with the HIMARS."

Critically, as this meeting was taking place, Ukrainian officials admitted that the series of attacks on Crimea last month were "successful missile strikes," leaving open the possibility that the US-supplied HIMARS were used.

Austin said the mission of the US is "changing," making it clear that the aim of the US is to draw the war out for as long as possible. He pledged to "upgrade our defense industrial bases" for the "long haul"—a

phrase he repeated five times.

In this he echoed the words of NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, who wrote earlier this week that NATO was "making the most fundamental shift in NATO's deterrence and defense since the Cold War," but that this would come at the cost of "soaring energy prices and costs of living," and the "threat of energy cuts, disruptions and perhaps even civil unrest."

The war unleashed by the US and NATO powers is at one and the same time a war against the working class: of Ukraine and Russia, of Europe and of the United States. In the name of the "war against Putin," the imperialist powers are waging a war against the world's workers, declaring that they must accept energy rationing, plunging pay and even starvation.

But the working class will have its own say in the matter. The crisis created by the collapse in living standards has led to a global surge of the class struggle, from the UK to France, the United States, Sri Lanka and Africa. As they enter into struggle, workers all over the world must raise the demand for an end to the war. To the ruling class's policy of world war, workers must counterpose the strategy of class war and the struggle for the socialist transformation of society.



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