

# Beware of Long Wars

## Ukrainian Attacks on Russia Are Dangerously Escalatory

by William J. Astore,\* USA



William J. Astore. (photo bracingviews.com)

Reports that Ukraine is launching modified drones to strike airbases *deep in Russia*<sup>1</sup> highlight the unpredictability and escalatory nature of wars. Ukraine is no longer content at defending itself against Russian aggression; Russia itself must be made a target, which will likely provoke harsher Russian

counterattacks. Meanwhile, the U.S. Congress continues to authorize billions in military aid to Ukraine, which is pitched as defending democracy and freedom.

War is many things but it is rarely democratic. Indeed, as *James Madison warned*,<sup>2</sup> war is inherently anti-democratic. It strengthens authoritarian forces and contributes to abuses of power and corruption. As the Russia-Ukraine War goes on, with no clear resolution in sight, Ukraine suffers more even as the chances of escalation rise.

*James Madison* warned that no nation can preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare

What's needed now is resolute diplomacy – a committed effort to end the war by all parties involved, obviously Russia and Ukraine but also the U.S. and NATO. The longer this disastrous war lasts, the more unpredictable it will become, the more atrocious it will prove, and the more likely ordinary Ukrainians and Russians will suffer and die, whether at various battlefronts or on the Homefront.

Negotiation is not weakness nor is it appeasement. Negotiation is sensible, rational, and life-

affirming. But there's little reason for Ukraine to negotiate when it's enjoying a blank check of support from the U.S. and NATO.

Meanwhile, as Ukraine continues striking deep into Russia, one wonders to what extent the U.S. military and intelligence agencies are involved. Did the U.S. provide technology? Targeting information? Intelligence? Or is Ukraine doing this entirely on its own, a scenario that is less than comforting?

I sure hope the U.S. and Russia are talking. In the confusion and chaos of war, how is Russia to know for sure that an attack on one of their strategic air bases is coming from Ukraine and not from NATO territory? Even if it's clearly coming from Ukraine, if these attacks are enabled or approved by the U.S./NATO, will the Russians see them as an act of war? Will they respond militarily, creating even more escalatory pressure?

Bizarrely, Ukraine's defensive war against Russia has been sold as America's "good" war, a chance to weaken Russia and *Vladimir Putin* in the cause of defending Ukrainian "democracy". But as Ukraine's tactics turn more offensive, and as the Ukrainian government likely becomes more authoritarian due to the pressures of war, how wise is it for the United States to continue to send massive amounts of military aid there while discouraging diplomacy?

Policies that end in prolonging the Russia-Ukraine War in the name of teaching Putin a lesson and eroding his power may teach us all a lesson in how war is not just anti-democratic. War runs to extremes, and only fools believe they can control it in a way that is conducive to liberty and freedom and justice.

Source: <https://bracingviews.com/2022/12/07/beware-of-long-wars/>, 7 December 2022

<sup>1</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/International/ukraine-drone-attack-hits-2-military-bases-inside/story?id=94515155>

<sup>2</sup> <https://bracingviews.com/2013/06/28/no-nation-can-preserve-its-freedom-in-the-midst-of-continual-warfare/>

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