

The USA Caused the War in Ukraine, and Only the USA Can End It

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While United States infrastructure has been rotting away and entire cities^[1] don't even have access to clean drinking water, the Biden Administration and the entire Democratic Party elite have given over \$54 billion in military aid^[2] to Ukraine from February, 2022 to the present.

Reading mainstream news, we're led to believe that this invasion was unprovoked^[3]; unpredictable; and a story of a rogue^[4] authoritarian^[5] state preying on a weaker, open, democratic society, fighting for the future of democracy in the Western world^[6].

We're led to believe that this war started in February with Russia's invasion. In reality, this war has been going on for 8 years, fueled by American support. This support has largely been funneled to neo-Nazis and ultranationalist elements fundamentally opposed to democracy.

So, what's the real story? Could this crisis have been predicted, and if so, avoided?

In 1989, during negotiations with the Soviet Union on the reunification of Germany, an informal agreement was made that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would not expand eastward—"Not one inch".^[7] This was acknowledged by both the US and NATO, which now assert that because they never put this agreement in writing, it is not binding.^[8] Therefore, they claim NATO has done nothing wrong and nothing to provoke a war with Russia. But the Russian perspective is very different.

To truly understand Russia's motivations and have any hope of achieving peace, we must grapple with the Russian perspective *on its own terms*. It does no good to dismiss history

and context while claiming Russian irrationality. We must understand the historical and geopolitical context to know which forces are at play so we can chart a realistic pathway to peace.



Michail Gorbachev discussing German unification with Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Helmut Kohl in Russia, July 15, 1990. (Photo: Bundesbildstelle / Presseund Informationsamt der Bundesregierung)

When the USSR dissolved in 1991, NATO reaffirmed its commitment against eastward expansion into former Soviet republics. Newly independent Ukraine made an agreement with Russia that they could maintain their military base in Crimea^[9] where their Black Sea Fleet is stationed. Ukraine also pledged that they would maintain their neutral stance and never join the Western bloc. Three years later in 1994, Georgia would become a founding member of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

After Ukraine's independence in 1991, Crimea's parliament declared independence^[10] from Ukraine, and ratified a new Constitution which was subsequently rejected by Kiev. Eventually, a consensus was reached in which the Autonomous Republic of Crimea was taken back under Kiev's jurisdiction, while still granting autonomy to Crimea and recognizing the Crimean Constitution drafted in 1992.



A woman with a banner saying “Black Sea Fleet, Sevastopol and Crimea are a unified whole”, 1992
(Photo: Sputnik)

In 1997, Russia and NATO signed^[11] the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security. For a brief moment, it seemed that NATO was interested in working together on a mutual security arrangement in Europe including and cooperating with Russia.

These hopes were dashed in 1999, when NATO invaded and bombed the former Yugoslavia, targeting pro-Russian forces and ethnic Serbs resulting in the deaths of thousands of civilians^[12] in the space of weeks—even bombing the Chinese embassy in Belgrade^[13]. Russia condemned these actions at the UN in the strongest possible terms. This marked the end of potentially meaningful cooperation between NATO and the Russian Federation for the foreseeable future.

NATO took this opportunity to antagonize Russia further, aggressively working to expand into Eastern Europe. Between 1999 and 2004, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined NATO^[14].

In 2004, a week after Ukrainian president Victor Yanukovich was elected, the West organized^[15] a “color revolution” appropriately known as the “Orange Revolution” which removed him from power and installed Victor Yushchenko; an opposition leader who almost immediately pushed for EU and NATO membership, and applied for loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Four years later in 2008, NATO extended a “Membership Action Plan” to both Georgia and Ukraine, officially setting them on the course to eventual NATO membership. As Putin made it clear at the time, extending NATO membership to these two countries on Russia’s borders “would be taken in Russia as a direct threat to the security of our country.”^[16]

Later in 2008, John McCain and other US politicians traveled to Georgia to incite the right-

wing government to violence against the majority-Russian breakaway state of South Ossetia. Thousands of refugees began fleeing over the border into Russia, creating a humanitarian crisis.^[17]

After repeated warnings^[18] Russia responded with military force, as US policy makers predicted. This is characterized in mainstream Western media as a Russian “invasion” of Georgia^[19], setting the precedent for how the West’s propaganda narrative would play out a few years later in Crimea.

