

“Russia is Succeeding Wildly in its Objectives!”

Scott Ritter on the War in Ukraine

Full transcript available

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What follows is a segment of the show March 25, 2022 Global Research News Hour program. It featured Scott Ritter, a former U.S. Marine Corps Intelligence Officer and outspoken columnist and commentator elaborating on some of the points surrounding the Russian intervention in Ukraine that have gone under -mentioned in standard media narratives.

In this interview (complete transcript available below) Ritter spoke of the role of Nazis in Russia’s move, the fact that the Russians will soon achieve a victory, the role of Zelensky in his public demands, and the role sanctions ultimately played in Vladimir Putin’s favor.

Scott Ritter is a U.S. Marine Corps Intelligence officer, former UN Chief Weapons Inspector from 1991 -1998, and is currently engaged as a commentator and columnist on Huffington Post, consortiumnews and the American Conservative.

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Transcript – Interview with Scott Ritter, March 23, 2022

Global Research: The last time you were on the show, about a month before Russia authorized a military incursion into Ukraine you mentioned that if it did happen it would not be trying to occupy the country. It would be in your words “lancing the boil.” An attempt to demilitarize and destroy Ukraine as a modern nation-state. It seems based on mainstream media coverage that it is in fact trying to occupy the country. Millions of Ukrainians are literally leaving the country as we speak, and this is not an operation that would end in days. It’s now approaching a month. Several Russian soldiers have been killed. They seem to be bogged down outside of cities. Certainly NATO is not yet going to engage them it’s true. Russia isn’t succeeding, no doubt due in part, it seems, to the resistance of the Ukrainian soldiers.

So let me ask you if you've changed your mind about what you said two months ago. I mean, did you err in your assessment of the Russian logistics in the situation?

Scott Ritter: NO! I'm a hundred percent correct! I mean, the fact of the matter is Russia isn't occupying Ukraine!

Ukraine is a nation of forty one million people. Now, they say ten million of those are displaced, some internally some have fled. That still leaves thirty million people occupying expansive areas of terrain, including cities such as Kiev where you have over three million people. Russia came in with two hundred thousand troops. Military math just simply says no, you're not occupying Ukraine with two hundred thousand troops!

So, let's just stop that kind of nonsense right off the bat! This is politicized rhetoric, what people say, that Russia is trying to occu – because what you've done now is create a straw man that says therefore Russia has failed in its objectives!

Russia is succeeding wildly in its objectives! I don't have to speculate. Russia has stated what its objectives are! There are two military objectives that will lead to one political objective.

The first military objective is de-Nazification. That is, the absolute destruction, liquidation, annihilation of the neo-Nazi and ultra-right wing nationalist military formations and the political parties that sustain them, along with any legislation that empowers them.

For instance, legislation passed in January of 2021 which made Stepan Bandera, a right wing Nazi supporting, Jew killing Ukrainian nationalist, elevated him to the status of national hero! And then went around – they passed additional legislation which named streets after him, named boulevards, named places, raised monuments and then also brought back into the mainstream people of his ilk. Nazis, people who had enlisted and served in Waffen SS units during World War II. People who had served in *Einsatzgruppen* that killed Jews during World War II. These people are now rehabilitated, and their names are put up in places of honour!

The Russians want to eliminate this. They want legislation passed in Ukraine which de-legitimizes Nazis instead of praising Nazis.

The Russians are doing very well on this front! They're in the process of finishing off the last Nazi defenders of the city of Mariupol. This is where the Azov battalion, now a regiment, was headquartered. These are right-wing neo-Nazi extremists, many of whom have swastikas and other Nazi symbols tattooed on their bodies. This is where they tormented the Russian speaking population for the past eight years! They are now in the process of being killed, or captured by the Russians.



That is what de-Nazification looks like. Similar de-Nazification processes are taking place elsewhere in Ukraine anywhere where the Russian forces find a neo-Nazi national unit of Ukrainian army. So anybody who thinks that the Nazis are doing well against the Russians, think again!

