

Zelensky Regime's Fate Is Sealed

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The West's cryptic or mocking remarks doubting the [Kremlin statement](#) on the failed Ukrainian attempt to assassinate President Vladimir Putin do not detract from the fact that Moscow has no reason on earth to fabricate such a grave allegation that has prompted the scaling down of its Victory Day celebrations on May 9, which is a triumphal moment in all of Russian history, especially now when it is fighting off the recrudescence of Nazi ideology on Europe's political landscape single-handedly all over again.

The alacrity with which the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken debunked the Kremlin allegation, perhaps, gives the game away. It is in the neocon DNA to duck in such defining moments. That said, predictably, Blinken also [distanced the Biden administration](#) from the Kremlin attack.

Earlier, the chairman of Joints Chiefs of Staff General Marks Milley also did a similar thing in an interview with the Foreign Affairs magazine disowning in advance any responsibility for the upcoming Ukrainian "counteroffensive". This is the Biden Administration's new refrain — hear no evil, speak no evil. No more talk, either, of backing Kiev all the way "no matter what it takes" — as Biden used to say *ad nauseam*.

The heart of the matter is that Kiev's much touted "counteroffensive" is struggling amidst widespread western prognosis that it is destined to be a damp squib. Actually, the salience of the [Foreign Affairs podcast](#) this week with Gen. Milley was also his diffidence about the outcome. Milley refused to be categorical that Kiev would even launch its "counteroffensive"!

There is a huge dilemma today as the entire western narrative of a Russian defeat stands exposed as a pack of lies, and alongside, the myth of Kiev's military prowess to take on the far superior military might of a superpower has evaporated. The Ukrainian military is being ground to the dust systematically. In reality, Ukraine has become an open wound that is fast turning gangrene, and little time is left to cauterise the wound.

However, Kiev regime is ridden with factionalism. There are powerful cliques who are [averse to peace talks with Russia](#) short of capitulation by Moscow and instead want an escalation so that the Western powers remain committed. And even after Boris Johnson's exit, they have supporters in the West.

The militant clique ensconced in the power structure in Kiev could well have been the perpetrators of this dangerous act of provocation directed against the Kremlin with an ulterior agenda to trigger a Russian retaliation.

From Blinken's vacuous remark, it seems the neocons in the Biden Administration led by Victoria Nuland are in no mood to rein in the mavericks in Kiev, either. As for Europe, it has lost its voice too.

This will probably show up in history books as a historic failure of European leadership and at its core lies the paradox that it is not France but the German government that has aligned itself closer with the US in the Ukraine war and risking an intra-European "epoch of confrontation."

Even otherwise, these are fateful times, with the political middle ground already shrinking in France and Italy and is much weakened in Germany itself in the wake of the pandemic, the war, and inflation. Importantly, this is only partly an economic story, as the decline of the centre and the de-industrialisation in Europe are closely related and the social fabric that supported the centre has come unstuck.

Germany, the powerhouse of Europe, has been relatively lucky so far. It benefited from cheap labour from east Europe and cheap gas from Russia. But that is over now and the decline of German industry is foreseeable. When society fragments, the political system also fragments and it will take progressively greater effort to govern such countries. Germany and Italy have a three-party coalitions; the Netherlands has four parties; Belgium has a seven-party coalition.

For the present, the hardliners in the Kiev regime have set the pace of events and Europeans will meekly follow. But there's a 'chill in the room' — to borrow the words of Judie Foster in the horror film *Silence of the Lambs* when Anthony Hopkins transformed in a flash into Hannibal Lecter.

Make no mistake, this is a tipping point; the clumsy attempt on Putin's life jolts the kaleidoscope beyond recognition. The only comforting thought is that the Kremlin leadership is not going to be driven by emotion. The considered Kremlin reaction is available from the [remarks by the Russian Ambassador](#) to the US, Anatoly Antonov:

"How would Americans react if a drone hit the White House, the Capitol or the Pentagon? The answer is obvious for any politician as well as for an average citizen: the punishment will be harsh and inevitable."

The ambassador went on to draw the bottom line: "Russia will respond to this insolent and presumptuous terrorist attack. We will answer when we consider it necessary. We will answer in accordance with the assessments of the threat that Kiev posed to the leadership of our country."

No knee-jerk reactions are to be expected. Nonetheless, the scaling down of the Victory Day celebrations on the Red Square itself must have been a difficult decision. The Victory Day on

May 9 is the most important holiday in Russia when the public and the state come together in a patriotic celebration during which people remember their family members who sacrificed their lives to defeat Nazism.

Many of the day's features—parades, songs and commemorative practices—date back to the Soviet era. Victory Day is the only major public holiday that made the transition to post-Soviet Russia. In a country that lost many of its idols and heroic achievements with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, triumph over Nazism remained a source of enormous collective and personal pride.

But Putin's hands are tied beyond a point when the country is in rage and demanding retribution, as evident from the comments by former Russian President and current Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev: "After today's terrorist attack, there are no options left except for the physical elimination of Zelensky and his clique."

As for Zelensky, he simply left Kiev for Helsinki — and to the Hague thereafter, and arrive in Berlin by May 13 on a state visit — sensing danger, perhaps. Indeed, the fate of the Zelensky regime seems sealed.

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Featured image: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky delivers an address in Kiev, Ukraine, April 15, 2022. (Credit: Ukrainian Presidency)

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