

The Arsenal of Democracy Isn't

The erstwhile “arsenal of democracy” is neither a democracy nor an arsenal.

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As I originally wrote in my July 10, 2022 article [Wunderwaffe Du Jour](#):

“The US military is not built nor equipped for protracted high-intensity conflict. Nor can it supply a depleted proxy army with the means to prosecute a protracted high-intensity conflict.”

The incontrovertible reality is that the US and its NATO allies are presently incapable of supplying the massive material demands of modern industrial warfare, as Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Alex Vershinin articulated so well in this essential June 2022 analysis: [The Return of Industrial Warfare](#).

And yet the public discussion of potential war always includes convinced voices proclaiming that, just like in the Second World War, US industry could very rapidly ramp up to produce armaments of surpassing quality, and in overwhelming quantities.

This titillates the biases of American exceptionalists in general, and is a particularly seductive fantasy of the [#EmpireAtAllCosts](#) cult drones propagandizing for filthy lucre at the countless armaments-industry-funded “think tanks” in Washington and London.

But the notion that the rapidly declining empire can resurrect the [Arsenal of Democracy](#) band for one final farewell tour is a singularly delusional vanity.

You see, for all its massive plunder of the public purse, the US armaments industry is effectively a modestly scaled high-end boutique.

And there is simply no way this domestic US industry can expeditiously expand its production. It would literally take years – probably a full decade – for the US to expand its military production to a seriously potent industrial scale.

For one, the labor pool for these industries is extremely finite and highly specialized. In the overwhelmingly financialized and service-oriented US economy, there is a shocking dearth of technical expertise of ALL kinds.

It's not simply a boomer cliché that "kids these days are innocent of almost any mechanical know-how".

If the US wants to staff new armaments factories any time soon, it will have to import the skilled labor from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea.

Beyond that, the permitting of new factories, with the attendant bureaucratic delays, public hearings, environmental impact studies, and various special interest road-blocking ... well, everyone knows how these things work now in America.

It took five years to build the Hoover Dam in the early 20th century. It would take FIFTY here in the early 21st century – if it could be built at all.

Those clamoring for the US to intervene in the Ukraine war in order to "teach those filthy Russians a lesson they'll never forget" simply have no conception of the catastrophe that would ensue were their dreams to be fulfilled.

If the Pentagon consented to such an undertaking, it could probably amass no more than 250,000 combat-capable troops in the theater, and to do so would entail the evacuation of virtually every major US military base on the planet (and most of the minor ones).

It could probably assemble an additional quarter million troops from the active reserves and National Guard units in the United States. That said, it is empirically impossible that 500,000 combat troops could be satisfactorily equipped for high-intensity conflict such as would be the scenario in a war between the US and Russia in eastern Europe. And even if they could be assembled and equipped, it would be an insufficient force to face over a million Russian troops, close to a third of which are already "battle-hardened" from almost a year of high-intensity combat in Ukraine.

In anticipation of the casualties attendant to great power warfare, it would become necessary for the United States to reinstitute conscription almost immediately. If a strong anti-war movement had not already been incited by its previous actions, conscription in America would almost certainly induce a widespread political upheaval, with large and aggressive public protests cropping up in all the major cities of the nation.

And, of course, it should go without saying that Russia would not simply remain passive (as did Iraq in 1991 and 2003) while the United States concentrated a huge force on its borders preparatory to an invasion. A shooting war would ensue even before the US was able to position in eastern Europe the men and equipment required to launch an assault against Russian forces in Ukraine.

Most meaningfully, even if the US/NATO *could* magically materialize a million and a half soldiers on the Polish, Romanian, and Lithuanian borders, it would not be able to sustain such a massive force for more than just a few weeks; likely less than a month. It would turn into the most humiliating military debacle in American and European history, and the Russians would sing songs about it for centuries to come.

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