

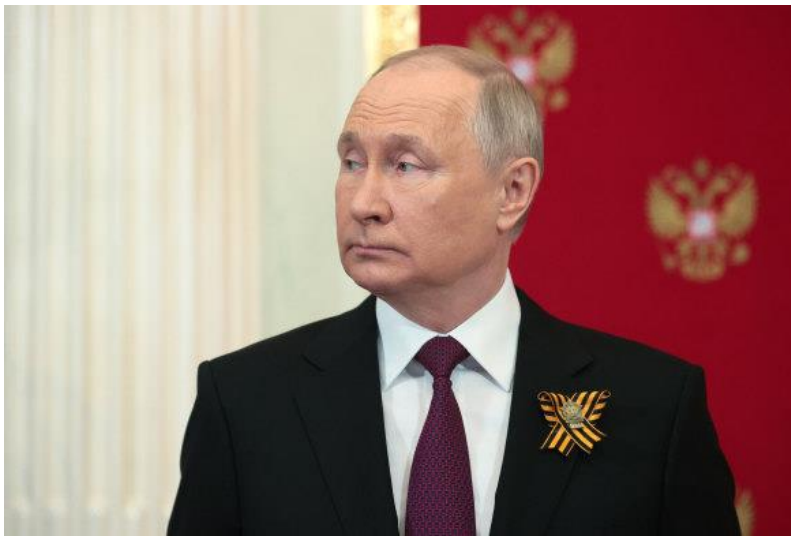
## ***My people's plea to Australia: Send 'Swiss Army knives'***



[Vasyl Myroshnychenko](#), Ukrainian ambassador, May 10, 2023

Last week the world simultaneously witnessed two events in Russia's war on Ukraine that are significant, including for Australia.

First, Vladimir Putin staged a fake drone assassination attempt on himself, according to the independent [Institute for the Study of War](#). This staged event – as Putin doesn't live in the Kremlin and there were firefighters in position – is a strange stunt to justify the further genocidal bombing of innocent Ukrainian civilians.



Vladimir Putin, facing defeat, is increasingly desperate and dangerous. *CREDIT: KREMLIN POOL PHOTO VIA AP*

On the same day, Russian forces shelled and fired missiles at Kherson, a port city of some 280,000 people, or about the size of Hobart. Some 23 people died, including in the aisles of their local supermarket, which is very much like a Coles or Woolies.

These two events – one bizarre and the other barbaric – show that the Russian despot is increasingly desperate and dangerous. This week, in one 24-hour period, Putin fired another 40 intercontinental ballistic missiles and 60 Iranian drones at Ukrainian civilian objects.

On the ground, Putin's military is literally bleeding to death, with between 100 and 500 casualties per day, including in a mad attempt to take Bakhmut, a place the size of Coffs Harbour with no operational value. Therefore, through airborne weapons, he's trying to maximise the death toll of regular Ukrainians.

It is clearer than ever [his illegal invasion of a peaceful neighbour](#) must be ended. It is the only way to protect the world from Putin's absolute disdain for international norms and human life. That requires

a strong alliance in support of Ukraine, which fights not only for itself, but for all who believe in liberal democratic values.



Ukraine wants Australian-made Hawkei four wheel drives for its fight against Russia.

That includes Australia. While New Zealand made further pledges last week, it is now seven months since the Australian government made new commitments to Ukraine's defence and future. Now that the government's Defence Strategic Review has been completed and there is an accurate picture of Australia's own needs, it's timely to make further military aid available to Ukraine.

This is especially important to support Ukraine's pending offensive to recover Russian-occupied territory. The offensive has been prepared for many months together with our allies. Some 70 Australian military personnel have, for example, been training Ukrainian troops in the UK.

For the offensive to succeed at the lowest cost in human life, it requires not only the bravery of Ukrainian forces, and the agility of its leadership, but overwhelming capability across all military dimensions. [Mick Ryan](#), a former Australian military leader who has met with Ukrainian commanders in Ukraine, noted as much on the pages of the *Herald*.

The large-scale movements of the offensive particularly require mobility; this is an aspect that the Australian military excels at. The Bushmasters have been making a great contribution in eastern Ukraine. Now, it is possible for Australia to offer the next-generation Hawkei protected fighting vehicle, which is manufactured in regional Victoria.

Described by some as a "Swiss Army knife" vehicle, the NASAMs-integrated Hawkei would, for example, provide the cutting-edge air defences to Ukrainian troops. It could also be used for intelligence and reconnaissance, command and control and other applications.

The good news is that there is an oversupply of Hawkeis right now. The bad news is that overly bureaucratic rationales are being offered for why the Hawkei cannot be used – and in fact tested – in Ukraine.

Further Bushmasters and armoured personnel carriers (APCs) would also be extremely useful for moving forward quickly to end the war fast, including as part of an overall plan we have suggested to the government that can give structure, continuity and surety for mutual benefit.

We are very grateful for the government's assurances of ongoing steadfast support, including the personal ones made by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles. I know he is committed to helping Ukraine.

The window is now. Ukrainian preparations are nearly complete. NATO and Ukraine's other allies are working well together through the Ramstein format for military aid co-operation. The number of modern air-defence and artillery systems and tanks that Ukraine has access to is reaching the necessary amounts. Russia is poised for defeat and its dictator for containment and irrelevancy.

We directly ask the Australian government to further support Ukraine in [finishing this terrible war](#), closing down Putin, and fostering a return to global peace, security and a rules-based order.