

Is President Biden going wobbly on Ukraine?

There are suggestions that Presidents Biden and Macron would like to see a negotiated settlement with Russia over Ukraine. German Chancellor Scholz has been on a visit to China, Russia's most important ally. I would be interested in your thoughts on how the Ukraine war might end and how it should end.

The government and people of Ukraine have been brave in resisting Russian aggression. They saw off an attempt to seize their capital and to replace their government, and they have made Russia fight hard for every mile of territory in the south east of the country that has become Russia's more immediate target. The West has supplied weapons, training and some support, but has not committed forces of its own to the conflict. As Ukraine has fought on without allies in the field, it will be Ukraine who decide when and whether to hold talks with Russia. So far Ukraine has stated that she cannot negotiate all the time Russia is pushing ahead with the invasion and lays claim to parts of the country.

The NATO allies will find it difficult to persuade Ukraine otherwise. Ukraine does depend heavily on western weapons and some other supplies. Were the West to restrict that support all the time Ukraine wishes to defend her territory it would aid and encourage Putin. It is probably Putin's strategy to seek to split the NATO allies from Ukraine or to create divisions within NATO over the future. Any unwillingness to support the defence of a neighbouring country from invasion would be seen as weakness by Russia and invites more incursions in more countries and provinces close to Russia's borders.