

Ukraine needs **MORE** weapons to defeat Putin's evil

SINCE October 10, Russia's attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure have left 40 per cent of it wrecked. Putin cannot win on the battlefield, so he is resorting to terror. His aim is to freeze Ukraine.

With every attack, Ukrainians grow angrier and more determined. But the hard truth is we are on the brink of catastrophe. Without proper air defences there will be no water, sewerage or heating this winter; no bridges for transporting medicine, food and weapons to the front. Babies will be born in sub-zero temperatures and the elderly will die.

For months, military aid has been delivered by Europe and the U.S. with coffee spoons, for fear of escalation. But Putin perceives reticence as weakness, so escalation has followed — and, with it, daily civilian deaths and destruction. Errors of timing have cost Ukraine thousands of lives. On February 24 we met invaders with handguns and hand-held Javelin anti-tank weapons, provided by the Biden administration on the assumption that Kyiv would fall and resistance would disintegrate into guerrilla warfare. Kyiv stood and Russia's blitzkrieg failed.

Had Ukraine received heavy weapons and modern artillery when President Zelensky asked for them in 2021, nobody would have heard of Bucha. They eventually arrived when Ukraine



Resolute: President Zelensky in front of a screen image of Churchill

needed them in the east, but the delays cost a sea of mass graves in razed cities. Civilian casualties in Kharkiv and Mariupol have long surpassed those of London and Coventry in World War II. Ukraine asked to close its skies, but the U.S. and Nato didn't send planes. Some of us still remember Roosevelt's Lend-Lease, when Victory and Liberty Ships were built in days, and when young British women tied back their hair and assembled Sten guns in factories day and night. Our children know who fought together with us to

demolish fascism. Now, once again, we face total evil.

This war is fought on Ukrainian soil but it is fought for our shared future, in which dictators will not trample over democracies. It is fought with Ukrainian hands and on the Ukrainian steppes, but it is our shared war. Nothing emboldens a tyrant more than victory. Putin will balk at using nuclear weapons on Europe, not least because that is where his lover and their children live. But should Ukraine fall, his soldiers will march on. The only way to avoid escalation is to arm Ukraine fully and fast.

Seventy years of peace make it hard for Europeans to believe in another world war. But ask your grandparents: did they think a six-year war was on their doorstep in 1939? Now we know: when a vast military complex is in the hands of a maniac, rule nothing out. It is our shared task to stop Putin, while Ukrainians are still there to fight. At the moment, we are using Soviet-era anti-aircraft systems while thousands of modern weapons systems lie idle in the U.S. and Europe. We need them now. European leaders have pledged to support Ukraine 'to the end'. Let that end not be a wasteland, which will be all too easy to march across.

ANASTASIA PILIAVSKY, Cambridge,
and VITALY OPLACHKO (retired
Ukrainian Navy captain), Odessa.

Picture: ALAMY