

The Donbass referendum and the blood on Biden's hands

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The husk of a Donetsk bus destroyed by Ukrainian artillery on Sept. 22. Six people were killed, including a 14-year-old. Photo: Donetsk News Agency

On Sept. 21, U.S. President Joe Biden stood before the 77th United Nations General Assembly and [said with a straight face](#): “If nations can pursue their imperial ambitions without consequences, then we put at risk everything this very institution stands for ... You cannot seize a nation’s territory by force.”

The Oxford English Dictionary defines projection as “the unconscious transfer of one’s own desires or emotions to another.” Or, in this case, one’s own actions.

Biden’s remarks were subject to widespread ridicule on social media. But many people who recognize the hypocrisy of a U.S. president condemning others’ alleged “imperial ambitions” may not fully understand how this slander was directed at the embattled people of the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics (DPR and LPR) of the Donbass region, who have been subject to eight and half years of unrelenting war since the 2014 U.S.-sponsored coup in Ukraine.

While Biden was in New York gracing world leaders with his comedy stylings and attempting to whip up a new wave of war frenzy against Russia and China, activists from around the U.S. gathered in Austin, Texas, to protest a conference of the biggest U.S. military-industrial corporations, including Raytheon Technologies, Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics.

Ukrainian president, U.S. tool, and war criminal Volodymyr Zelensky was the invited guest of honor of the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA). He only appeared virtually, but Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister [Volodymyr Havrylov was in Austin](#). Havrylov joined the chorus of U.S. officials and billionaire war profiteers, encouraging an unprecedented speedup of weapons production (and profits).

The Biden administration and Congress have committed [\\$70 billion in war aid to](#)

[Ukraine](#) so far this year.

Thanks to these esteemed folks, on Monday, Sept. 19, another awful massacre occurred in Donetsk, the capital city of the Donetsk People's Republic. At least nine people were killed and five more wounded when a Ukrainian shell hit a bus stop and destroyed a nearby market. As usual, the target was an entirely civilian area.

At first, rescue workers thought more people had been killed, [Donetsk News Agency reported](#), "due to the large number of body fragments."

On Tuesday, Sept. 20, a school and several residential buildings in Donetsk were damaged by Ukrainian fire. A civilian was wounded. The next day, a hospital was hit, wounding three.

Now it's Thursday, Sept. 22. [Another mass slaughter](#) of civilians in Donetsk. "Kiev gunmen delivered artillery fire from the occupied town of Orlovka using 155mm projectiles which impacted near the Central Indoor Market building and flower shops and hit the Route 38 mini-bus. Six people, including a 14-year-old girl, were killed, and another six were wounded in the shelling, according to the latest reports."

In the Lugansk People's Republic, cities like Alchevsk that had been largely spared from attacks in recent months are now being routinely attacked by Kiev, using long-range weapons provided by the U.S. and other NATO powers. Svatovo, Novoaidar, and Troitskoye were all hit by U.S. high mobility artillery rocket systems (HIMARS) this week.

Referendum to join Russian Federation

This is the backdrop for the decision to hold a referendum for the DPR and LPR to join the Russian Federation. The referendum is being organized quickly, on an emergency basis, and will be held over five days from Sept. 23-27. Residents of the

liberated Kherson and Zaporozhye regions of Ukraine will also have the opportunity to vote.

All of these regions, along with Kharkov and Odessa, rose against the fascist-led, U.S.-sponsored coup regime in the spring of 2014. Mass movements in each region declared their intentions to proclaim people's republics. Only Donetsk and Lugansk were able to successfully resist being crushed by the Ukrainian military and neo-Nazi gangs. Anti-fascists in those areas were forced into exile, imprisoned, killed, or driven underground.

The United States pressed Ukraine to launch a new offensive against the Donbass starting in late 2021 – a deliberate provocation to draw Russia into a military conflict with the NATO military alliance. In February, the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Militias and the Russian Armed Forces united in a special military operation to protect the Donbass republics and de-Nazify Ukraine. Today many Ukrainian anti-fascists fight in the ranks of the Donbass militias.

A movement for a referendum on joining the Russian Federation has been growing in the Donbass republics for several years. It's not something the Russian government wanted; Russian President Vladimir Putin resisted these calls in the interests of a negotiated agreement with Ukraine and its Western sponsors. But the U.S. rulers weren't interested in a negotiated settlement — they wanted war.

If, as expected, the referendum is successful, the Russian government has signaled that it will accept the vote and incorporate the DPR and LPR as soon as October 1.

The decision to join the Russian Federation may not be ideal from a political standpoint and certainly was not the goal of many of the communists and socialists who inspired the independence struggle of 2014. But it is driven by necessity.

Stronger defense for Donbass

Under the Russian Constitution, once the DPR and LPR are part of the federation, Russia will have a much stronger basis to defend those areas and respond to the Ukrainian-NATO attacks, including exercising its nuclear deterrent. The republics will maintain their names and enter the federation as autonomous republics, as Crimea did in 2014.

The recent military setback for the anti-fascist alliance in Ukraine's Kharkov region and subsequent attempts by the Ukrainian military to break into the DPR and LPR have created enormous anxiety for the people of Donbass, who face genocide in the event of a Ukrainian takeover. This has been the stated policy of not only the hardened fascist battalions like Aidar and Azov but even of high officials in Kiev for the last eight-plus years.

On Sept. 21, President Putin made a national address to present a decree on a partial military mobilization (draft). Up to 300,000 people are to be called up to protect Russian territory from NATO aggression, which will soon include the DPR and LPR. It appears that the Russian government has now accepted the fact that there will be a prolonged state of war with the imperialist West.

We can expect these new defensive measures to be met with a new wave of anti-Russia war propaganda heading into the midterm U.S. elections, on a par with the witch-hunt against all things Russia earlier this year. This is likely to have an impact on the politically weak sections of the anti-war movement here. It is incumbent on principled anti-imperialists and socialist workers to meet this challenge with courage and political clarity.

Victory to the Donbass republics, Ukrainian anti-fascists, and their allies!

Defeat U.S./NATO imperialism and its Ukrainian proxies!

End the New Cold War against Donbass, Russia, and China!

