

# *The involvement of the United States in the war in Ukraine: for peace or for war*

(Axes Territoire, Identité, Echanges)

## FOR PEACE

America has crossed a threshold in Ukraine, both in its short-term involvement and its long-term intent. The U.S. was initially cautious during the fall and winter as Russia, a nuclear country with veto power at the U.N. Security Council, amassed more than a hundred and fifty thousand troops along the Ukrainian border. Two days after long convoys of Russian tanks rolled across the border, on February 24th, the U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, still claimed that America's goal backed by hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid was simply to stand behind the Ukrainian people. The goal backed by tens of billions of dollars in aid is to "weaken" Russia and ensure a sovereign Ukraine outlasts Putin.

To ensure peace, Across the world, political leaders and ordinary citizens have condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine. At the same time, there seems to be basically no chance that the United States or any other major world power would send its troops to fight on the Ukrainians' behalf for the simple reason that doing so could plausibly lead to a wider war, and even nuclear conflict.

There are three main actions that the United States has taken and will continue to take: imposing sanctions to punish Russian aggression, providing military assistance to help the Ukrainians fight back, and maintaining cohesion with allies so that the first two actions are as functional as possible.

The basic Western strategy has been to make the war more painful for Putin: Supply



the Ukrainians with weapons while imposing crippling sanctions on the Russian economy. These measures are designed to shift Putin's cost-benefit analysis, making the war costly enough that he'll look for some kind of exit. In broad strokes, experts say, it's a sound strategy one that can still be escalated, albeit within certain bounds.

Ukraine doesn't have to win outright; it just has to hold out long enough for Russia to be convinced to change course. To help the Ukrainians further, then, the United States and its allies can simply build on what they're already doing.

The White House sanctioned Russia initially targeting a few banks, oligarchs, political elites, government-owned enterprises, and Putin's own family to pressure the Russian leader to put his troops back in their box, without resorting to military intervention. "Direct confrontation between NATO and Russia is World War Three, something we must strive to prevent," President Joe Biden said, in early March.

## FOR WAR

Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February, but Ukrainian forces retook large areas around Kyiv in early April after Russia abandoned its push towards the capital.

Following the withdrawal from the north of Ukraine, Russia has refocused its efforts on taking control of the east and south of the country.

The UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) says Russia has likely suffered a similar death toll

in the first three months of its Ukraine operation, to that experienced by the Soviet Union during its nine-year war in Afghanistan. It says a combination of factors have led to the high number of casualties, including poor tactics and limited air cover.

Russia has taken control of the port city of Mariupol, which its forces encircled at the start of March, after more than two months of fierce Ukrainian resistance. With his strategy to "weaken" Russia, the U.S. president may be turning the Ukraine war into a

global one. Biden was sending a clear message to Putin : You will never succeed in dominating Ukraine.

Beyond that, Biden said at the White House, the new policy was intended "to punish Russian aggression, to lessen the risk of future conflicts."

### RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

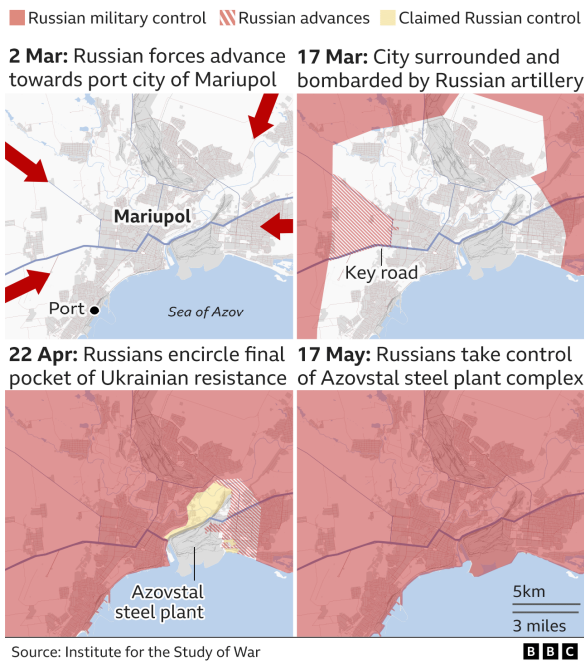
#### Who controls what in Ukraine?

The US State Department says it will maintain support for Kyiv but Ukraine will have to define its own objectives in talks with Russia. Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov says the war is "entering a protracted phase".



America's posture in providing a third country with that level of assistance to wound the US' nuclear superpower rival would have been unthinkable before the invasion, especially given Biden's desire to avoid a direct clash with Moscow. The US role -at the vanguard of a broad Western front against Putin, which is resulting in heavy losses for the Russian army -is again raising questions about how far the Kremlin strongman can be pushed before he reacts.

### How Russian forces took control of Mariupol



The fact that there is now public knowledge about valuable intelligence that the West is offering Ukraine appears to increase the risk that Putin could be humiliated and might act in a way that could trigger a dangerous escalation. This reality means Biden is under enormous pressure to calculate how far to go in Ukraine without crossing red lines that Putin has neither identified, nor may not have even established in his own mind, to avoid a disastrous slide toward war.

The US is arguing that it is not engaging in a proxy war with Russia but is in fact helping Ukraine defend itself -a step that would not have been necessary if not for the unprovoked Russian invasion. The United States stakes its credibility on participating in the war in Ukraine. Biden wants the United States to resume its place in NATO.

## CONCLUSION

While Biden and his team have spent much of their time and resources on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, provocations from North Korea have intensified and China continues to flex its economic and military might. Along the way, Biden is expected to reaffirm US support for its allies amid intensifying provocations from North Korea, while also seeking new areas of economic cooperation particularly on advanced technologies affected by supply chain disruptions.