

A Support Ukraine Assessment

In Support of Ukraine

Recent news coverage of the tax payers' dollars sent to Ukraine seem to ignore the history of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, (NATO.) NATO was formed in 1949 when it was realized that the Soviet Union was planning to invade Europe to add more land and assets to their empire. The US enlarged its bases in Europe, and required the allied nations to increase their defense spending. As a member of the United States Air Force from 1963 until 1993, I was involved in many training exercises flying US Army troops from the states to bases in Europe. The scenario most frequently posed was an invasion by the USSR through the Fulda Gap in Germany. The exercises and the preparations continued even after the fall of the Berlin Wall. I recently read that through all these years the US has spent 30 trillion dollars to support and defend the NATO mission. Remember, this was all to deal with the USSR, now Russian threat. A few months ago, I was at a forum where a Ukrainian declared that Ukraine had destroyed at least half of the Russian Army. This seems to make the dollars we have spent to support the Ukrainian Army money well spent. It has been more effective than all those previous expenditures in reducing the Russian threat. I am also disturbed at the media slant on the reports of the US support. Why is it always in dollars? Why is it not more specific as to which weapon systems we are sending? We should be exulting at how effective systems like anti-tank missiles are at stopping armor attacks, and also our anti-aircraft systems against aircraft and drones. I sense an anti-Ukraine attitude from the liberal media. Let us look at what our military assistance dollars have accomplished; not only have we destroyed the major NATO threat, but we have also disclosed how corrupt and ineffective the Russian Army really is, and most importantly from a veteran's standpoint of view, all without any losses of our US military.

Rep. Kenneth L. Weyler

Civil, Informed Disagreement:

Can we Afford to Support Ukraine: Can we Afford Not to

My friend and Institute for Objective Policy Assessment (IOPA) colleague Ken Weyler made some solid arguments in favor of continued – perhaps expanded – US support for Ukraine's battle to prevent a Russian takeover.

With regret, I must respectfully disagree with his conclusion. The primary basis for my disagreement is fiscal. The current US fiscal policy of rapid debt expansion is unsustainable. We have already created a cash debt – doesn't even include massive unfunded liabilities – that is unprecedented in peace time, and all debt projections under current law are for that debt to continue to grow faster than our ability to finance it. Like for a private household, debt growth limits realistic options.

That means billions for Ukraine now accelerate already unsustainable debt growth, and later will compete for the limited funds in a balanced budget that includes massive debt service payments.

Whether we implement a plan to balance the budget or allow the circumstances of unsustainability to impose a balanced budget upon us, debt service spending will consume an enormous amount of federal revenue. We are already on the verge of spending one-third (!!!) of federal revenue on debt service. 2/3 of current federal revenue is about \$3.3 trillion. Current federal spending after debt service is about twice that!! I don't see us including arms funding for Ukraine that survives a 50% spending cut. Yes!!! No wonder George Will argued we are sleep-walking into a major political and financial crisis. Very few people are aware of these dire circumstances.

Because higher taxes will slow economic growth, it is highly doubtful whether higher tax rates can prevent huge spending cuts.

So, it's my contention that prioritizing the 2/3 of federal revenue left after constitutionally mandated debt service payments will simply not leave room for defending foreign countries. There may not be enough room to adequately defend ourselves. I've heard top defense experts say that the federal debt is our #1 national security threat. I agree with them. We no longer have the fiscal space to rapidly expand our military strength. That's dangerous; more dangerous than leaving the defense of Ukraine to our European partners that also have a much larger stake in the Ukraine outcome.

We will have to forgo a lot of things that under less dire fiscal circumstances we would opt to fund. For example, another emerging IOPA initiative is to analyze/assess immigration policy with an eye towards reforms that will affect the fiscal consequences of immigration. It is a prospect that already appalls many people, including me; a grateful immigrant that would have probably been kept out by immigration policy reforms that our huge debt forces us to consider.

All of that said, Ken Weyler's solid arguments in favor of supporting Ukraine's defense may just mean that we must get more creative to end the meat-grinding, heart-rending conflict between Ukraine and Russia. For example, it's been argued that many of the weapons we're retiring would be very useful to Ukraine. IOPA research could help find low-cost ways to support them.

Dr. John Merrifield, IOPA President

Weyler Reply to Merrifield:

Long-Term Thinking on Ukraine

In reply to the opposition to my piece on supporting Ukraine. I tried to emphasize the long term of US spending on NATO. In over 70 years we have spent 30 trillion dollars on NATO. That huge amount is almost the same as Washington's irresponsible spending has put us in debt. Having worked on state budgets for two decades, I have learned the

importance of long-term thinking. Yes. We have spent a great amount on aid to Ukraine. In the last two years, more damage has been done to the Russian threat than in the previous 70 years. This is no time to back out of this critical mission. We are funding a surrogate, with our NATO allies, that has done more in those two years to destroy the Russian Army and to probe its weaknesses, than all those previous decades. If we quit now, it will all be for nothing as it will allow the Russians to rebuild the threat. Ukraine is on the march to do severe damage to the Russian threat, that will take decades to recover. I know that the US Congress is doing a terrible job at managing the huge resources the citizens and businesses are forced to contribute. To go for years without balancing budgets is unconscionable and all of them should be removed from office. Almost all of our Congressional members are more concerned with pleasing their big money supporters than in keeping our country number one. Foreign aid has earned very little support from those countries we give it to. Too much ends up in dictators' accounts. Many of the so-called non-profits should be soliciting from the public, if they are worthy, rather than supporting liberal policies and politicians. Democrats rely on the votes of those dependent on government handouts. Witness all the illegal immigrants Biden has invited in and given benefits, which sometimes exceed those given to our veterans. This emphasis on building a dependent population is the secret of Marxism and the weakness of citizenry who would have the wherewithal to keep government under control. The corrupt media and the corrupt Congress do not operate in our citizenry best interest. In the long run, dollars spent now in destroying the Russian threat will yield long term dividends.

Kenneth L. Weyler