**The fog of war**

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You can prosecute a war for only so long on the strength of smoke and mirrors, delusions and illusions, lies and press releases. Eventually, however, reality catches up with you. The thuggishly propagandized American citizenry couldn’t know it, but that catching up began in the first weeks of the War and has only accelerated since.

Within the first week of the War, Russia had destroyed Ukraine’s air force and air defenses. By the second week, it had taken out most of Ukraine’s armories and weapons depots. Over following weeks and months, it systematically demolished artillery shipped in from former Warsaw Pact, now Nato, countries in Eastern Europe. It dismantled the country’s transportation and fuel supply systems. It has recently taken out most of the country’s electrical infrastructure.

The Ukrainian army has lost an estimated 150,000 troops, a pace more than 140 times the rate of US losses in Vietnam. This, at a time when 10 million of its formerly 36 million people have fled the country. The military is down to dragooning 16-year-old boys and 60-year-old men to man the barricades. It cannot get replacement ammunition. Russia has knocked out some 90 per cent of Ukraine’s drones, leaving it largely sightless. Delivery times for the tanks that are the hoped-for “game changer” are running into months and years. Not that that will matter.

Remember all the other failed ‘game changers’? The M777 howitzers and the Stryker armored fighting vehicles? The HIMARS multiple rocket launchers and the PATRIOT air defense systems? All were going to turn the tide at one time. All have proven impotent to stop Russia from seizing 20 per cent of Ukraine’s territory and annexing it and its people to Russia.

The US lost the economic war, as well. Remember Joe Biden’s delusional prediction that the US would see that “the ruble will be reduced to rubble”? And that “the most stringent sanctions regime in history” was going to “weaken” Russia, perhaps even leading to Putin’s overthrow? Most of it backfired, badly. Last year, the ruble reached its highest exchange rate in history. Russia’s 2022 trade surplus of $227 billion was up 86 per cent from 2021. The US’ trade deficit over the same period rose 12.2 per cent, and is approaching $1 trillion.

As a result of all of the above and more, the tide of insider opinion has turned against the War. Senior officials in Europe are talking openly about how the losses are unsustainable and they need to get back to security architectures that prevailed before the poisoned CIA-supported coup in Maidan in 2014. Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently let slip that “It will be very, very difficult to eject the Russians from all of occupied Ukraine in the next year. The Washington Post warned recently that Ukraine faced a “critical moment” in the war, belaboring the fact that US support was not limitless and would soon be reached. Hint. Hint.

The Rand Corporation, one of the US’ best-connected strategic whisperers, just published a report stating that “The consequences of a long war far outweigh the benefits.” It explicitly states that the US needs to husband its resources for its more important upcoming conflict with China. Newsweek headlined that ‘Joe Biden Offered Vladimir Putin 20 Percent of Ukraine to End War’. It also revealed that “Nearly 90 percent of the world isn’t following us on Ukraine.” Vast swaths of Latin American, Africa, and Asia refuse to support the US in its demand for sanctions against Russia.

These are not ‘light at the end of the tunnel’ divinations. Quite the contrary. If there’s a common thread running through it all it is the sickening recognition that the war is lost, militarily, economically, and diplomatically, that there is no plausible scenario in which those losses will be turned around by soldiering on, and that what is needed now is a hide-the-loss, get-out-any-way-you-can, face-saving exit strategy.

That will not be available, either. That’s where the tunnel at the end of the light comes into play.

Even before the US and its Nato puppets undertook the War, the rest of the world – and that means most of the world – was congealing itself into an anti-Western economic and security bloc. Led by China and its strategic ally, Russia, that bloc includes more than a dozen trade and security organizations. Those include the BRICS confederation of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, working explicitly to devise multi-polar institutions to stand up to the US’ unipolar hegemonic model.

It includes the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a security compact made up of leading nations from east, central, and south Asia, including China, Russia, India, and soon, Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. It is explicitly working to devise measures to prevent the kind of predatory military assaults the US carried out against Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, and Afghanistan.

The organizing economic engine behind these efforts it is China’s Belt and Road Initiative. BRI is a dizzyingly ambitious plan to connect Asia and more than 100 nations with 21st Century economic infrastructure, everything from highways and high-speed rail lines, to power generation, energy pipelines, communication systems, cities, ports, and more. It is critical to understand why BRI poses such daunting challenges to US supremacy in the world.

Infrastructure is so powerful because it spins off a vast, unimaginable array of secondary, and tertiary economic benefits. It was the railroads in the nineteenth century that bound the US together as the world’s first continental-scale market. Manufacturers could produce for a larger market, and, therefore, at larger scale, and, therefore, at lower cost, than could producers anywhere else on earth.

The railroads made the US the largest market in the world for iron, steel, machine tools, grading equipment, farm equipment, and scores of other commercial and industrial products essential to a modern industrial economy. The US began the 1800s with 1.5 per cent of the world’s GDP. It ended the century with 19 per cent of a four-times larger number, making it the largest economy in the world.

Excerpted: ‘Ukraine and The

Tunnel at the End of the Light’.

Courtesy: Commondreams.org