

Washington Moves Toward Arming Ukrainian Regime

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On Monday, the New York Times announced that the Obama administration is moving to directly arm the Ukrainian army and the fascist militias supporting the NATO-backed regime in Kiev, after its recent setbacks in the offensive against pro-Russian separatist forces in east Ukraine.

The article cites a joint report issued Monday by the Brookings Institution, the Atlantic Council, and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and delivered to President Obama, advising the White House and NATO on the best way to escalate the war in Ukraine.

The think-tank report calls for the US to distribute at least \$3 billion in military equipment to the Kiev regime over the next three years. Among the equipment proposed for delivery are light anti-armor missiles, counter-battery radars to target artillery and rocket launchers, medium range drones and armored Humvees. They also call on NATO member states in Eastern Europe with former Soviet equipment to provide weapons and equipment to Kiev.

According to the *Times*, US officials are rapidly shifting to support the report's proposals. NATO military commander in Europe General Philip M. Breedlove, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, US Secretary of State John Kerry, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey all supported discussions on directly arming Kiev. National Security Advisor Susan Rice is reconsidering her opposition to arming Kiev, paving the way for Obama's approval.

Behind the backs of the American people, Washington is recklessly escalating a conflict that threatens to provoke war with Russia. Offensives by Ukrainian fascist militias such as the Right Sector or the Azov Battalion have already led to the deaths of more than 5,000 people and forced over a million to flee their homes. Russian officials have repeatedly stated that they will intervene militarily to halt a bloodbath by Kiev regime forces in east Ukraine—a move that could trigger a global war between Russia and Ukraine's NATO allies.

The way the report was assembled testifies to the utterly anti-democratic fashion in which US foreign policy is determined. The think-tank report, which the *Times* ludicrously described as "independent," was authored by a cabal of former high-ranking Pentagon, NATO and State Department officials. Behind the backs of the American people, a policy is being set into motion that could trigger war between nuclear-armed countries including the United States and Russia.

In fact, the institutions and individuals that issued the report have close ties to the Obama

administration and the Democratic Party. First Lady Michelle Obama sits on the board of directors of the Chicago Council.

Among those who signed off on the report, one finds:

Strobe Talbott, current President of the Brookings Institution, who served as Deputy Secretary of State in the Clinton administration and Ambassador-at-Large to the former Soviet Union. He oversaw the development of US policy toward Russia amid the Stalinist dissolution of the USSR, and early efforts to draw former pro-Soviet states in Eastern Europe and former Soviet republics in the Caucasus away from Russia. As President Bill Clinton's closest advisor on Russia, Talbott supported Boris Yeltsin's shelling of the Russian parliament in 1993, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people.

Ivo Daalder, current President of the Chicago Council, was a foreign policy adviser to Obama during his 2008 presidential campaign and the US representative to NATO during the war on Libya in 2011. The bombing campaign led by the United States, France and Britain devastated Libya, killed tens of thousands and resulted in the lynch mob murder of Moammar Gaddafi.

Michele Flournoy currently chairs the Center for a New American Security think-tank and was the Under Secretary of Defense under Leon Panetta from 2009 to 2012. She also served in the Defense Department in the Clinton Administration, formulating US policy on Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia. She was considered a potential candidate to replace current Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, who announced his resignation in November.

Two former US ambassadors to Ukraine, John Herbst and Steven Pifer, signed their names to the report. Significantly, Herbst was ambassador during the US-backed 2004-2005 Orange Revolution that brought to power a pro-Western government. In 2006, he secured \$2.3 million in funding through USAID, a long-standing conduit for CIA funding and operations, to promote the development of pro-Western media in Ukraine.

In calling for such an escalation in Ukraine, the signatories are all following in the footsteps of former National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski. Last year, Brzezinski delivered a speech at the Wilson Center laying out the policies now being advocated in the Brookings Institution report and discussed by the *New York Times*.

He called on Washington to provide Kiev with, "weapons designed particularly to permit the Ukrainians to engage in effective urban warfare of resistance. There's no point trying to arm the Ukrainians to take on the Russian army in the open field, thousands of tanks, an army organized for the application of overwhelming force." Instead, he proposed a policy of intimidating Russia and, if it decided to intervene in Ukraine anyway, bogging it down in urban ethnic warfare.

He explained,

"There is a history to be learned from urban resistance in World War II and most recently in Chechnya, whose capital persisted for three months in house-to-house fighting. The point is, if the [Russian] effort to invade was to be successful politically, it would have to incorporate taking the major cities. If the major cities, say Kharkiv, say Kiev, were to resist and street fighting became a necessity, it would be prolonged and costly. And the fact of the matter is, and this is where the timing of this whole crisis is important, Russia is not yet ready

to undertake that kind of effort. It will be too costly in blood, paralyzingly costly in finances.”

The strategy outlined by Brzezinski is sinister and reactionary. If US operations fail to intimidate Russia into ceding all influence in Ukraine and letting NATO proxies crush the Donbass, US weapons and equipment would be used to bleed Russia white in a war fought inside cities that are home to millions of people, and that might escalate into full-scale nuclear war.

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