The second is de-militarization! This means that Russia is going to dismantle the NATO army that had been built in Ukraine. A lot of people don't realize that there were 260,000 active duty Ukrainian military personnel, most of whom have been trained by NATO in the past eight years to NATO standards. That means that Ukrainian military units were inter-operable with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. You could take a battalion, a NATO trained Ukrainian troops, and place them under NATO command and they would perform well.

This isn't theory. This is reality. Ukrainian troops participated in numerous NATO-led operations around the world and in Europe. So, Russia has said that this – the existence of a NATO proxy-force is unacceptable, and that its goal is to de-militarize Ukraine.

Now, this could be done peacefully with Ukrainian soldiers staying in their barracks, while the Russians dismantled and removed from Ukraine all NATO provided equipment and oversaw the reorganization of Ukrainian military in a manner which made it no longer a de-facto proxy of NATO. Or if they wanted to resist, Russia would destroy them.

Now Russia came in a little soft handed early on. They didn't bomb the barracks. They went out of their way to avoid unnecessary deaths among the Ukrainian troops. But the Ukrainians decided to fight!

Lets be clear here. This is a big army: 260,000 active duty, 310,000 reservists and security forces. Normally in the military if you want to launch an offensive operation, you want a three-to-one advantage. That is, for every single defender, you want three of your own troops. Russia went into Ukraine with a three to one disadvantage! Meaning for every single Russian, there were three Ukrainians. And yet, Russia is winning on the battlefield. They are

advancing at a rate faster than the German army advanced during the Blitzkrieg of World War II! They are engaging the Ukrainian forces on large scale combat operations the likes of which have not been seen in Europe since World War II. And they are prevailing.

They are in the process of entrapping 60-100 thousand Ukrainian troops in Eastern Ukraine, one of the largest bedlam development cauldron type operations seen since World War II. They are doing the same around Kiev. And they are doing the same in the area of Odessa.

A lot of people will look at video-tapes that have been put out on YouTube and elsewhere showing destroyed Russian columns, dead Russian troops. This is war on a scale that people can't imagine! It's well beyond anything the United States and its allies undertook in Iraq and Afghanistan. When you have war on this level, there will be tactical setbacks.

Ukrainians who are extremely hard fighting, well-trained, well equipped groups are capable of limited combat success. And they are enjoying limited combat success on the battlefield. There is multiple occasions where they had defeated the Russians. Where they have inflicted serious casualties on the Russians. But from an operational and strategic standpoint, the Russians are winning and winning decisively. Ukrainians cannot sustain their defence. They lacked a logistical depth. They're running out of gas. They're running out of ammunition. They're running out of food and water. Their troops are worn out, worn down, and are rapidly disintegrating as we speak. As we speak!

The Ukrainian defences in Eastern Ukraine are collapsing. They're starting a panicked retreat westward. They're going to be cut off by the Russians, and probably killed by the Russians if they don't surrender to the Russians. So no, the Russians are doing quite well. People are...

GR: Did you say the Russians, I mean, put on your military and analyst glasses for a moment. Is Russia going to prevail? And how far away is the victory? IS it weeks away, or...

SR: Russia will prevail. And I believe that Russia is closer to victory than they were starting this conflict. Meaning that Ukrainian military is collapsing as we speak, and the ability for Ukraine to sustain large scale resistance is diminishing if not being eliminated.

This war's over! It's all over but the shouting! That's all just a statement of fact.

GR: If you're right about this, then what do you make of the role of Zelensky in this situation? Because he's been speaking to governments around the world, and he's a national hero and everything. But does he think that he can still win this? The forces will, you know, "close the sky" and all the other things? Or is there something more going on in terms of seeing the writing on the wall as it were?

SR: Well, Zelensky knows what the outcome of this will be.