In 2009, Albania and Croatia joined NATO. Then in 2010, Ukraine conducted war games with NATO in the Black Sea, turning a new page for overt military cooperation between Ukraine and the West, and outraging the Russians, to whom Ukraine had promised to remain neutral.

Later that year, Victor Yanukovych once again won the presidency in Ukraine. Shortly afterwards he reached out to the IMF for the loan requested by the previous administration, which had failed to come to an agreement with the IMF over the conditions of the loan. At the same time, Yanukovych asked for Ukraine to be considered for membership in the EU.

Over the subsequent three years, President Yanukovych became increasingly frustrated as the EU rejected his application and the IMF wouldn’t budge on its conditions. The conditions included:

- Selling off state-owned businesses and assets
- Ending pension payments
- Cutting Social Security
- Lowering the minimum wage
- Raising the retirement age
- Cutting education and healthcare funding and benefits
- Eliminating collective bargaining
- Allowing Western firms to exploit Ukraine’s resources and labor

While these terms are not unique (the IMF generally insists on these conditions when providing loans to developing countries^[20]), Yanukovych viewed them as a total abdication of Ukrainian national sovereignty, which would have doomed the average Ukrainian to a life of misery and poverty for the benefit of multinational corporations.^[21] Previous IMF loans had also wreaked havoc on the national economy.^[22] After years of negotiations, Yanukovych ultimately refused the IMF “structural adjustment package”, once again setting the stage for Western-led regime change in Ukraine.

Over the coming months, US money began pouring into Ukraine through NGOs^[23] like the National Endowment for Democracy^{[24] [25] [26]}. These funds financed opposition groups and worked to destabilize the country. Over \$5 billion^[27] was funneled into these regime-change efforts by the State Department and USAID alone.

In early 2014, a US-led coalition of western countries began an operation meant to depose Yanukovych by any means necessary. Working from the same playbook they used in

Ukraine in 2004, they organized^[28] a “color revolution” by capitalizing on preexisting grievances, utilizing nationalist extremist forces to destabilize the country.

As Yanukovych’s brutal overreaction to the Euromaidan protests escalated, far-right groups funded, armed, and promoted^[29] by the West began fighting back. They seized government buildings, police stations, and even military bases. These forces drove tanks through Kiev emblazoned with Nazi symbols, and forced Yanukovych to flee via helicopter.^{[30] [31]}

As the Maidan protests in Kiev sent the President into exile, anti-Maidan protests began to escalate around the country^[32], especially in majority-Russian speaking areas^[33]. In May, 40 anti-Maidan protesters—mostly ethnic Russians—were burned alive^[34] in a trade union hall in Odessa by neo-Nazis. Nazis shot people as they were jumping from windows to escape the flames, and survivors were beaten to death in the streets.



Then Vice-President Joe Biden shaking hands with Oleh Tyahnybok

As the new coup government was being installed, Joe Biden, John McCain, Victoria Nuland and others traveled to Kiev and shook hands with neo-Nazis who led the movement to overthrow the democratically elected president. These leaders included the likes of Oleh Tyahnybok^[35], head of the antisemitic neo-Nazi political party Svoboda (formerly the *Social-Nationalist Party of Ukraine*), who was awarded the Hero of Ukraine medal for his exemplary role in overthrowing the government, and the founder of the Azov Battalion, Andriy Biletsky, who said in 2010 that the Ukrainian nation’s mission is to “lead the white races of the world in a final crusade against Semite-led Untermenshen [inferior races].” Weeks later, Victoria Nuland (now Biden’s Under Secretary of State) was exposed in a leaked phone call^[36] as having approved appointments to the new coup government.



