

Aid Ukraine to halt Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping's diabolical plans

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Chinese President Xi Jinping has been willing to help out Vladimir Putin and Russia. Alexei Druzhinin, Sputnik, Kremlin Pool Photo via AP, File

From the outset of the Russian invasion, the words used to describe Ukraine's chances covered a range of possibilities — with one glaring exception. Hardly anyone dared even talk [about a Ukrainian victory](#).

Starting now, that must change. China's apparent willingness to assist Vladimir Putin's army in addition to helping him [avoid economic sanctions](#) dramatically raises the stakes. A Russian victory in Ukraine

now would be a triumph for a New World Order led by brutal autocrats and a defeat for the West and democracy itself.

To prevent that disastrous outcome, the United States and Europe must sharply increase their help for beleaguered Ukraine when they meet next week in Brussels. Short of [sending NATO troops](#) or starting any direct military conflict with Russia, they must do everything possible to help Ukraine defeat Putin, or at least deny him the total victory he wants.

President Biden can make a down payment on the new approach before leaving Washington by finally approving the transfer of 28 [fighter jets from Poland](#).

In doing so, the president would be reversing his reversal of a week ago. After Secretary of State Tony Blinken first said yes to the idea, Biden [personally rejected it](#), saying it would be “escalatory.”

His decision came after Poland suggested flying the [unused MiG-29 fighters](#) to an American air base in Germany, then having Ukrainians fly them into Ukraine. In exchange, the US was asked to send F-16s to replenish the Polish air force.

Avoid being a target

Poland wanted to avoid becoming a Putin target as well as upgrade its own air capability, but the idea of first flying the MiGs to Germany was too cute by half for Washington, and the Pentagon shot down the idea

as “not tenable.”



President Biden should've approved the Poland deal to send unused MiG-29 fighters to Ukraine's defiant forces.

AP Photo/Alik Keplicz, File

That was then. Changes on the ground — and in Beijing — make it imperative that Ukraine somehow get the MiGs and just about everything else it wants and needs. A proposed airlift of food, water, medicine and other essentials is gaining support, but the aim must go [beyond saving lives](#) to saving Ukraine itself.

The continuing Russian bombardment is reducing more cities to rubble and creating the [largest refugee crisis](#) since World War II, with nearly 3 million Ukrainians already having left the country and untold others wanting to go if they can safely get out. Each day brings the Russian [army closer to Kyiv](#), and the fall of the capital would be a major psychological setback, destroy the government and lead to even greater massacres.

While it was always something of a fantasy that the [plucky Ukrainian military](#) and brave civilian resistance could stop Putin's advance, the success in slowing it down is exacting a terrible price. Now nearing the three-week mark, the invasion's crushing attacks by rockets, missiles, tanks and aircraft reveal that Putin is prepared to destroy and empty Ukraine if that's what it takes.



Ukrainian servicemen are in dire need of more weaponry and military supplies.

AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky

America and other NATO nations were maddeningly slow to provide assistance before the invasion and after it began, and had to be shamed into stepped-up action by widespread public horror at the [indiscriminate Russian brutality](#). While the first set of sanctions were wrist slaps, a subsequent tightening of the screws on Russia's economy and vast shipments of military aid to Ukraine signaled a more serious approach.

But the continued pounding of civilians and the China alliance have raised the bar higher and require yet another larger and more effective response. As it was at each preceding stage, the alternative is to

accept [Putin's bloody plan](#) of conquest and watch him pulverize a European capital and turn tens of millions of surviving Ukrainians into subjects.

Even then, there is no guarantee he would stop. Putin's desire to rebuild the Soviet Union and his threatening language about other former captive nations are sending chills throughout Europe.



Establishing a no-fly zone in Ukraine will allow NATO to bring much-needed aid and supplies to battered residents.

ICRC/Handout via REUTERS

NATO has understandably said no to a separate Ukrainian request to [impose a no-fly zone](#), arguing it would inevitably result in direct combat with Russian planes and ground defenses and lead to World War III.

Let Ukrainians fly MiGs

But giving Ukraine the MiGs is not significantly different from other weapons already provided as long as the jets are flown by Ukrainian pilots. And while there is no guarantee the Soviet-era aircraft can change the tide of the war, they give Ukraine another option to help thwart the Russian attack.

That is especially true of the missile and [rocket launchers](#) firing on urban targets from miles away. They are out of range of Ukrainian ground forces and their equipment, but the Polish planes would augment what remains of Ukraine's air force and might be effective.



Russian President Vladimir Putin will continue his barbaric invasion of Ukraine no matter how many innocent people are killed.

MARCUS YAM/LOS ANGELES TIMES/Shutterstock

Surely there are other ideas to consider as well, and the urgent NATO meeting and Biden's decision to attend are signs the alliance recognizes the need to do more. Minimalist steps wrapped in pusillanimous palaver won't help Ukrainians, nor will they fool Putin and his new best friend, Chinese [President Xi Jinping](#).

The despots are in this war to win and to further cement their claims that the West is decadent, weak and no longer capable of global dominance. Proving them wrong is essential, especially because Biden's [calamitous cut-and-run](#) from Afghanistan bolstered our adversaries' confidence that he will fold under pressure.

To be sure, thwarting Putin in Ukraine is a very tall order, but failing to do so will embolden his type everywhere. Not only in Russia and China, but also in Iran, North Korea and who knows where else.

In that case, a world that is already very messy and dangerous would get a lot worse in a heartbeat.