Think about it for a second. Every time he says, "if you just close the skies, if you just give us a no-fly-zone, we can win!" But what's he really saying? That the Russians are winning the war! Okay? I mean there's no other way of interpreting that!

GR: Yeah...

SR: He's not saying, "hey, don't worry about not closing the skies because we're doing pretty well on the battlefield. We're going to win this thing!" He's saying that if you don't

close the skies, we have lost this war!

GR: Ahhh! Okay...

SR: And that's exactly what's happening. Because NATO is not going to close down the skies, and Ukraine is losing the war. He knows this. His generals know this. His troops know this. This is why at every single chance, everybody involved in the Ukrainian resistance is demanding a no-fly-zone because without this, they're doomed, and they know it!

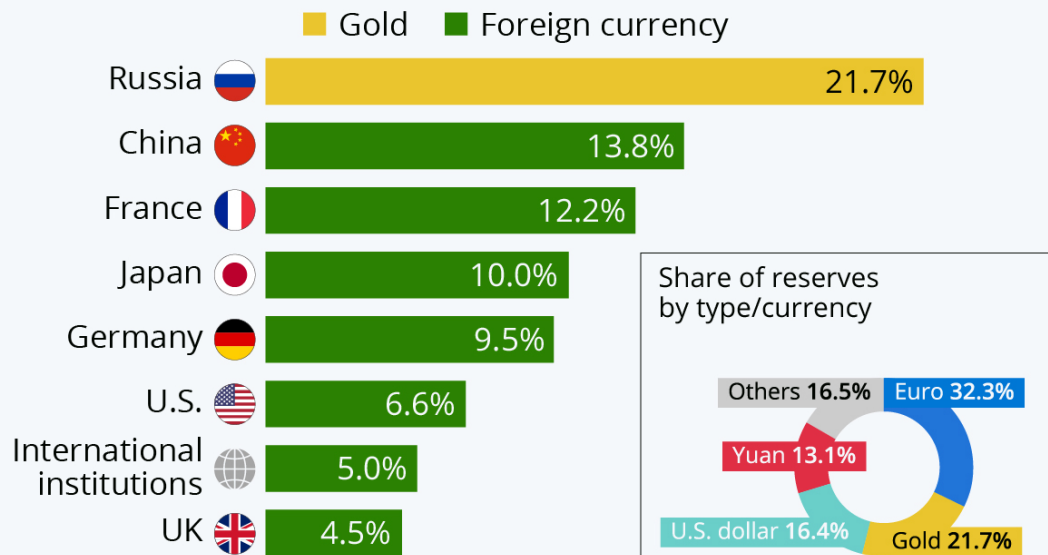
GR: What about the sanctions aspect of it. I mean, are they going to wear down the Russian public over time? Or will the boomerang effect of the sanctions wear down the US, Canada, and the EU first? How do you see that the sanctions aspect playing out?

SR: Well, let's look at this strategically for a second. Joe Biden looked Vladimir Putin in the eye last June and threatened him with massive sanctions should he act on Ukraine. Sanctions like you've never seen before! Alright, now Putin as soon as he got done changing his pants and everything because I'm sure that just scared him to death. He had months to sit down with his inner circle and say, "how do we prepare for this?" Nothing the U.S. and its allies are doing has taken the Russians by surprise. NOTHING! They anticipated EVERYTHING! And they have a plan in response.

As for instance today, when the sanctions came out, remember Russia had 650 billion dollars in sovereign fund in reserves – foreign reserves, gold reserves – and half of that was dispersed in banks around the world. And people went, "why would you do that?" Because the West is going to freeze them, which the West did. And the answer is because Russia was setting the West up for a trap, which was sprung today.

Who Holds Russia's Central Bank Reserves?

