

The Great Betrayal *

- In just this past week, we have witnessed one of history's greatest and most shameless betrayals of a free and independent nation, and a loyal ally, fighting for its very existence against a rapacious, genocidal, imperial-colonialist aggressor.
- Less than a month into his second term of office as U.S. President, Donald Trump has reversed America's official policy of "supporting Ukraine as much and for as long as it takes" to help it fend off Russia's full-scale invasion, to now calling Ukraine the aggressor state, blaming it for starting the war, blaming it for not ending the war on terms earlier dictated by Russia, and parroting, word for word, even the most preposterous of the Kremlin's demands for a permanent end to hostilities.
- In a word, Trump is handing Ukraine to Russia on a silver platter, while asking nothing in return from Russia other than future business opportunities for American corporations.

Here is a list of Russia's key non-negotiable terms for a peace deal with Ukraine and Trump's response to those terms even prior to the start of negotiations with Russia:

- **First: Russia opposes any direct Ukrainian or European participation in negotiations for a peace agreement.** Trump is totally fine with this demand. According to him, there is absolutely no reason for Zelenskyy to be invited to participate because (1) "he has no cards to play" and (2) "he is a poor negotiator" and is "a grossly incompetent leader".
- **Second: Russia demands that its annexation of Crimea and the other four Ukrainian oblasts (regions) it has partially or totally occupied to date be recognized as permanent and irreversible.** Trump and his Cabinet all agree that Ukraine will have to concede land for peace, starting with Crimea. It's also very likely that Ukraine will be forced to give up most, if not all, of the territory that Russia has captured since 2014. When asked why, Trump responded that Russia fought very hard to take that land, losing a lot of soldiers in the process, so why shouldn't it be allowed to keep it?

- **Third: Russia wants to permanently block NATO membership for Ukraine.** According to Trump and Vance any thought on Ukraine's part of future membership in NATO is a non-starter.
- **Fourth: Russia demands that Ukraine be forced to hold a Presidential election before any peace agreement is signed.** Trump agrees wholeheartedly with this Russian demand (which, incidentally Trump calls his own) despite its being as obscene as it is absurd for a country at war. He has called President Zelenskyy "a dictator without elections" and has defended this pre-condition to a peace agreement on the false claim that Zelenskyy has no electoral legitimacy and has the support of only 4% of the Ukrainian electorate.
- **Fifth: Russia categorically opposes any European or American peacekeeping forces being allowed to set foot on Ukrainian soil.** Trump has made it absolutely clear that America will offer Ukraine no future security guarantees that in any way involve US feet on the ground in Ukraine. However, he has stated many times that he favours a strong European peacekeeping presence in Ukraine.
- **Sixth: Russia demands the removal of all economic and political sanctions against it.** Marco Rubio has agreed that this demand will be considered favourably by the U.S. but only after a peace agreement has been reached.
- **Seventh: Russia demands that Ukraine be permanently demilitarized.** Trump has yet to comment on this demand.

What is perhaps most striking about Trump's extraordinary display of generosity to Putin is that he has asked for virtually nothing in return from Russia, while demanding that Ukraine meet not only all of Russia's preconditions but also Trump's own demands that strictly benefit America and no one else, all at Ukraine's expense. In particular...

- Trump has demanded that, as a pre-condition of any peace agreement with Russia, Ukraine agree to compensate America for the military and financial assistance it has received to date, such compensation to be payable in the form of rare earth and other strategic mineral resources, plus a right of first refusal on highly favourable terms on future sales of these same minerals once Ukraine pays off the first half trillion dollars of what Trump has stated Ukraine owes to America.

- Trump has also taken to openly threatening Zelenskyy, demanding that he quickly agree to his terms or risk losing Ukraine.
- As for changes in the relationship between Russia and the US, Trump has committed to, among other things, bring Russia back into the G8, immediately drop all references to Russia as the “aggressor” in the war in Ukraine in all official US Government and UN communiques and, for that matter, to revise all references to the Russian war on Ukraine to simply the Ukraine war. He has also committed to normalize diplomatic, economic, and trade relations with Russia and --- as outrageous as it sounds -- to withdraw from any and all initiatives the object of which is to bring Russian war criminals – including Putin -- to justice.

