



Trump's Opportunity To Arm Ukraine

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President Trump's trip to Poland next week is an exceptional opportunity to reassert U.S. leadership and American greatness. In Warsaw Mr. Trump can reaffirm the U.S. commitment to European security by giving Ukraine the weapons it urgently needs to defend itself against Russia's continuing aggression.

Russia's violations of the 2015 Minsk II accords grow daily in both number and intensity. Moscow has reconstituted four armies on Ukraine's borders, rebuilt the Black Sea Fleet, created a powerful antiaccess and area-denial bubble in the Black Sea, militarized Ukrainian energy installations there, and prepared the logistical infrastructure for a major war with Ukraine, including potential amphibious operations in the South. It is building nuclear bunkers in Feodosiia and Sevastopol. The Russian military clearly regards large-scale, protracted conventional war, backed by mounting nuclear threats, to be a real possibility.

Vladimir Putin believes that he is already at war with the West, even if shots are not yet being fired. How else to explain repeated overflights of Europe, close encounters with U.S. and other NATO naval and air forces, election subversion in France, Germany and Holland, massive information-war campaigns throughout Europe that coincide with continued hacking against America's political system?

Though Mr. Putin occasionally praises Mr. Trump, the Russian president's actions demonstrate that he is contemptuous of Trump and U.S. resolve.

The Obama administration's strategic dereliction compounded the Russia problem. Mr. Trump's trip will be closely watched as a sign of his willingness to advance U.S. and European security. Giving Ukraine weapons that can meet Russia's threats - counterbattery radars, armored vehicles, antitank weapons, secure communications gear, reconnaissance drones, anti-landing weapons like shallow water mines, and training and intelligence support - can help deter Russian aggression while solidifying American leadership of NATO.

Arming Ukraine would keep faith with policies dating back to President Harry Truman to support free peoples against aggression. It would enhance U.S. leadership and resolve. Moreover, it would communicate those attributes globally and create, as did Ronald Reagan's policies, a real basis for future dialogue with a Russia deprived of the means of aggression. A public show of helping Ukraine would also turn down the heat domestically. Mr. Trump's persistent critics would be forced to credit him with resisting Russia in support of American interests.

Arming Ukraine and shoring up NATO can't be the end of it. Congress must expand and extend sanctions while passing legislation to counter Russian information warfare and reinforcing NATO. Perhaps the most direct way to impose costs on Russia is to increase American energy exports to Europe.

Mr. Putin won't like any of it. His goal all along has been to sow chaos in the West and diminish NATO's influence on his doorstep. Paradoxically, he is forcing Mr. Trump to play a bigger role in Eastern Europe than the U.S. president wants to. If Mr. Putin moans about it, Mr. Trump should deliver a strong, simple message: You brought this upon yourself.

While in Warsaw, Mr. Trump will have a rare opportunity to do the right thing and demonstrate American greatness in action. For our freedom and for Europe's, he should not miss that opportunity.

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