

The Russian war in Ukraine

This week's news that Ukrainian forces have liberated an area of eastern Ukraine taken by Russia comes as welcome news in the West. The decision to support Ukraine against a murderous invasion has been backed by a supply of advanced Western weapons which have helped oppose the substantial Russian forces.

Ukrainian sources tell us Russian troops fled with low morale and in poor order, leaving vehicles and munitions behind. Russia claims it was a tactical consolidation that they ordered. All seem to agree Russia now controls less territory which looks like a Ukrainian advance. Ukraine is now reporting bad treatment of citizens under Russian rule.

This presumably means President Biden and the European allies will be encouraged by this and will continue to supply weapons, financial and other support to the Ukrainian state. The US has warned us to expect a long conflict. France and Germany want a negotiated peace. The Ukrainian success makes it unlikely Ukraine will offer to surrender territory to Russia. It poses the question what will Russia now do?

Putin watchers do not expect him to sue for peace or to give up his violent attempt to take over substantial parts of the country. He is fighting a military war with Ukraine and a sanctions and commercial war with the USA and her allies. Putin is using the gas weapon to try to split the European allies. He wants to dilute or reduce western support for Ukraine. He is using nuclear pressure against both Ukraine and the West through occupying a nuclear power station. He sometimes speculates about the use of more extreme weapons which would put an end to the Putin lie that he was liberating Ukrainian people.

His use of the gas tap has so far troubled western economies with massively higher gas prices, allowing him to collect substantial revenues whilst selling much less gas. This winter is going to be a difficult struggle both over trade including gas and for the forces seeking to win back lost territory.

I would be interested in your thoughts on what the West should now do. .