

Defending Ukraine From Russian Imperialism?

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

In Bertrand Russell's [A History of Western Philosophy](#), the philosopher delivered his summarization of the writings of Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas thusly, "Before he begins to philosophize, he already knows the truth; it is declared in the Catholic faith. If he can find apparently rational arguments for some parts of the faith, so much the better; if he cannot, he need only fall back on revelation. The finding of arguments for a conclusion given in advance is not philosophy, but special pleading."

American foreign policy is determined in much the same fashion. Valuable objects are desired. Noble justifications are manufactured. Trusting populations are deceived. War is made. Empires do their special pleading on a global scale. For instance, the U.S. and its allies know precisely how they want to portray the Ukrainian conflict to their deluded Western populations. They need only apply the false flags and fashion the nefarious motives—like so many brush strokes—to the canvas of geopolitics.

Both the government and their corporate media vassals know their conclusions in advance. They are simple: Russia is the aggressor; America is the defender of freedom; and NATO is gallant security force that must counter Moscow's bellicosity. As the chief pleader in the construction of this fable, the Obama administration has compiled a litany of lies about the conflict that it disseminates almost daily to its press flacks.

One lie is that Putin has a feverishly expansionist foreign policy. No evidence exists for this claim, repeated *ad nauseum* in the West. The annexation of Crimea hardly seems like an example of such a policy. Crimeans voted overwhelmingly to secede from Ukraine. Russia was quite content with its long-term agreements with Kiev over the stationing of its Black Sea fleet at Sevastopol. It was the Kiev putsch that forced its hand.

There are plenty of signals that Putin has sent a stream of conscripts across the border to battle alongside the besieged "rebel separatists" in the East of Ukraine. But is this a crime of imperialism, sending soldiers to defend communities of ethnic peers under attack? Seems a difficult argument to make.

Moreover, Moscow has long stated that it wouldn't permit NATO bases on its border—a purely defensive stance. The West knows this, but that is precisely its plan. It also surely knew that by capsizing Kiev and installing a few Westernized technocrats, it would provoke Russia into taking Crimea rather than sacrifice its Black Sea outpost. This cynical baiting permitted Washington to frame its aggression as self-defense, and Moscow's self-defense as aggression. For context, consider how the U.S. might react if China suddenly toppled Mexico City using local drug lords with the aim of stationing hypersonic glide missiles in Tijuana. For once, Washington's contempt for diplomacy would be justified.

Few members of the Western mendacity machine discharge their pro-Imperial duties with more determination than the useless and fatuous rag, *The Economist*, an Atlanticist organ whose readership is rich in Wall Street mafiosi, executives, technocrats, and above all snobs. Below a typical cover dripping with venom toward Putin—this propaganda technique is called “the personalization of hatred.” It’s easier to sell.



Another lie is that we know Russia was behind the downing of MH17. Obama repeated this outlandish claim in the pulpit of the United Nations, no less. No proof exists, but plenty of circumstantial evidence seriously [undermines](#) the charge—missing air traffic controller (ATC) transcripts, the absence of satellite evidence of Buk anti-aircraft missile launchers in rebel territory, shelling traces on cockpit material, and Ukrainian ATC worker tweets pointing the finger at Kiev, and so on. Yet within hours of the crash, Barack Obama had told the world that Russian-backed separatists were responsible, and that Moscow must be punished. Nobody owns the narrative better than the USA.

A third lie is that the toppling of Viktor Yanukovych was a democratic uprising. Interesting how these always seem to occur wherever America has “strategic interests” in peril. Only then does the fever for representative government seize upon the minds of the rabble. Setting fantasy aside, the most reasonable conclusion, judging not least by admissions from Victoria Nuland and Obama [himself](#), is that the U.S. engineered a coup using fascist thugs in the vanguard, and false flag shootings to drive Yanukovych into hurried exile. Odd how it all occurred when Yanukovych, after prevaricating for a time, discarded his association agreement with the EU for a better Russian offer. (Note likewise how Syria erupted in violence immediately following Bashar al-Assad’s decision to reject a Western-backed Qatari pipeline deal in favor of an Iranian one. In both cases, the inciting incidents were examples of an imperial province defying the diktats of Rome.)

