

Trump Would be a Fool to Arm Ukraine

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John Hudson [reports](#) on the push to get Trump to approve sending arms to Ukraine:

President Donald Trump's top advisers are closer now to achieving what seemed unthinkable at the start of his presidency: Shipping millions of dollars of US weapons to Ukraine's embattled military.

According to the report, Trump's advisers think that the president will agree to arming Ukraine if they can persuade him that it will lead to "peace" and the Ukrainian government will pay for the weapons. It's possible that they might sucker Trump into believing this, but he would be a fool to listen to them. Sending arms to Ukraine makes a dramatic increase in violence more likely. It will almost certainly lead to escalation and will make a peace settlement even harder to reach. There is no military necessity for providing these weapons to Ukraine now, unless the goal is to encourage their government to go on the offensive. That obviously won't lead to "peace," but rather to a renewed conflict that Ukraine can't win.

Ukraine isn't in a great position to pay for the weapons, either. Hudson continues:

Requiring Ukraine to pay for the arms package is not an ideal situation for cash-strapped Kiev, which has allies on Capitol Hill who are more than willing to foot the bill.

In short, Trump's advisers have to deceive him into thinking that arming Ukraine won't have the destabilizing and provocative effect that it is very likely to have, and they have to make him think that Ukraine will pay for something that it can't really afford and that hawks in Congress want to give away. Trump is gullible and doesn't know enough about these issues to understand the implications, so his advisers will probably succeed. If I had to guess, Trump will end up going along with the bad advice he is receiving. He doesn't know enough to realize when he's being misled, and he tends to favor more aggressive policies because he mistakenly thinks they project "strength." That makes him unusually susceptible to hawkish demands to do irresponsible and destructive things. Arming Ukraine would be an extraordinarily foolish thing for Trump to do, and so it is probably what he will decide to do.

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