

Those Committed to Helping Ukraine Must First Decide What Constitutes Real Help for the Country's People

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Ukraine is a country where millions of people are in deep distress. Several million people have been displaced or face serious disruption of life. Hence certainly the people of Ukraine need help. The desire of anyone to extend unselfish, unconditional help to them is a very noble desire.

However all those persons in any part of the world who have a sincere desire to help the distressed people of Ukraine should exercise one very important caution—they should carefully ensure that the action they take with a motivation of help REALLY helps the people of Ukraine, and does not harm them.

It is necessary to voice this caution because a lot of what has been done in recent times in the name of 'helping' Ukraine by some self-proclaimed 'friends' of Ukraine shows all the signs of having actually had a very different impact on the prospects faced by the people of Ukraine.

There should be an open and unbiased debate on this. Are common people of Ukraine helped by ever-increasing supply of western/NATO weapons and military training (including increasingly dangerous ammunition having long-term highly hazardous impacts), or is this pushing them deeper into war and conflict? Is it in the best interests of war and conflict ravaged people to quickly move towards a ceasefire and negotiated peace, or is it to extend war and conflict forever? As a taxpayer in a western country who worries about how your money will be spent, should you advocate further weapon supply, or should you advocate a careful channelizing of your money so that it goes directly to help some Ukrainian family facing economic crisis as well as to help peace and ceasefire campaigns?

Even when decisions to send more weapons and ammunition are taken by politicians of

western countries (motivated by lobbyists of arms manufactures), a question that needs to be raised is—exactly in whose hands the weapons are going and has it been ensured that these political and military leaders of Ukraine are committed to a future of peace, safety, democracy and socio-economic well-being of their own people?

This may need a bit of background too. Some highly relevant questions need to be explored in an entirely unbiased way by those who are really sincere about helping the people of Ukraine.

Is it true that a democratically elected President and his government in Ukraine were toppled in 2014 by a coup engineered largely by the USA and its close allies and with local extreme right wing, neo-Nazi forces playing a lead role?

Is it true that subsequently the USA and close allies acquired a very influential role in Ukraine, and encouraged or allowed the extreme right, neo-Nazi forces to become stronger and heavily armed and then use this position to harm the Russian-language speaking citizens, killing many of them, thereby leading the country to civil war type conditions, although earlier the same people had been living peacefully together?

Isn't it true that these forces, which became more powerful under a regime characterized by increasing US influence on Ukraine policy, are committed to, and have been supported precisely for this reason, to a policy of permanent hostility with Russia (by geography, history and culture the most important neighbor of Ukraine)? Doesn't such a policy condemn Ukraine to conditions of permanent or very long-term conflict, with all the resulting problems and difficulties for the common people of Ukraine?

Isn't it correct that while imposing such policies or strengthening such groups most likely to pursue them, the USA policy makers or handlers have been strongly guided by their own geo-strategic interests, as narrowly perceived by them, instead of the welfare of the people of Ukraine? Isn't it true that such policies are actually the opposite of what will best serve the welfare interests of the people of Ukraine (for example a policy of pursuing friendship with all neighbors is likely to be best in keeping with the welfare of the people of Ukraine)?

Isn't it true that since the coup of 2014, foreign and big business interests from the west or allied countries have moved in quickly to gain control over farmland and other resources and assets of Ukraine?

Isn't it true that in the present ruling regime of Ukraine corruption levels are known to be extremely high, while transparency levels are very low?

Isn't it true that whatever regimes are controlled or dominated by extreme right wing or neo-Nazi forces have been generally very aggressive, always harmful for the common people and undemocratic?

Isn't it true that in recent times in Ukraine there has been a clampdown on many voices of democratic opposition, and several opposition groups and parties, including those closer to working class people and weaker sections, have not been allowed to function properly?

Let these questions be debated in an unbiased way among citizens of various countries, among youth, among students, among academics and scholars, among social activists, among political parties, among communities, but please do not allow this debate to be

corrupted by money or by selfish narrow interests. Let this be free and unbiased, and if it is still possible let the media also take up the debate in free and unbiased ways, in particular avoiding any influence of the military industrial complex and its think-tanks (think tanks which exist to support those big companies who manufacture and supply real tanks).

If on the basis of such a free and unbiased debate the answer to the various questions raised above is 'yes, this is correct (or by and large correct)', then clearly the unending supply of weapons to Ukraine's present regime cannot be justified.

So this would not be the right policy to follow for those persons of western countries or other countries who want to sincerely help the common people of Ukraine. If they truly want to pursue their noble desire to help the people of Ukraine then two ways can be suggested.

Firstly, they can find or establish such honest groups that can ensure that any help they give will directly be taken to help those Ukrainian persons or families, women and children, injured or displaced persons who really need this help. For example, a person in the USA or Germany keen to help a distressed Ukrainian family can transfer a certain amount of money to it by using the advice and services of such a group. Such groups can also be set up with the help of migrants from Ukraine so that their knowledge of local conditions can be properly utilized too.

Secondly, they can extend their help to those peace movements which are struggling for bringing early peace to Ukraine, perhaps starting with an immediate unconditional ceasefire to be followed by detailed (and if necessary prolonged) negotiations for peace.

Such a cautionary as well properly discussed and deliberated approach to helping the people of Ukraine is quite clearly a much better option than throwing in billions of dollars into weapons supply at regular intervals.

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