What I’d like to leave you with here are the key reasons why Ukraine must reject Trump’s proposed \$500B rare earth minerals tax, at least in its present form, as compensation for past U.S. aid to Ukraine and the price of peace with Russia

- The total value of U.S. military aid provided to Ukraine is far closer to \$100B than \$500B as falsely claimed by Trump, and the vast majority of that total represents U.S. government expenditures inside America on the manufacture of new military hardware for American forces to replace the equipment that was sent to Ukraine instead of being mothballed, as originally planned by the Pentagon.
- In addition, U.S. aid to Ukraine was neither charity nor a loan to be repaid. To the contrary, America has already benefitted and continues to benefit mightily from the aid it has provided thus far, so much so that Ukraine owes America nothing but its sincere thanks. Consider the following:
- **First**, Ukraine has done great damage to Russia’s air force and decimated its Black Sea fleet despite having neither an air force nor a navy of its own. It has also inflicted devastating personnel losses upon Russia. A massively weakened Russia is an enormous benefit to the United States since it significantly limits Russia’s ability to wage large-scale warfare elsewhere and, thus, reduces the need for America to continuously increase its

defense budget in anticipation of ever-increasing Russian aggression.

- **Second**, Ukraine has caused America to completely re-think how to allocate new military spending and, in the process, avoid wasting tens, if not hundreds, of billions of dollars of new funding on weaponry, technology and software that, if not already obsolete, soon will be. In particular, Ukraine has demonstrated that the era of tank warfare is largely over, and that future wars will be fought to a much greater extent relying on drones, robots, unmanned vehicles and equipment, and AI.
- **Third**, America has benefitted enormously from Ukraine's battlefield learnings, innovation, and new means of circumventing or neutralizing Russia's once near-insurmountable lead in electronic warfare.
- **Fourth**, if Ukraine wins, it will significantly diminish any incentive for China to invade Taiwan. This is of vital importance to America as it would no longer need to spend as much on the defense of that island nation, including the possibility of having to place U.S. troops in harm's way.
- **Fifth**, no country has benefitted more from *Pax Americana* than America itself. Allowing Russia to dismantle the post WWII global order by rewarding its naked aggression against Ukraine would harm America more than all other democracies combined. Its reputation as a reliable ally would be shattered, its global influence would be much diminished, and its economy would suffer in a world of unbridled national self-interest and lawlessness.
- **Sixth**, the U.S. appears to have forgotten, or worse still, intentionally disregarded, the promises it made in the Budapest Memorandum. Pursuant to that agreement, Ukraine gave up its entire nuclear arsenal to Russia (the third largest in the world at that time) after being subjected to immense pressure by America to do so. In exchange, the U.S. provided written assurances to uphold and maintain the sanctity of Ukraine's international borders, independence and sovereignty against any future Russian aggression. It is America, therefore, that owes Ukraine

assistance now, not Ukraine that must pay compensation to America.

- **Seventh**, after the Holocaust and the creation of the United Nations, the US and the rest of world agreed that “Never Again” would countries stand by while an aggressor state ruthlessly pursued a policy of genocide against any other nation or religious, ethnic or racial group. America, as the undisputed leader of the free world, bears a special responsibility to uphold that pledge in defense of any country or people at risk of being annihilated by a rogue state. After all, the words Never Again either have meaning for everyone, or no one. There is no middle ground when it comes to preventing genocide.
- **Eighth**, Trump and his Cabinet are adamant that Ukraine must give up territory in exchange for peace. Perhaps it has escaped their attention that several million Ukrainians still live in Russian-occupied territories under the most merciless and oppressive of regimes where the Ukrainian language is banned, where all vestiges of Ukrainian culture and tradition have been declared illegal, where Russification of the population has been honed to an art through hundreds of years of practice from the days of the Tsars and then Commissars to the present time, where orphans have been stolen away to Russia for brainwashing and ultimate conversion into Russian chauvinists and future soldiers of a revived Russian empire, where thousands of Ukrainian cultural heritage and religious institutions have been stripped bare of all precious artistic and historical artifacts, rare manuscripts and other national treasures and transported to Russia for it to claim as its own, and where Ukrainian men between the ages of 18 and 65 are conscripted into the Russian army to fight against their former countrymen in Ukraine. This is the hell on earth that Trump appears content to permanently inflict upon millions of Ukrainians as the price of peace and the corresponding reward to Russia for its unlawful invasion. In other words, Trump is literally demanding that Zelenskyy pay America one half trillion dollars in rare earth minerals for the privilege of America condemning a significant percentage of Ukraine’s population to ethnic genocide under Russian colonial rule. Are there no Americans of principle

