

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نېاشد تن من مېباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مېباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

ROB URIE

10.05.2025

Trump's 'Mineral Rights' Deal is about Continuing the American War in Ukraine



The geographic distribution of Ukraine's ferrous and non-ferrous output.

With neither political party in the US seeing a benefit in publicizing the fact, last week the Trump administration recommitted the US to the American war in Ukraine, Acting under the cover of the US – Ukraine Mineral Rights deal, negotiators made it about weapons, not minerals. Mr. Trump's 'win' is that under the terms of the deal, the US will now be credited for US weapons supplied to Ukraine. The contract language explaining the mechanisms for doing so is provided below.

While the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza is finding diminishing support inside the US, a plurality of Americans continues to view the war in Ukraine as just. Missing from public comment has been that Donald Trump's foreign policy is converging with Joe Biden's

foreign policy. Recall, Mr. Biden's foreign policy team was proclaiming (and here) that nuclear wars are winnable in late 2024, just before they were removed from office.

'If, after the Effective Date (4/30/2025), the Government of the United States of America delivers new military assistance to the Government of Ukraine in any form (including the donation of **weapons systems, ammunition, technology or training**), the capital contribution of the U.S. Partner will be deemed to be increased by the assessed value of such military assistance, in accordance with the LP Agreement.' Section 5, Article 6, US – Ukraine Mineral Rights deal.

As with everything in Trump World, the seeming end-point of the Mineral Rights deal isn't the end. Mr. Trump apparently understands that he has no leverage in negotiations to end the war in Ukraine because Russia has already prevailed militarily. Skeptical readers are invited to recall the US classified documents leaked by US Airman Texiera in 2022 – 2023. The leaks revealed that Ukraine's prospects were viewed quite poorly by US officials, even back then.

The problem for Mr. Trump is that the Russians are less prone to taking US pronouncements at face value than the American public is. Mr. Trump's ploy to pose the US as a mediator in the war, as opposed to the lead antagonist, retains the fiction begun by the Biden administration that the US is a sympathetic bystander. However, the Russians are working from a different set of facts. Since the start of 2022 (or 1990), Russia's facts have comported with actual outcomes, whereas American facts haven't.

Given this evolution of the facts, the timing of Mr. Trump's Mineral Rights deal— inked immediately prior to his resumption of US arms shipments to Ukraine, suggests that it (Mineral Rights deal) was a pretext. Mr. Trump only started talking about it two months ago. He also knew, or should have known at the time, that he had no leverage to enforce his campaign promise to end the war in Ukraine. Resuming US arms shipments may be Trump's gambit to recover leverage in negotiations.

Possibly this strategy will work. But likely not because the Russians believe what Mr. Trump is saying. The Mineral Rights deal, which barely mentions minerals, gives Mr. Trump the face-saving device of the US now being compensated for weapons deliveries, a 'win' for his administration. If he can't end the war, at least the US can earn a 'profit' as its reward. As strange as this economic framing of US foreign policy may read, it persists throughout accounts of US military history from the late nineteenth century forward.

Readers need only recall the public skewering that Joe Biden received for completing Mr. Trump's planned withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 to understand that the public good

tends to be suborned in uniparty elections. While Mr. Trump can't and won't run for President again, his Republican colleagues in Congress will be running.

The utterly predictable images of dead infants and destroyed building in Ukraine, with Donald Trump's face superimposed over them, will buoy the electoral prospects of any Democrat in 2028 who says that they are willing to preemptively nuke Russia. With history as a guide, count on every Democrat proclaiming that they will preemptively nuke Russia.

The short sightedness of this practice, should it come to pass, is that nuking Russia would produce very much the same result as nuking the US. Author Annie Jacobsen argues in her recent book Nuclear War that the world will end within two hours of the first nuclear launch, and she explains how the process works. The 'rational' response to a first strike is apparently to launch every missile that the receiving nation has under the premise that its future capacity to launch weapons will be impeded.

