



How the American War Machine Ran Out of Gas

Description

The conflict in Ukraine shows that the “arsenal of democracy” is in a pitiable state, which may encourage Chinese aggression.

The arsenal of democracy is in a pitiable state, and so is America’s ability to sustain — or better yet, deter — a great-power war. That fragility didn’t develop overnight; it was the result of decades of deliberate policy choices. Those choices didn’t carry much penalty in a post-Cold War world defined by American dominance. As the conflict in Ukraine has shown, however, they are likely to prove far costlier in the years ahead.

The US once had an unbeatable defense industrial base. By the end of World War I, its shipyards [were building](#) more ships than the rest of the world combined. By the middle of World War II, America’s industrial output was four [times](#) Germany’s. The (perhaps apocryphal) quip of the German antitank gunner, explaining why he was overwhelmed by American forces — he ran out of shells before they ran out of tanks — illustrated how manufacturing superiority translated into military superiority.

by Hal Brands

Category

1. Army-Wars-Conflict Zones-Military Tech.
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