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\$113 billion for U.S. proxy war against Russia: Congress lauds Ukrainian war criminal while bombs rain on Donbass

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December 28, 2022

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Spin vs. reality: Zelensky addresses Congress, Dec. 21;

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Kalinin Hospital building in Donetsk, Dec. 18.

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On Dec. 21, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited Washington, D.C., to rally support for war against Russia – and especially for billions of dollars more in U.S. military aid.

When he spoke before the assembled U.S. Congress in prime time, [Zelensky phrased it this way](#): “Your money is not charity. It’s an investment.”

This statement was calculated to appeal to the corporate lawyers, weapons industry lobbyists, Wall Street flunkies, and Big Oil representatives, who make up the vast

majority of the “democratically elected” representatives and senators in the Capitol.

Keep pumping billions into the proxy war against Russia, Zelensky was saying, and U.S. big business will reap rich rewards – not only the privatized agricultural lands and industry of Ukraine but the long-sought breakup of the Russian Federation and unfettered plunder of its resources.

The speech included a dramatic photo-op of Zelensky handing a ragged Ukrainian flag signed by soldiers to Vice President Kamala Harris and outgoing House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Zelensky also took the opportunity to attack Iran – a handy way to curry favor with those Republicans who might be tempted to oppose Democratic war spending in Ukraine – though only for partisan gain, not out of any real opposition to the war.

The sales pitch was successful, not that the result was ever really in doubt. “Congress just passed a \$45 billion assistance package for Kiev on the way out the door for the holidays,” [Responsible Statecraft reported Dec. 23](#).

This brings the total in publicly reported U.S. “aid” to Ukraine in 2022 to approximately \$113 billion. That’s not counting aid from other NATO countries or covert U.S. aid.

[Russia’s entire military budget](#) for 2022 was about \$75 billion, expected to grow to about \$84 billion next year. For comparison, the [U.S. military budget](#) for 2022 was \$1.64 trillion – again, not including plentiful covert and hidden funding.

Ukraine’s long war on Donbass

As President Joe Biden and Congress were feting Zelensky, the military forces under his command (and directed from Washington) were in the midst of a rampage of

death and destruction rained onto the streets of Donetsk, the capital city of the Donetsk People's Republic, and other parts of the Donbass mining region.

The people of Donbass declared independence after a U.S.-backed far-right coup overthrew the elected government of Ukraine in 2014, and earlier this year voted overwhelmingly to join the Russian Federation.

The leadership of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics appealed to Russia to intervene to support them when [Ukraine's NATO-armed-and-funded military was poised to carry out a genocidal attack on Donbass](#) last February.

Standing beside Biden [at a White House press conference](#), Zelensky said: "There can't be any just peace in the war that was imposed on us by these — I don't know how to describe that because we are in the White House, and I can't find the proper language — so these 'inhumans,' I would say."

This is precisely the kind of dehumanizing language popularized by far-right Ukrainian nationalists and fascists against Donbass's working-class, Russian-speaking residents (subhumans, insects, etc.) that helped fuel eight years of war and left over 14,000 people dead before Russia's intervention in February.

And this year? [Al Mayadeen reported Dec. 20](#): "Since February 24, strikes conducted by Ukrainian forces on the Donetsk People's Republic have killed 4,392 civilians, including 132 children, and wounded 3,926 people, according to the DPR's mission to the Joint Center for Control and Coordination of issues related to Ukraine's war crimes (JCCC)."

Hospitals, schools, homes targeted

The city of Donetsk has been targeted relentlessly by Ukrainian forces since the escalation of the war. Fortified on high ground west of the capital, some of the most

hardened neo-Nazi military factions, like the Azov Regiment, shower death on residents: artillery, missiles, drone attacks, mines and bullets.

“In the massive attack at central Donetsk on Sunday [Dec. 18], the enemy shelled a hospital in the Kalininsky districts, damaging Blocks No 5, 6, 7 and 8. Block No 6 took a direct hit. Two patients who were inside at the time of the attack were wounded; one of them later died of his wounds,” [Donetsk News Agency reported](#).

The hospital was shelled again on Dec. 20 while Zelensky was en route to Washington.

“In the Kievsky and Voroshilovsky districts, Ukrainian artillery strikes damaged the Donbass Arena stadium, Olympiysky sport complex, Yunost youth center, two dormitories of the Technical University, a boiler house, tram overhead lines, a public transport stop and an office building. ... Twenty-seven homes and 10 infrastructure facilities have been damaged.”

Just a few days earlier, on Dec. 15, Ukraine launched over 40 rounds from multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS) at central Donetsk, “the most massive attack since 2014,” [Mayor Alexei Kulemzin said](#). Nine civilians were wounded, including a 10-year-old child.

Most men have been drafted into service by the Donetsk People’s Militia and sent to the front lines. Those who remain in the city are seniors, people with disabilities that make it unrealistic to flee, and their caregivers – primarily women. There are also residents who fled at the beginning of Ukraine’s war in 2014-2015 and later returned, refusing to leave their homes again.

In neighboring Lugansk, “On Dec. 16, at 4:10 a.m., the Armed Forces of Ukraine fired at Lantratovka, firing three rockets from the U.S. HIMARS multiple launch rocket system into the village. Eight people were initially reported dead, and 23

others were injured.

“Later, a source in emergency services said that 11 people were killed, about 20 were injured, and the fate of 20 others remained unknown,” [according to Lugansk Information Agency](#).

Since entering the conflict, Russia’s military has focused on targeting arms depots, other military targets, and Ukrainian infrastructure essential to NATO’s weapons deliveries – not civilians. On the other hand, Kiev has shown no such restraint, as it has not throughout the war on Donbass, which is about to enter its ninth year.

Organize to stop the war

Perhaps the most notable thing about Zelensky’s carefully staged “surprise” visit is that it failed to inspire the pro-war sentiment heard earlier this year during the “Save Ukraine” campaign.

Millions of U.S. workers and members of oppressed communities are living paycheck to paycheck, losing their homes to skyrocketing rents, struggling to feed their families and fuel their homes and cars, and facing the consequences of unchecked climate collapse.

How could they help but notice the billions of their tax dollars being poured into the war machine and the profits of Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and company?

The anti-war movement in the U.S. is finally starting to shake off the fear and lethargy that immobilized it earlier this year. While the political perspective of many of the established organizations remains confused at best, there is growing pressure from below to fight back.

The United National Antiwar Coalition has called for a [Stop U.S. Wars Week of](#)

[Action](#) from Jan. 13 to 22, 2023, to coincide with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. The ANSWER coalition and CodePink, organizations that have taken moderate, anti-Russia positions since February, are calling actions around this time, including a protest in New York City on Saturday, Jan. 14.

Ahead of that demonstration, an important meeting is being planned in New York to give a clear anti-imperialist perspective to the movement. Entitled “[People Speak Out to Stop Racism, Poverty and World War III](#),” it will feature talks by John Parker, who made an eyewitness visit to the front line in Lugansk, Margaret Kimberley of Black Agenda Report, and other notable activists.

This event will be held on Friday, Jan. 13, from 6-9 p.m. at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, 521 W. 26 St. in Harlem, and will be livestreamed worldwide. For more information or to endorse, contact info@stopnato.org.

