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Diane Francis

2 years into war, Ukraine still has the upper hand

Через 2 роки після початку війни Україна все ще має перевагу

Польсько-американська історикиня, письменниця і журналістка, лауреатка Пулітцерівської премії 2003 р. за книгу "Історія ГУЛАГу", знаний симпатик України в західних інтелектуальних колах Енн Епплбом виступила на щорічній вечері Літературного фонду Петерсона в Торонто. В інтерв'ю редакторці «National Post» Даяні Френсіс вона перед своїм виступом торкнулася поточних політичних криз, пов'язаних з наданням допомоги Україні. Е. Епплбаум сподівається, що проблеми щодо підтримки України будуть вирішені. Літературний фонд Петерсона просуває та підтримує видавців, перекладачів та авторів українських книг. Він був заснований Стенлі Петерсоном, українським біженцем, який приїхав до Канади 1949 р. Нещодавно фонд запустив проєкт «Подорож до істини» - ініціативу, покликану допомогти зібрати докази воєнних злочинів, скоєних росією в Україні.

https://financialpost.com/diane-francis/ukraine-still-has-upper-hand-2-years-war?_gl=1*f8grid*_ga*MjM2NTU4OTYxLjE2NzM0OTY0OTc.*_ga_72QH41ZTMR*MTcwMjMINzM2OC4yODcuMS4xNzAyMzU3Mzg3LjQxLjAuMA..&_ga=2.153979775.634230343.1702207627-236558961.1673496497

Kyiv faces challenge of political obstruction in the West, but historian Anne Applebaum is optimistic this will be resolved

“There is an intentional abrogation of rules,” she told the audience attending the Peterson Literary Fund annual dinner in Toronto, where she spoke on Dec. 9. She also gave a preview of her upcoming book, *Autocracies Inc.*, which explored how the world’s autocracies gain ground against democracies and the rules-based system.

The Peterson Literary Fund promotes and supports publishers, translators and writers of Ukrainian books. It was founded by the late Stanley Peterson, a Ukrainian refugee who came to Canada in 1949, made a fortune in the stock market and later set up the fund. Recently, it launched the Journey for Truth Project, an initiative to help accumulate evidence of war crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine.

Applebaum emphasized to the crowd that modern warfare and conflict are now characterized by terrorism, or tactics designed to instil fear among targeted populations. Russia designed this template in Syria, where it purposely destroyed hospitals, cities and civilians in 2017.

“Norms are gone,” she said.

Other examples of fear tactics include extraterritorial assassination and criminal plots by India, Russia and China; Beijing’s abuse of its Uyghur minority in western China; Russian atrocities in Ukraine and the forced landing of a commercial jetliner by Belarus to allow the regime to arrest a dissident.

The rules of war are also flouted routinely, but the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly cannot respond because accused countries can exercise vetoes.

“We are sleepwalking as direct attacks continue against the United Nations, democracies, the laws of war and the rule of law,” Applebaum said. Her next book will build on her 2020

bestseller on challenges facing democracies, *Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism*. Prior to that, she wrote *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine* on the history of the Holodomor in Ukraine, where millions were intentionally starved to death in the early 1930s.

Applebaum is an American and a naturalized Polish citizen. In 1992, she married Radoslaw Sikorski, who has served as Poland's defence minister and is a member of the European Parliament. She speaks Polish and Russian as well as English.

An experienced journalist and geopolitical expert, she addressed the current political crises involving aid to Ukraine in an interview with me before her speech. After nearly two years of providing massive military, humanitarian and financial help to Ukraine, both the United States and the European Union are now enmeshed in political battles against obstructionists who seek to block further funding to strong-arm their agendas.

Last week, the Senate Republicans in the United States, who mostly support Ukraine, voted down an aid package for Ukraine and Israel to force President Joe Biden to secure his country's southern border against illegal migrants.

In the European Union, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary has attempted to veto aid to Kyiv and block its entry into the European Union. There are two reasons for this: he's a pal of Putin's and, more urgently, he wants to get the €27 billion (\$39 billion) of EU funds Brussels has withheld from his country due to allegations of corruption and misuse of funds.

"I think these will be resolved," said Applebaum. "If no funding, the consequences are there will be 10 million more refugees in Europe, concentration camps all over Ukraine as now exist in its occupied areas, a collapse of faith in the West and reverberations in Taiwan and elsewhere. It will be an epic-changing catastrophe."

Despite headwinds, she remains optimistic.

"I think Ukraine can win. It needs technological advances, but people are working on it," she said.

Applebaum added there is no "stalemate" and fighting continues on both sides. Ukraine is "doing well" by hitting targets inside Russia and the Black Sea.

"With no navy, (Ukraine has) driven most of the Russian fleet out of Crimea and its grain is being shipped," she explained.

Russia still hasn't attacked a NATO nation, bombed Poland's supply bases or pursued Moldova, which is of note to Applebaum.

"I'm surprised (Putin) hasn't done it ... he may still be afraid of NATO," she said.

And that may be the best sign of all that Ukraine and its allies still have the upper hand.