A fourth lie is that Western sanctions against Russia are merited, since they are based on Russian aggression. However, a State Department run by his rhetorical eminence, Secretary

of State John Kerry, would never phrase it so bluntly. Instead, we were [informed](#) that Russia was being chastened for “violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine,” and because it had worked to, “undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets.” One can just imagine the media flacks in speechless submission as this decree was sonorously recited from on high. None of this puffery removes the fact that the coup was a contemptuous move to bring NATO to the edges of Russia.

Bootlickers Anonymous

My, how the media lemmings fall in line with the official rhetoric. Dutiful to a fault, Western corporate media have performed their servile tasks with aplomb this month. A Thursday *Times* edition earlier in the month led with the headline, “U.S. and Europe working to end Ukraine fighting.” Saturday morning’s edition led with “U.S. faults Russia as combat spikes in East Ukraine.” A lead in the *Economist* put it rather more bluntly, “Putin’s war on the West.” Beneath the headline was a Photoshopped image of the Russian President, looking resolute, hand extended with puppet strings dangling from each digit. The op-ed pages of the *Washington Post* [teemed](#) with vitriol, continuing efforts to portray Obama as a latter-day Neville Chamberlain, arch appeaser of transparent tyrants. The “alarmingly passive” White House should be more concerned about how “to keep Vladimir Putin in line.”

This isn’t nuanced propaganda. It isn’t hedging or garden variety bias. It’s flat-out mendacity. Surely these publications have, as none of the rest of us does, the resources to know that the United States, trailed by its milquetoast EU lackeys, is trying to provoke a conflict between nuclear powers in eastern Ukraine. It either wants Russia to quit backing eastern rebels and permit NATO to establish bases on its border, or allow itself to be drawn into a resource-sapping proxy war. The end goal of the former is to divide Moscow from Europe. The goal of the latter is to vastly diminish the federation’s capacity to support its Shiite and Alawite allies in the Middle East, all of who stand in the way of Washington’s feverish dream of regional hegemony. Neither option holds much hope for residents of Donetsk, Luhansk and the surrounding *oblasts*, or provinces.

Yet the *Times* leads the Western world in disseminating, in every Starbuck’s in America, the folderol that our high-minded, hand-wringing, and munificent leaders are pursuing peace. This despite the unquenchable imperial ambitions of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who will not cease his provocations until he has resurrected the former glory of the Soviet Union, circa the Stalin era. How soon before the term “Hun” starts circulating? We’ve [already](#) got warmongering Senators releasing fake photos and cantankerously arguing that Obama is weak in the face of a world-historical threat.

Howitzers for Peace

Despite hysterical claims that Obama is a dove and tremulous fears that Putin will roll unopposed across the European mainland, the U.S. Congress [approved](#) new sanctions on Russia just before Christmas. The Orwellian, “Ukraine Freedom and Support Act” was intended to make Vladimir Putin, “pay for his assault on freedom and security in Europe,” according to co-author of the bill, Senator Larry Corker, the Republican who will soon chair the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

But what are sanctions without a little lethal aid thrown in? The bill also provided \$350

million in such aid to Kiev. That [means](#) “anti-tank and anti-armor weapons, crew weapons and ammunition, counter-artillery radars to identify and target artillery batteries, fire control, range finder, and optical and guidance and control equipment, tactical troop-operated surveillance drones, and secure command and communications equipment.”

