**Ukraine War and the Asia-Pacific**

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Ukraine continues to fight the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in its own country. Remember Russia launched its “special military operation” in Ukraine in late February this year. I was of the view since then that Ukraine would become another Afghanistan. So the damages of war continue to devastate both warring countries. No signs yet to end it. Russia and Ukraine war continue to hit the regional and global economy and peace too. Economic recession, energy and food crisis and inflation continue to surge. Who cares?

On this Monday, a new wave of strikes from both sides hit strategically important targets as well civilian residential areas. The rt.com, the only source of information on Russia, reported citing the local authorities that Ukrainian forces subjected the Russian city of Donetsk to massive artillery shelling and rocket attacks. At least four civilians were killed and several more wounded. The attacks targeted residential areas of the city damaging at least three buildings. The Joint Center on Control and Coordination (JCCC) mission has alleged Ukrainian for “war crimes” yet again.

Ukraine accused Russia of destroying homes in the southeast and knocking out power in many areas with a new volley of missiles while Moscow said Ukrainian drones had attacked two air bases deep inside Russia hundreds of kilometres from the frontlines.

Meanwhile, RT has quoted the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) revealing that the US has secretly modified HIMARS sent to Ukraine. The artillery systems were allegedly altered so they couldn’t fire long-range missiles into Russia. A total of 20 of the M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) launchers have been sent to Ukraine since June, along with several batches of GMLRS guided missiles and service vehicles. The GMLRS have a range of almost 80 kilometres (50 miles). Moscow has repeatedly warned Washington that providing heavy weapons to Ukraine risks crossing Russia’s “red lines” and involving the US and NATO in the conflict directly. The US and its allies insist they are not a party to the hostilities while continuing to arm Kyiv. Strange conflicts.

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The US director of intelligence, Avril Haines, has said the fighting in Ukraine has been slowing down and this will likely continue in the coming winter months. However, there has been no evidence of fading resistance on the part of Ukrainian forces. Both sides would try to “refit, resupply and reconstitute” for any counter-offensive in the spring.

The developments mentioned above reflect the mindset of the Russia-Ukraine war master. What hints to the alleged modifications in HIMARS, and the development of a narrative that the war will slow down in the coming months and resurge in spring? How would a prolonged Russia-Ukraine war benefit the US-NATO objectives?

In the short term, the military shipments to Ukraine are making good money for the war masters, the US and some of the Western countries. What is the next and long-term? Reconstruction and rehabilitation of Ukraine, once totally ruined. All efforts are on the way to strengthen Taiwan militarily and strategically after having many assurances during several high-level US visits. Seems after provoking Ukraine against Russia, Taiwan is being prepared and strengthened against the One-China framework while the world is deeply focusing on the Russia-Ukraine war. The media is not reflecting what exactly is happening in the Asia-Pacific region.

Seems, the US is pursuing a two-faced policy towards Taiwan against the backdrop of the Ukraine crisis. Despite the White House’s declared policy of protecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the island state, Washington is likely to create a Russia-Ukraine-like situation in the Asia-Pacific region to hype a cold war against China. Realizing the threats, China is taking suitable measures. Some believe that the “Zero Covid Policy” is one of them that is aimed at discouraging the free movement of the “agents” in China.

Some analysis in the New York Times reflects that the US is having serious difficulties in providing weapons to Taiwan, and preparing for a hypothetical conflict with China. The Pentagon systematically evades sending heavy weapon systems to Taipei as they are reserved for Ukraine at the moment. Perhaps, the situation has led the White House to look for ways to reach an agreement with Beijing. The recent engagements seem time-buying for both sides. The November 2022 meeting between Chinese leader Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Joe Biden was just a show-off of what both countries are looking for. However, it could not reduce tensions in Sino-US relations including the US concessions to Taiwan.

Authoritative US experts are convinced that today the priority for the US and its allies is to maintain Ukraine’s effectiveness against Russia in the war. Taiwan, ultimately, may become a bargaining chip in the geopolitical game of the White House seeking to normalize relations with Beijing and force the Kremlin to shift its focus from the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation to new threats in the Asia-Pacific region.

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