

## Opinion: As we mark 1000 days of Putin's war, Ukrainians know how to force him into peace



[Vasyl Myroshnychenko](#), Ukrainian ambassador, November 19, 2024

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It is timely, on the 1000th day of Russia's war against Ukraine, to mark the lessons learnt and to consider the latest developments, including the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States.

In the first respect, as I write – after 33 months of war – Russia has launched its largest-ever air assault on Ukrainian civilian targets. It sent 120 ballistic missiles and 90 drones, mostly provided by Iran, against Ukrainian cities and energy infrastructure. Ten people, including two children, were killed. The attempt before the northern winter, as it was last year, is to terrorise and freeze Ukrainians into submission and surrender; it will again prove futile, as Vladimir Putin continues to underestimate the resolve and resistance of the Ukrainian nation.



Firefighters put out flames following a Russian rocket attack in Odesa, Ukraine, on Sunday. *Credit: Ukrainian Emergency Service/AP*

This vicious assault occurred not more than 24 hours after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz appealed directly to Putin to suspend hostilities and to enter into peaceful negotiations. Putin responded with an act of utmost disregard not only for Ukrainian life but also for diplomacy.

As Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said after the attack: "This is the answer to all those who wanted to achieve something with Putin through conversations, phone calls, hugs and appeasement. Today, this 'dove of peace' sent Ukraine yet another barrage of Kinzhal and Kalibr missiles. That's Putin's diplomacy. His language is treachery."

Indeed, it reinforces one of the important lessons of the war. Every time Putin senses weakness on the part of the West in its support for Ukraine, he responds with deadly force. Whenever there is a vacuum of strength and purpose, the dictator in Moscow attempts to fill it with brutal violence. As part of this, the Kremlin has now entered into a truly evil alliance with the rogue regime in North Korea, which has deployed troops in the war.

While it will give them no satisfaction, Australia's leaders have been proven right: the war on Ukraine has significant implications for your own Indo-Pacific region. I welcome the stance that Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is to take at the G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, that the world's leading economies should more assertively act against Russian aggression.

As world events unfold, what Ukraine knows is that we must constantly assert our sovereignty, control our own destiny and grow our capability to defend ourselves and prosecute the war to a just conclusion. While we greatly appreciate the loyal support of our allies, including Australia's recent and unparalleled gift of 49 M1A1 Abrams tanks, we know we must secure our self-reliance. To that end, as the war shifts technologically, Ukraine is now the world's largest innovator and manufacturer of military aerial and naval drones and is well advanced in its development of three types of long-range ballistic missiles.

Increasing our domestic capabilities, including our own capacity to hit Russian air bases, ammunition dumps and other strategic sites, will be complemented if the current US administration confirms – as was reported on Monday – that it will allow Ukraine to use American-provided tactical missiles, ATACMs, against targets inside Russia. We would hope to receive related commitments from our British and French allies. Even then, the words matter less than the actual weapons, some of which, as President Zelensky has noted, are yet to arrive. The clock should not be left ticking on the important additional capacity to knock out the Russian military assets that launch the missions that kill innocent Ukrainians on a daily basis and that sustain the Russian war-making machine.

Such a move, in short, is a manifestation of the strength needed to force Putin to conclude the war. To that end, Zelensky late last week said it was certain that the war would end sooner under the policies of the Trump administration. We are optimistic that the Trump strategy for international affairs, founded on the principle of peace through strength, is aligned with our victory plan and how, in 2025, we aim to force Russia into peace.

While many uncertainties remain, as the [Herald's editorial](#) outlined on Monday, one thing is clear to me: Trump will never back down to the murderer in Moscow. This is an extremely important and undeniable feature of all future scenarios.

We further note the president-elect's appointment of Senator Marco Rubio as secretary of state and representative Mike Waltz as national security adviser. Both have supported strength in opposition to Russia's attempt to destroy the international security architecture in its favour.

After 1000 days of what Putin promised would be a three-day war, Ukraine has defied the odds on the battlefield and built strong alliances with like-minded, values-based countries, such as Australia. That period has taught Ukraine and the democratic world that it must act with strength and steely purpose to defend the global rules-based order. Russia must never be rewarded for its aggression against Ukraine – or the borders, safety and prosperity of other nations will not be secure.

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