Now President Obama, tired of the pretense of diplomacy, is said to be weighing a recommendation from the always-helpful Brookings Institute to speed some \$3 billion more in military aid to Kiev, [including](#) missiles, drones and armored Humvees. [Look](#) at this stern-faced collection of the pale and pious, spines erect as they advocate more slaughter in East Ukraine, where the U.N. has condemned both sides of the conflict—Western-backed Ukrainian government *and* the Russian-supported Novorossiia Army in the East—of indiscriminate shelling, which no doubt accounts for the hundreds of civilian death in just the last few weeks. A [million](#) have already fled to Russia as shelling has destroyed power and medical infrastructure, one of the first steps toward the impoverishment of a region. Couple that physical distress with the economic stress being implemented through Kiev’s agreement with the European Union.

The U.S. has also promised energy aid to Kiev to counter—as the media generally puts it—Russian threats to cut gas supplies. It is rarely noted that Kiev has refused to pay or even schedule payments on its \$2 billion past-due invoice on previous deliveries. This is no doubt a Western prescription or precondition of assistance.

Note the staggering disparities here. Kiev owes Russia \$2 billion in back payments. Vice President Joe Biden promises \$50 million in energy [relief](#), none of which will make it to Moscow. Then the president [weighs in](#) with \$350 million in military aid and contemplates a staggering \$3 billion more. He also [offers](#) a piddling \$7 million for humanitarian purposes alongside some 46 million in the same bill for border security and the like.

That’s some \$3.35 billion to further destroy a fractured Ukrainian society and \$57 million to help repair it. Forgive me for being obtuse, but how is this peacemaking? Yet Secretary of State Kerry, Senator John McCain and others in Congress have continuously cast the conflict in defensive terms, producing all manner of fabrication to support the conceit. In the next sound bite, NATO’s Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg [says](#) the alliance wants to double its Response Force to some 30,000 troops. France’s Hollande has called for Ukrainian entry into NATO.

Peace Before the Thaw?

Amid all this belligerent posturing, cameras crisply flashed when Angela Merkel and Francoise Hollande, Vladimir Putin and Petro Poroshenko concluded a [second](#) Minsk ceasefire agreement last week, implemented Sunday. It was perhaps a last ditch effort by a temporizing EU to prevent a vicious proxy war, or possibly more insincere diplomatic posturing to provide cover for Western aggression. In any event, Washington was notably absent, but surely it loomed large over the meetings. The core points of the accord include a withdrawal of heavy weapons behind the nominal buffer zone; amnesty for prisoners; withdrawal of foreign militias and disarming of illegal groups; decentralization of areas controlled by Novorossiia Armed Forces, supposedly in the form of constitutional reform; but also Ukrainian control of the Russian border by year’s end. Despite the agreement, the battle for the city of Debaltseve continued, with the rebels—or “terrorists” in Kiev parlance—finally emerging victorious yesterday and driving the Ukrainian Army into retreat.

Betting on peace isn't a smart call in this circumstance. Already radical [voices](#) have flared up in Kiev and also in rebel [circles](#) declaring their contempt for the agreement. None of the contracting parties in Minsk seem to have control over these groups. Poroshenko himself said he agreed to the first Minsk agreement to let his troops regroup, and he has [evidently](#) refused the stipulation of constitutional reform this time around. Nor has Washington shown any serious interest in implementing a peace plan. In fact, the financial outlay by the White House suggests this is no token conflict, but part of a larger imperial strategy that many pundits [claim](#) doesn't exist.

But it does. Look at Carter administration National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski's strategic master plan, laid out in his book [The Grand Chessboard](#), among others. Then see how that plan found its apostles in the neoconservative movement, re-articulated in Paul Wolfowitz's 1992 Defense Planning Guidance for the Clinton administration, and later in the Bush administration's madcap blueprint for reshaping the Middle East. As ever, the objective is full-spectrum dominance, an arcadia or nightmare, depending on which side of the imperial fence you find yourself.

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* Ronald Reagan, shameless Cold War propagandist and accomplished liar, gained big points with this ad peddling fear, of course. Fear sells well in the US, an ignorant, massively misinformed civilization.

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