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WAR IN UKRAINE

OPINION

Volodymyr Zelenskyy doesn't need a standing ovation. He needs a no-fly zone

Western leaders still believe, naively, that they must avoid "escalation" — and that it is in their power to keep this war localized to Ukraine.

By **Alexandra Chyczij** Contributor

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Today, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will address Canada's Parliament. He will speak of the courage of the Ukrainian people [in the face of the Russian onslaught](#). MPs and senators will no doubt honour him with a standing ovation. President Zelenskyy will thank them — and then he will remind them that Ukraine needs a no-fly zone. Now.

Against the Russian onslaught of tanks, artillery, bombs, airstrikes, cluster munitions and thermobaric weapons that the dictator Vladimir Putin unleashed, the Ukrainian people have responded with bravery and valour. An offensive on three fronts that the Russians thought would crush Ukraine in two days has ground to a halt.

Kyiv, a city of over four million and the primary target of Russia's offensive, remains in Ukrainian hands more than two weeks after it was supposed to fall. It is today a symbol of heroic resistance to tyranny — the capital not only of Ukraine, but of the Free World.

The Russians are taking massive casualties. Their ground forces — stuck, unfed and poorly supplied — maraud and rob. In the few towns that Russian forces have managed to occupy, civilians protest and harass the occupiers.

Unable to defeat the Ukrainian people, Russia now seeks to destroy them by raining hell down from the skies on Ukrainian cities. The systematic war crimes Russia is committing against Ukraine are a genocide.

Mariupol, a city of 400,000, is besieged and under constant Russian bombardment. Without food, heat or water, civilians there are staring death in the face. Dozens of other cities are under rocket and air attack. Humanitarian corridors, hospitals, schools, [nuclear power plants](#) — all are targeted by Russian bombs.

Well over 2.5 million people have been forced to leave Ukraine as Russia's assault has created the greatest humanitarian crisis seen in Europe since the dark days of the Second World War. Putin's intent could not be clearer. It is that of despots who came before him: the annihilation of an entire people.

And yet Western leaders still believe, naively, that they must avoid "escalation." They believe, wrongly, that it is in their power to keep this war localized to Ukraine. Reasoning that Russia has not yet invaded a NATO country, they are content to let Ukrainians fight alone. And so they refuse the pleas of Zelenskyy and his people for a no-fly zone.

But as so often happens, the Canadian public is ahead of the politicians and knows what needs to be done. Two in three Canadians [support a no-fly zone](#), even at the risk of provoking a greater conflict between NATO and Russia. [The same is broadly true](#) of our closest ally, the United States.

Canada and its allies can save thousands of lives by showing Putin that the genocidal murder of civilians is a line that cannot be crossed. We can implement a no-fly zone. We can ground or destroy Russia's planes. We can take out their rockets. We can give the Ukrainians fighter jets, anti-aircraft systems and anti-rocket defences. Our leaders can do this knowing they have the backing of their people.

Facing unprecedented Western economic sanctions, Putin's regime is finished. Having sown the wind, they will reap the whirlwind. His regime will meet the end reserved for all tyrants and murderers. The only question that remains is how many innocent people he and his henchmen will be allowed to murder, on their way to eternity in Dante's [seventh circle of Hell](#).

Today, President Zelenskyy will speak to Canada's Parliament on behalf of 40 million Ukrainians, a brave and undaunted nation he has proven himself worthy of leading. I hope that our prime minister, his cabinet, MPs and senators will not merely applaud Zelenskyy, but will actually hear him.

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