

What's the Best Way to End a War?

Sending more weapons to Ukraine isn't the answer

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U.S. foreign policy is a place where logic goes to die.

Antony Blinken, the U.S. Secretary of State, said yesterday that the quickest way to end the Russia-Ukraine War is "to give Ukraine a strong hand on the battlefield," by which he meant more and more weaponry, including Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles and Patriot missile systems together with Challenger II tanks from Great Britain. Not surprisingly, then, the White House also hinted at yet another aid package for Ukraine, which may be announced "as soon as the end of this week."

Logic suggests the quickest way to end a war is to stop fighting. Announce a cease fire, negotiate, and find acceptable terms for an armistice or peace treaty. Stop the killing—stop the war.

Of course, the U.S. State Department is really [a tiny branch](#) of the Pentagon. It's been that way for decades. The Pentagon budget, \$858 billion for this year, is 14 times greater than the State Department's at \$60 billion. It often seems that a primary mission of the State Department is to market and sell U.S. weaponry overseas. Small wonder that Blinken sees more deadly weaponry in Ukraine as the answer to ending a catastrophic war.

In a way, Blinken's blinkered thinking is typically American. What's the quickest way to end a war on crime? A drug war? Or almost any other problem in America? Obviously, more guns, more security cameras, more metal detectors, more body armor, and so on. Think about our "solutions" to gun violence in schools, which include armored backpacks for eight-year-olds and semi-automatic pistols for teachers. Too many Americans look to guns as a "solution" to life's problems; count Blinken among the gun-lovers, at least when it's in the form of U.S. arms exports.

While it's true U.S. arms exports and aid may keep Ukraine from losing quickly, it's highly unlikely these same weapons will help Ukraine to win quickly and decisively. Russia can and likely will match any escalation to this war, and at a cheaper price than the U.S. taxpayer is currently paying (now over \$100 billion and rising).

Blinken's bloodless language about war is also revealing. It's all about giving Ukraine "a strong hand on the battlefield," as if Ukraine and Russia are playing a polite game of poker. More weapons to Ukraine means more bloody death and destruction; attrition or even escalation is far more likely than a quick end in Ukraine's favor.

Blinken probably knows this, but a large part of his intellectual training was spent at Harvard and Columbia Law, just as Jake Sullivan, his younger counterpart at the National Security Council, trained at Yale and Yale Law. These men aren't stupid, they're just narrowly trained and partisan functionaries willing to spout whatever the empire needs them to say in the cause of imperial hegemony.

And so U.S. lawyers continue to send guns and money to Ukraine, especially guns, while saying this is the best and quickest way for Ukraine to beat Putin and end the war with Russia. Logic, however, suggests more fighting and dying and a lack of decision for either side.

Best not confuse a "strong hand" with a dead man's one.

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Featured image: Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken meets with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in Kyiv, Ukraine, on May 6, 2021. [State Department photo by Ron Przysucha]

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