and good conscience left on this earth to prevent such a travesty? If not, then Ukraine may well follow in Churchill's footsteps during what were Britain's darkest hours in WWII when he uttered these three words about how he proposed that Britain survive Hitler's unstoppable war machine ..."alone, if necessary".

A Final Note

Let there be no mistake. Putin is pulling out all stops to lock-in a favourable peace deal with Trump. It's not because Russia is winning the war. It's because Russia is in grave danger of losing it. Consider the following:

- Personnel losses are approaching 900,000 killed, injured, captured, or missing in action.
- Another million or more men of military age have fled the country.
- Russia has exhausted its pool of military age men in Siberia and the far east, as well as entire divisions of mercenaries including 50,000 Wagner fighters, and approximately the same number of inmates released from jail to fight and die in Ukraine
- Russia's desperation in signing-up new recruits is demonstrated by the sky-high signing bonuses and salaries it has begun paying to bolster its military ranks. It has also started deploying North Korean troops by the thousands.
- Russia's losses of heavy equipment and armaments on the land, sea and in the air are mind boggling. So much so that recent Russian offensives – instead of relying on heavy armour – are being conducted largely with motorcycles, Chinese golf carts, and Ladas, if not infantry alone. Remarkably, as of just a week or two ago, Russia has also started to equip its military at the front with new "transport vehicles" for their food supplies and equipment, namely, mules. Literally. The mighty Russian army has been reduced to using mules to transport supplies to the front.
- Russia's economy is in tatters. Inflation is soaring, interest rates exceed 20% and there are massive worker shortages in the civilian economy as higher wages are drawing away more and more workers to the military where they are quickly killed or permanently injured. Natural gas sales to Europe have fallen off a cliff and oil production and exports are under

growing pressure from nightly bombing raids by Ukrainian long-range drones targeting oil storage facilities, refineries and oil pumping stations.

- Putin has front-end loaded the resources and equipment needed to conquer Ukraine and they are being destroyed much faster than they can be replaced. The result is that Russia's capacity to wage all-out warfare against Ukraine has been severely hobbled these past 3 years and is approaching a critical breaking point. Professional armies do not send their soldiers to battle in golf carts and Ladas or relying on donkeys and mules to haul supplies to the front lines.
- In closing, and I'm directing my comments to the representatives of various federal political parties present here today. Canada is the host of the 2025 G7 meetings this year. They will take place in mid-June in Kananaskis, less than 100 kms west of here. In Canada's capacity as host, please ensure that Russia is barred from attending. And, if Canada fails in that task, then at least make sure that Putin is arrested on the outstanding warrant for war crimes issued against him by the International Criminal Court. Finally, as America under Trump continues its drift towards Russia and away from Ukraine, the members of the Ukrainian-Canadian community implore you to reject America's example and, instead, stand with Europe in providing Ukraine the full measure – not a half measure, or a quarter measure, but the absolute full measure -- of military aid it requires to vanquish the evil that confronts it. In doing so, you will stand on the right side of history and be forever remembered as reinforcing, with honour, Canada's unblemished record of defending freedom and democracy wherever it is imperilled.

Слава Україні!

***Formal remarks delivered by featured guest speaker, Bohdan Romaniuk (Vice-President (Alberta) and Member of the Board of Directors -- Canada Ukraine Foundation) at the Calgary rally in support of Ukraine on Sunday, February 23, 2025 on the occasion of the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion.**