

Biden administration demands another \$60 billion to fund the Ukrainian bloodbath

Jordan Shilton
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In the wake of the collapse of the \$118 billion bill to finance war and the assault on immigrants, the Biden administration is redoubling its efforts to ensure financing of its main priority: the US-NATO proxy war against Russia over Ukraine.

On Thursday, legislation that would fund just the war passed a procedural hurdle in the Senate, with 17 Republicans joining Democrats to move it forward. While the bill pledges some \$14 billion to back Israel's genocide against the Palestinians and around \$10 billion to prepare Taiwan for war with China, the majority of the spending, \$60.1 billion, is earmarked to continue the mass slaughter in Ukraine against Russia.

As the US-NATO war on Russia approaches its second anniversary, Washington is determined to prolong the conflict, which has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. In pursuit of their goal of reducing Russia to the status of a semi-colony, the US and its European imperialist allies are prepared to fight to the last Ukrainian.

Following the spectacular failure of its "summer offensive" in 2023, Ukraine's Zelensky regime confronts a military and social calamity. The army is running out of manpower, with decimated units struggling to hold defensive lines against Russian attacks. Zelensky is preparing a plan to conscript a further 500,000 Ukrainians to be used as the imperialists' cannon fodder. Bitter factional in-fighting within the Ukrainian oligarchy led this week to Zelensky removing Valery Zaluzhny as the army's commander.

The ruthlessness with which Washington is escalating the conflict is bound up with the imperialist character of the war. American imperialism systematically provoked the oligarchic nationalist Putin regime into invading Ukraine in February 2022 because it was seeking a pretext to launch a long-planned war on Russia. After financing and helping organize a fascist-spearheaded coup in 2014 to install a pro-Western regime in Kiev, the US, Canada and the European powers poured huge quantities of arms into Ukraine and vastly expanded NATO's presence throughout Eastern

Europe.

The centrality of the war in relation to imperialist geostrategy is underscored by the extent of the financial support provided to Kiev by the major powers. According to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Ukraine received a total of \$247 billion in military, financial and humanitarian aid commitments between 24 January, 2022 and 31 October, 2023. The country's annual GDP for the last pre-war year, 2021, amounted to just \$200 billion. In other words, the entire state and corrupt oligarchy is funded by the imperialist powers, which supply the weapons and the strategic and logistical planning for the war.

The military spending bill is seen as essential to demonstrate to Washington's rivals its ability to continue waging war on all fronts. As retired Gen. H.R. McMaster, national security advisor under Trump, put it when discussing the urgency of securing congressional backing for the \$60 billion for Ukraine:

The abandonment of Kyiv would be a gift to the Moscow-Tehran-Beijing-Pyongyang axis of aggressors. Allies and partners would lose trust in America as those aggressors are emboldened.

At the most fundamental level, the American ruling class is troubled by the loss of "trust" in its economic power, which it has sought to uphold over the past three decades through the increasingly aggressive use of its unchallenged military superiority. The defeat of Ukraine in a conflict in which the US and its European allies are so heavily invested would deliver a staggering blow to this agenda. The dominance of the dollar, which permits American imperialism to pile up incredible levels of debt to fund its war machine, would be called even more seriously into question.

But there are also more immediate economic concerns at stake: securing the profits of the banks and investment funds

involved in the Ukrainian bloodbath. Beyond purchasing new weapons, a substantial chunk of the \$60 billion will go, in one form or another, to pay their fees.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*:

International bondholders, including MFS Investment Management, BlackRock and Fidelity Investments, agreed last year to give Ukraine a payment holiday on about \$20 billion of debt until mid-2024. The Finance Ministry hopes to restructure the bonds further next year, which requires asking reluctant investors to forgive some of the debt and swap the rest into new securities.

The *Financial Times* reported last June:

BlackRock and JPMorgan Chase are helping the Ukrainian government set up a reconstruction bank to steer public seed capital into rebuilding projects that can attract hundreds of billions of dollars in private investment.

JPMorgan Chase, the world's largest bank with \$3.7 trillion in assets, has been deeply involved in directing policy in Ukraine. In a statement published by the bank in May 2023, it noted that the bank is "providing its expertise in restructuring strategies, sovereign credit ratings, asset management of government liquidity and digitization of the economy."

It added that the bank was also working to "identify opportunities to help Ukraine establish close economic connectivity to Europe, as well as to create an entity that can direct and safeguard investments from the official and private sectors, and to facilitate trade flows."

Having invested tens of billions of their own euros into backing the Ukrainian regime, Washington's current European allies are also determined to secure continued US support and are equally as committed to securing their own pound of flesh.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who is currently visiting Washington for a bilateral meeting with Biden, published a guest commentary in the *Wall Street Journal*. Just a week after the European Union approved a further €50 billion (\$54 billion) in financial support for Kiev, Scholz boasted that the European powers have been "Ukraine's largest financial supporter, having contributed more than \$91 billion since the beginning of the war, followed by the US."

He concluded:

Despite our support, Ukraine could soon face serious shortages in arms and ammunition. Some financial commitments have already run out, and others need to be extended. The long-term consequences and costs of failing to stop Mr. Putin's aggression would dwarf any of the investments that we are making now.

Like all wars, the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine is creating golden opportunities for the capitalist parasites to turn human blood into dollars and euros. Workers have no interest in supporting the American or European bourgeoisies in their squabble to determine who acquires the lion's share of the booty.

The reactionary nationalist Putin regime offers no alternative to the imperialists' lust for profit and plunder. On the contrary, the historic bankruptcy of the Russian capitalist oligarchy—which owes its power to the dismantling of the Soviet Union by the Stalinist bureaucracy—was expressed in the fact that it had nothing to offer in response to the imperialists' provocations over Ukraine but military violence and the promotion of Russian chauvinism.

Ending the bloodbath in Ukraine can be accomplished only through the international unification of the working class in Russia, Ukraine, the United States, Europe and beyond on the basis of a struggle to put an end to capitalism, which is the root cause of war and imperialist barbarism.

The lengths to which the imperialists are prepared to go have not only been shown in the death toll in Ukraine, but also in their unanimous support for Israel's genocide against the Palestinians. These open displays of savagery have already produced protests by millions of people around the world. The mobilisation of the widespread opposition that exists in the working class to imperialist war is possible only by counterposing the programme of world socialist revolution to the catastrophe produced by the division of the globe into rival capitalist nation-states.



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