

This cartoon was published in early March 2022, just a few days after Russian troops invaded Ukraine.

Four Ukrainian soldiers are trying to raise their flag, with the help of two hands pulling on a rope attached to the flag pole. Those two hands are labeled "US/NATO".

This is a reinterpretation of the famous, Pulitzer-winning photo "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima", which was published during the Pacific War toward the end of World War II. That photo symbolized the tremendous effort it had taken the US Marine Corps to win that battle.

By echoing it in his cartoon, Mike Luckovich means to convey the idea that Ukraine will have to fight relentlessly and make a lot of sacrifices to keep the Russian army at bay.

He also implies that Ukraine can count on its western allies, America and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which is a military alliance that was created just a few years after the end of the Second World War, in the context of the early Cold War, and growing tensions with the USSR and its eastern allies (soon to form their own military alliance, the Warsaw Pact).

Indeed, in the cartoon, the Ukrainians are clearly struggling, and if the two hands were not helping them, they would almost certainly be unable to raise the flag.