Largest holders of Russian central bank foreign currency and gold reserves, by location*



* as of Jun 30, 2021

Source: Central Bank of Russia



statista

Today, Vladimir Putin gave a speech in which he said the following: "Because you froze our assets illegally, you have defaulted on every obligation you have in regard to Russia. Therefore, Russia will not only never again accept foreign currency, you know, for payment for Russian services or goods, we are going to demand from this moment on that all nations that are on the non-friendly list that is everybody who sanctioned them must now pay in Russian Rubles for natural gas.

Okay Europe cannot survive! One of the big things that came out of this economic sanctions was that the United States had been promising Europe, "Don't worry about Russia gas! We have a plan B! We will be able to bring together resources and make sure that you have the gas you need!"

Well, there is no plan B. There aren't the resources available. There's not enough gas. And Europe will shut down immediately.

Now, Russia hasn't shut off the pipelines. Because Russia was laying a trap. Russia now has confirmed that Europe is addicted. Germany has admitted right now that if Russia turns off the gas pipelines, Germany won't have any gas for next winter. It's over! All she wrote! Their economy will collapse! The French economy will collapse! Every economy in Europe will collapse! And there will be a rebounding effect in Canada and the United States.

So now, Europe is in the difficult position of if they want to keep the gas going, that they must keep going in order to survive, they've got to pay in Russian Rubles. Take a look at what's happened to the Russian Ruble just today! IT's rebounding! Everbody said the Ruble is collapsing. No! It's the dollar that's collapsing right now! Because the Russians have laid a trap. They set the trap. And this is just the first of many! The Russians have many other traps out there that they have set, and they can initiate at a time of their choosing. So, the notion that the sanctions...

Look, the sanctions are hurting Russians right now. There's no doubt about that. But the sanctions also liberated Putin for the first time since he took power to be able to divorce Russia from the Western economy. And in doing so, eliminate in totality any leverage the West had over Russian domestic political affairs. The West used to be able to threaten sanctions. And the Russians are saying, "gosh, maybe we don't want to do that so we'll..." The West no longer has – the West has sanctioned everything. It's over!

Putin has said, "thank you very much! Thank you! You've done me a big favour! The first thing you've done by freezing all the assets is that you have disembowelled the oligarchs!" You know that corrupt class of Russian businessmen that came to life during Boris Yeltsin's ten years as a president. That Putin inherited!

Putin was able to neuter them politically by telling them that if they get involved in domestic politics he will destroy them, and he did. Several of them have been forced to flee to London and elsewhere because Putin will put them in jail for life. The others that remained were able to retain their riches and continue to get rich, but they were not allowed to be involved in politics. But their existence has always been a thorn in Putin's side. He doesn't like them. He doesn't want them. And he hates the fact that he needed them. But now that the West has gone in and seized all their assets, they're bankrupt and broke! And guess what! Putin doesn't want them now! He's told them to get the heck out of Russia! HE has no use for them! Go live where you wanted to live over there! You're no longer welcome here!

The other thing that's happened is about 20 percent of the Russian population that was relatively apolitical, who tended to vote for the status quo, meaning vote for Putin would have turned on Putin had Putin initiated a divorce with the West. These are the Russian middle class whose economic well-being had become so intertwined with the West that there could be no thought of breaking with the West. If any move by Russia, by Putin, by anybody, to do so would have caused a backlash that any democracy, and Russia is a democracy, would have cost the incumbent the vote. Putin would have been voted out.

But now that the West has sanctioned Russia, it is not Putin that has made the divorce, it's the West! Putin is now applying shock therapy to these people, seeking to rapidly reinstate their middle class status, by pivoting eastward to China, to India, to elsewhere, to recapitalize the Russian economy. And now that he has made gas based upon the Ruble standard, those Rubles that these Russians had in the bank that last week were worth nothing, they're worth twice as much today! And this time next week, they'll double in value again! And the middle class is going to forget the West ever existed.

GR: Amazing analysis! Scott Ritter, it's been a pleasure hearing your unique take on this situation. We thank you so much for your time!

SR: Thanks for having me!

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