

While Biden Gives Ukrainian Army “The Most Lethal Weapon,” War Profiteer BAE Systems Stock Soars

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Sending Ukraine a \$300 million shipment of powerful M-777 howitzers is a lobbying triumph for BAE Systems, one of the many war industry corporations fattening on the death and destruction of the Ukraine war

On June 15, the Biden administration announced that it was providing an additional [\\$1 billion in military aid to Ukraine in a package that includes shipments of M-777 howitzers](#), ammunition and coastal defense systems.

While that announcement was being made, the Ukrainian army was shelling Donetsk, the capital of the Donetsk People’s Republic, [with the U.S.-supplied howitzers along with French guns, according to The Donbass Insider, killing five civilians and wounding seven firefighters](#).

The attacks were being carried out from Ukrainian positions in Peski, a village not far from Donetsk airport.

According to a [video](#) produced by journalist Patrick Lancaster, a U.S. naval veteran who has reported on the war in eastern Ukraine over the last eight years, there were no military targets in the areas shelled by the Ukrainian army, only civilians.

Bringing Ukraine Closer to Victory?

Consistent with a society that used military technologies to subdue the native populations, most Americans subscribe to the belief that new superweapons can deliver salvation in wars.^[1]

They ignore the dictum of German theorist Karl von Clausewitz that war is “politics by other means,” meaning that victory can only be achieved by aligning with the right side—which

does not appear to be the case for Ukraine.

The New York Times characterized the M-777 howitzer—[which made its debut in Afghanistan in 2005](#)—as [“the most lethal weapon the West has provided \[to Ukraine\] so far.”](#)

[Highly portable by land, air and sea](#), it can [fire as far as 40 kilometers away or 25 miles](#)—further than Russia’s primary artillery system—and is [capable of striking within 10 meters of a target when coupled with the M982 Excalibur precision guided munition](#), which Canada has sent to Ukraine.^[2]



Ukrainian soldier checks sights on the M777 howitzer. [Source: coffeordie.com]

The flat, rolling plains of the Donbas are particularly [suited for artillery fire compared with the shoulder-mounted Javelin missiles that were effective in neutralizing enemy forces in the first months of the war when Russia was targeting densely populated cities like Kyiv](#), senior U.S. defense officials have said.



A stack of 155mm shells sits in a wooded area near a base in the Donetsk region of Ukraine. [Source: [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)]

The American Legion reported that the United States had already [sent 108 M-777 howitzers to Ukraine](#) before the most recent aid package was signed by President Biden.



Soldiers with Ukraine's 55th Artillery Brigade clean and carry out maintenance on a howitzer. [Source: [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)]

The Pentagon claimed that the howitzers had an immediate impact upon their arrival on May 8, enabling the Ukrainians to [“go on the counter-offensive in the Donbas”](#) and [“take back some towns the Russians had taken in the past.”](#)

Colonel Roman Kachur, commander of Ukraine's 55th Artillery Brigade, told *The New York Times* that [“this weapon \[the howitzer\] brings us closer to victory. With every modern weapon, every precise weapon, we get closer to victory.”](#)

However, *The New York Times* reported on June 20 that Russian forces “appeared poised to tighten the noose around thousands of Ukrainian troops near two strategically important cities in the Donbas,” mounting an “assault on Ukrainian front lines.”^[3]

So a Ukrainian victory appears far off.

The Russian Interior Ministry reported that it had [destroyed U.S.-made howitzers through use of attack drones](#).

Former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter wrote that [Ukrainian dependence on Western artillery they were unfamiliar with resulted in a ten-fold disparity in firepower with Russia which was destroying Ukrainian defensive positions with minimal risk to its troops](#).



Satellite image of Russian attack drone taking out M777 howitzer near the settlement of Podgornoye.

[Source: farsnews.ir]

NATO **Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg** warned that the Ukraine War could [“last for years.”](#) meaning we are looking at another Vietnam.



M777 howitzers bound for Ukraine. Will they make a difference in the war? [Source: eurasianimes.com]

Merchants of Death

The M-777 howitzer is made by the U.S. division of BAE Systems, the largest arms manufacturer in Europe, which has supplied Ukraine with [400,000 rounds of munitions, anti-tank guided missiles and armored vehicles equipped with anti-aircraft missiles](#).

Former CIA Director [Gina Haspel](#), who observed waterboarding at a CIA black site, [sits on the company's Board of Directors](#).

In March, BAE Systems ironically bankrolled an [arms fair in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where sanctioned Russian weapons makers showed off some of the weapons they were using in Ukraine](#), including tanks, helicopters and drones.



