

“Victory? Be it Middle East or Ukraine, Biden would rather prevent it”

By Lev Tsitrin

By the end of 2022, Ukrainians had the momentum in beating off the Russian invasion. A large chunk of the rural east of the country was liberated, and a concerted push was underway to kick the Russians out of a major city, Kherson. Strategists were planning the next move – towards the sea of Azov and Crimea, cutting off Russian troops in Ukraine’s south steppes from supplies. Ukrainian victory was in the air.

And then, a strange thing happened. Ukraine’s push ran out of steam – or to be more precise, out of munitions. The supply got stopped, Biden getting cold feet at what would come next, and shutting off the faucet. End result – the Russians got all the time they needed to salt the planned route of Ukrainian attack with dense mine fields, and to dig an impassable system of trenches and anti-tank defenses. What would have been an operation with a high chance of success if munitions kept flowing when Ukraine had the strategic initiative, became a “mission impossible” half a year later, when the requisite munitions finally arrived. End result – today, it is the Russians who have the initiative, taking more and more of Ukrainian territory. Biden’s fear of Ukrainian victory in 2022 resulted, in 2024, in West’s despair over Ukraine’s dwindling ability to hold the Russians off, and Western leaders’ nightmarish thoughts of “who will be next on Putin’s menu?” That’s what one gets by indecision, by getting a problem fester. Much more munitions, and many more troops are now needed to do what could have been done at the end of 2022 with relative ease, and at much lesser cost. Restraining Ukrainians then for fear of Ukrainian victory resulted today in a far worse fear – the fear of Ukrainian defeat, and of its consequences for the West.

Did Biden learn from his Ukraine mistake? Did that debacle teach him that in a war, the momentum must be nursed and maintained, and there can be no holding punches until the

victory?

Surprise, surprise! The answer is a “no,” as evidenced by his attitudes in the Israel-Hamas war.

Yes, Biden went to Israel – “the first US president to do so in the time of war,” he likes to repeat – but only to restrain the Israelis from smashing into Gaza with overwhelming force, breaking Hamas and its war machine, its tunnels and the battalions in a massive punch. What preoccupies him is not victory, but a question of what will happen “on the day after.”

Clearly, he is worried that “the day after” the destruction of Hamas may not be to his liking. The idea of Israel taking control of the strip by policing, in perpetuity, the Gaza-Egypt border to prevent Hamas from ever arising again, goes counter to Biden’s grand vision of the “two-state solution.” Hence, the need to prevent Israel’s victory. And it is here that his Ukrainian experience comes handy: stopping the flow of munitions does the trick! Hence, Biden’s vetoing the supply of 2,000-pound bombs that are indispensable in safely destroying Hamas’ tunnels.

And the idea of putting Israel into the straitjacket of Biden’s strategic vision by stopping the flow of armaments is popular with a rather surprising number of highly-placed democrats. Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland is an ardent supporter, according to a report by [The Hill](#) (“I continue to believe that the Biden administration should pause the transfer of offensive weapons until the Netanyahu government meets the Biden administration’s objectives in a number of areas.”) Ditto Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts (“Giving more arms to Israel is not pushing in the right direction”). Ditto Senator Chris Murphy, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on the Middle East (“My belief is that the administration should be using all the leverage it has, including weapon sales, in order to bring this conflict to a close.”) And so on (“Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) ... called for Biden to hold back the military sale.”)

There is of course a good deal more to it than what meets the eye – the mere concern for Palestinian civilians caught in the cross-fire. Much closer to home, the elections loom, and Biden needs the votes of the anti-Israel, pro-Hamas, “progressive” wing of the Democratic party that organizes loud protests,

that votes “uncommitted” in the primaries, that builds the encampments on college campuses – and what is the better way to get back into those folks’ good graces than by preventing the destruction of Hamas, so it can rebound (just as the Russians did in Ukraine)? Hence, Biden’s latest “ceasefire” initiative that would end the war, keep Hamas in charge of Gaza, and Israel, out of it. In Biden’s calculus, denying Israel the victory, thus insuring that Hamas ultimately arises victorious, will cement his victory over Trump.

But whatever the dirty election politics, the fact remains that the shorter the war, the lesser the pain. And the harder the punch, the shorter the war. And the more munitions, the harder the punch. Letting the war drag on actually causes what Biden says he aims to prevent by blocking munition supplies to Israel – it ensures civilian suffering and death, simply by prolonging the war.



Ultimately, Biden’s desire to control wars’ courses, and shape wars’ outcomes causes a lot more casualties, civilian and military, than simply doing the right thing by bringing forth the victory – and wars’ end – through supply of munitions. This was true for Ukraine in 2022, and this is true for Israel now.

But the lesson is not being learned. For Biden, politics overtakes the strategy; his desire to win at the voting booth is far greater than his determination to rid the world of evil via letting America’s allies win on the battlefield. Let’s keep Biden’s priorities in mind, come November.