

UK: Morning Star veers even more anti-Ukraine

Wednesday 26 July 2023, by [DENHAM Jim](#) (Date first published: 11 July 2023).

The *Morning Star* these days is increasingly open in its desire to see Ukraine defeated. While denouncing, and not without some reason, the new inclusion of cluster bombs in US military aid to Ukraine, it is actually much more excited about signs of backtracking within the US ruling class (“Cluster bombs grab the headlines, but backtracking may be underway too”, editorial, 10 July 2023).

“It is a sign of the difficulties the Nato strategy is encountering in Ukraine that a top-level US delegation of foreign policy figures recently met with senior Russian figures including Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

“Outgoing Council on Foreign Relations president Richard Haass, CFR figure and Georgetown University professor Charles Kupchan, and Kissinger Associates managing director Thomas Graham, went to discover ‘where there might be room for future negotiation, compromise, and diplomacy over ending the war. [...] As the existing US-Nato strategy loses both coherence and credibility, elements in the US are bound to seek a face-saving formula.”

There follows the obligatory denunciation of the EU (“too many of the governments in Europe are prepared to sacrifice their own economies to the initiatives of the US hegemon and that the EU bureaucracy is the most compromised in this respect”) before a final appeal to “elements in British politics, on both left and right, and especially in the labour movement who allowed themselves to be incorporated in the effort to settle the Ukraine question on the battlefield... to recover their critical faculties and a sense of where British and European interests lie.” “British and European interests”, you will note: no mention of the people of Ukraine and their right to defend themselves. If it wasn’t already obvious, it’s now obvious that the *Morning Star*, for all its occasional token criticisms of the invasion, wants Putin to prevail and holds the people of Ukraine in contempt.

Cluster munitions are horrible weapons that can be delivered by rockets, missiles, and aircraft. They open in mid-air and disperse dozens and even hundreds of smaller sub-munitions, also called bomblets, over an area the size of a city block.

Many sub-munitions fail to explode on impact, leaving duds that act like landmines, posing a deadly threat to civilians for years and even decades.

The 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions comprehensively prohibits these weapons because of their indiscriminate effects and the long-lasting danger that they pose. It requires the destruction of stockpiles and clearance of areas contaminated by cluster munitions.

Cluster

The Convention has been signed by 123 countries, including Britain — but not by the US, Russia or Ukraine.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February last year, Russian forces have used cluster munitions in attacks that have caused hundreds of civilian casualties and damaged or destroyed homes, hospitals, and schools. The Ukrainian military has not denied its own use of cluster munitions in the conflict and has long publicly asked to be supplied with them.

Biden's decision poses real issues for those of us on the left who support Ukraine's right to fight the invaders and to obtain the weapons it needs in order to do so.

Since World War 2, cluster bombs have been mainly used in invasions or to put down domestic rebellions. In nearly all those cases, they were dropped indiscriminately. In fact, very often the intent was to attack the civilian population as well as enemy combatants.

That is not the type of war Ukraine is fighting. The Ukraine government is fighting against an invasion and is unlikely to use cluster bombs indiscriminately amongst its own population.

But solidarity with Ukraine does not mean endorsing its military choices, any more than it means endorsing its government's domestic policies.

Meanwhile the *Morning Star* veers close to solidarity with the Russian forces, and without even mentioning their use of cluster bombs.

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