Profit has no national loyalty: Arms bazaar hosted by BAE in Riyadh in March where sanctioned Russian firms showcase miniature tanks and other weapons used in war in Ukraine. [Source: [opendemocracy.net](https://www.opendemocracy.net)]

During the 2020 U.S. election campaign, BAE Systems [donated \\$569,202 to Democratic Party candidates, and \\$452,594 to Republicans](https://www.opensecrets.org), according to [opensecrets.org](https://www.opensecrets.org).

Joe Biden received \$102,591 compared to \$94,966 for **Donald Trump**.

Additional recipients of BAE's largesse included such anti-Russia hawks as [House Speaker Nancy Pelosi](#) (D-CA—\$7,373); [Steny Hoyer](#) (D-MD—\$10,000), [Chuck Schumer](#) (D-NY—\$5,605); [Liz Cheney](#) (R-WY—\$3,259 and another \$5,500 in 2022); [Jamie Raskin](#) (D-MD—\$4,089); [Adam Schiff](#) (D-CA—\$8,036); [Mitch McConnell](#) (R-KY—\$9,289), [James Inhofe](#) (R-OK—\$13,300) and [Lindsey Graham](#) (R-SC—\$11,383).^[4]

So far this year, BAE Systems has spent [\\$940,000 on lobbying](#) Congress; in 2021, [it spent \\$3.63 million](#).^[5]

This amounts to chump change for the company: [Shares in BAE Systems have reached an all-time high since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, rising by 28 percent over ten weeks to give BAE a stock market value of £24 billion](#) and putting it among the largest 25 companies in the Financial Times Stock Exchange.



Source: corpwatch.com

In a blatant conflict of interest, a number of Tories in England's Upper House of Parliament—notably [Lord Glendonbrook](#), [Viscount Eccles](#) and [Lord Sassoon](#), and unaffiliated peers [Lord Lupton](#) and [Lord Gadhia](#)—each own shares of at least £50,000 in [BAE Systems](#).^[6]



Prince Charles addresses Britain's Upper House of Parliament in May. Numbers of Tories in the chamber who support the war in Ukraine own shares in leading war profiteer BAE Systems. [Source: english.alarabiya.net]

Samuel Perlo-Freeman, research coordinator for the campaign against the arms trade, said that BAE Systems [“like other major world arms companies, are seeing their share prices soar in response to the war on Ukraine, as European countries prepare to massively rearm, doubling down on the very militarism that has created so much death and suffering in Ukraine, Yemen and elsewhere.”](#)^[7]

In May, BAE Systems’ CEO, **Dr. Charles Woodburn**, told investors: [“We see opportunities to further enhance the medium-term outlook as our customers address the elevated threat environment.”](#)

Which really means that, by antagonizing the Russians, great profits can be made in the Ukraine War and any compromise or diplomatic solution that might end the war should be rejected.

*

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Notes

1. See H. Bruce Franklin, *War Stars: The Superweapon and the American Imagination* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).
2. The howitzers are [equipped with a digital fire control system](#) that ensures outstanding accuracy. According to a senior defense official speaking at a Pentagon news briefing, [Canadian forces trained the first Ukrainian artillerymen](#), followed by Florida National Guardsmen who taught additional Ukrainians how to handle the howitzers.
3. Thomas Gibbons-Neff, Vivian Yee and Andrew E. Kramer, “Russia Tightens Its Grip Around Pivotal Cities in Ukraine’s East,” *The New York Times*, June 20, 2022, A6.
4. Other [recipients of BAE Systems largesse in 2020 included](#): Dianne Feinstein, Rafael Warnock, Jon Ossoff, James Risch, Dick Durbin, Marco Rubio, Tom Cotton, Bernie Sanders, Patrick Leahy, Tammy Duckworth, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez; Adam Smith, Elizabeth Warren, and Amy Klobuchar. All voted for billions in arms shipments to Ukraine since the war started. 2020 Presidential candidates Pete Buttigieg and Andrew Yang also took money from BAE Systems.
5. [20 out of 29 BAE Systems lobbyists in 2021 and 17 out of 26 in 2022](#) previously held government jobs—an excellent example of the so-called revolving door. The bill that the lobbyists pushed for the most was [H.R.4350](#): National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, which promoted \$777 billion in military spending.
6. Adam Bychawski, “Revealed: Ukraine war makes Lords members richer through arms investments,” *Open Democracy*, March 17, 2022, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/dark-money-investigations/ukraine-war-uk-lords-richer-arms-investments-russia-bae-systems/>

7. Bychawski, "Revealed."

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