The Russians have hypersonic alternatives to nuclear weapons. The Oreshnik missile is both hypersonic and it has an innovative non-nuclear warhead. The only hypersonic weapons that the US has are ICBMs. The result is that the Russians can fire hypersonic missiles around the globe that the US can't shoot down. As JFK warned, nations left with a choice between nuclear escalation or surrender will choose escalation.

This detour into military hardware is to make the point to Americans that we all have 'skin in the game.' The Biden administration was playing nuclear Russian Roulette only a bit over three months ago. The administration's argument, if memory serves, was that they had crossed several Russian nuclear 'red-lines' and the Russians hadn't responded, so they must be bluffing. Now consider Russian Roulette. Every pull of the trigger suggests that the gun is empty until the one where you find yourself standing before your maker wondering what went wrong.

The practical problem for the US is that the war in Ukraine 1) has been lost by the West, 2) and terms need to be negotiated to get the best deal possible for Ukraine, but 3) any American politician who does the right thing by admitting defeat and moving on 4) will be publicly pilloried and their party precluded from winning another election for a decade at least. This made Trump's original plan of ending US support for the Ukraine war and normalizing relations with Russia the only workable one.

With somewhere between one and one-and-one-half million Ukrainians now dead, arguments can be had over who is responsible for the carnage. But remember Mr. Trump's 'peace through strength' campaign sloganeering. Was the Biden administration really 'too weak' to defeat the Russians in Ukraine? Or was the war a mistake that the West never should have

started? Asked conversely, would Donald Trump escalating in Ukraine in the present benefit or harm Ukraine and the US? It would harm Ukraine while benefiting the US through weapons sales. Until we all die in a nuclear inferno.

Part of Mr. Trump's logic with respect to ending the war in Ukraine has been to foster cooperation between the US and Russia for his Greater Israel project. Russia recently inked a non-binding, and very lawyerly worded, mutual defense agreement with Iran that could be brought to bear if Iran is attacked by the US and Israel. With Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu having spent much of his life trying to instigate a US war with Iran, the contours of WWII begin to come into focus.

With respect to Iran, last week Donald Trump backed away from US demands that Iran stop all of its nuclear enrichment activities. Recall that lower-level enrichment is required to produce medical radiation products. This is being taken by the commentariat to mean that a US war with Iran is now off of the table. However, the US – Israeli genocide for Greater Israel is just getting warmed up. With Mr. Trump's attention span somewhere around 30 – 45 seconds, the bet here is that millions more will die before the nation-state of Israel is recognized to be the genocidal menace that it is.

Two members of the US commentariat, retired CIA Analyst Ray McGovern and Columbia University economist Jeffrey Sachs, are both more positive regarding prospects for a Trump peace deal with Russia than I have laid out here. McGovern's logic, if I may, is that both Trump and V. Putin really want a peace deal, so one will eventually happen. Jeff Sachs is playing the ambassador, suggesting that Mr. Trump's mental lapses with respect to the facts under consideration are immaterial. He adds to this his version of Ray McGovern's argument. The Americans who imagine that continuing the war will benefit either Ukraine or the US may wish to consider that the pictures of slaughtered infants and destroyed buildings from the conflict mentioned above already exist, irrespective of what Donald Trump does about policy. When Ukraine was told by the US to pay no heed to Minsk II because the US would take care of it, that was one-million dead Ukrainians ago. And the same was said when Ukraine was told by ~~BeZe~~ BoJo not to sign the Istanbul agreement.

Finally, Americans may wish to consider that nothing that they have been told over the last forty years by either the American political class or the establishment press has turned out to be true. Iraq had no WMDs. Russiagate was a calculated fraud perpetrated by MI6 and the CIA to support their war against Russia. And for those who are always 'dealing,' transactional relations preclude the possibility of truth because everything that is said is a negotiating point.

But none of this means that the US won't bear the consequences if the current wars go off the rails. Advances in technology keep making the world less safe, Hypersonic missiles can reach the US in a matter of minutes. Fortress America is over.

MAY 9, 2025

Rob Urie is an artist and political economist. His book *Zen Economics* is published by CounterPunch Books.