John McCain on stage in Kiev with neo-Nazi leader Oleh Tyahnybok

After the coup, the new government immediately accepted the IMF loan^[37] which Yanukovych had vetoed, and began massive auctions of state assets.^{[38] [39]} Dozens of openly neo-Nazi and ultranationalist paramilitary organizations were subsequently inducted into the Ukrainian Armed Forces with official recognition, state funding, and arms^{[40] [41]}. The most notorious of these include Azov, Aidar, Svoboda, Right Sector, Misanthropic Division, National Corps, C14, Ethnic National Union, and Patriots of Ukraine.

Over the coming months, civil unrest intensified as protests^{[42] [43]} against the Maidan coup and the new Kiev government in the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine continued. Neo-Nazi and ultranationalist militias began shelling civilian areas of the Donbass region, which is majority Russian-speaking.



Aftermath of the shelling of the central Donetsk bus station, 2015 (Photo: Euromaidan)

In conjunction with the protests against the coup in Kiev led by a people's front of socialists, communists, and other civil society groups, citizens militias which were formed to defend the Donbass region after the coup in Kiev seized government buildings, and declared independence from Ukraine. Referendums were held shortly afterwards with nearly 90% voting to secede from Ukraine.

Following these referendums, the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics were officially founded. Their stated aims included the right of self-determination and public ownership of the means of production. In the coming years, many key industries and properties which had been privatized by corrupt oligarchs after the Soviet era were nationalized without compensation.^{[44] [45] [46] [47] [48]}

Representatives of the newly declared DPR & LPR asked Russia to recognize them as independent republics and intervene to protect them from Kiev. Despite support from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, Russia declined this request, while recognizing their referendums to leave Ukraine as legitimate.^[49]

Kiev then moved to terminate pension and social security payments to all those living in the Donbass region.^[50] In response, the DPR used property seized from corrupt billionaires to pay people's pensions and Social Security payments in both the DPR & LPR.

After the coup d'état in Kiev, the people of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea dug in to defend themselves from the ultranationalists who took power in Kiev.^[51] Citizens militias and—allegedly—a few dozen Russian troops who were stationed at their existing military base in Crimea, seized government buildings and occupied military bases across Crimea without firing a single shot.

Shortly after this, a referendum was held in Crimea in which 89.5% of citizens on voting lists cast their votes, with 97% voting to rejoin Russia.^[52] As with the previous referendums in the DPR and LPR, this referendum was condemned by the Western powers, who refused to send international observers to oversee the referendum.^[53]

The new government in Kiev was busy. They banned books by Russian and Soviet authors, and outlawed Russian music in the media.^[54] The new government developed a curriculum for public schools which demonized their shared Soviet history, erased the history of resistance to fascism and glorified figures like Stepan Bandera and groups like his Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UAP) while white-washing, minimizing, or omitting their crimes—both of these explicitly antisemitic organizations collaborated with the Nazis while they were occupying Ukraine, and actively participated in carrying out some of the most egregious crimes of the Holocaust.^[55]

In May of 2015 Ukraine banned socialist symbols of any kind, with a corresponding 5-year prison sentence for sharing a socialist image or even singing the Internationale (with a 10-year mandatory sentence for members of any socialist organization doing the same).^[56] While this law also officially banned Nazi symbols, a corresponding law passed the same day glorified Nazi-collaborating antisemitic organizations like the OUN and UAP as "independence fighters", and criminalized any criticism of their past misdeeds. Although the law also banned "Nazi symbols" like the Swastika, this aspect of the law has gone basically

unenforced. Neo-Nazi symbols such as the Wolfsangel—used by the SS—and the Black Sun—created by SS leader Heinrich Himmler—remain the official symbols for groups such as Azov. Any positive reference to the Soviet period was made illegal, and dozens of Soviet monuments honoring the heroic sacrifices endured by the Red Army in fighting the scourge of fascism in Ukraine were vandalized, dismantled, and destroyed.^[57] Street names were even renamed if they were deemed to be too Russian-sounding.^[58]



Statue of Lenin dismantled and destroyed, Odessa region, 2021

As if this wasn't overtly fascistic enough, the new government outlawed celebration of the Day of Victory Against Fascism^[59] and eventually criminalized the Communist Party of Ukraine^[60], forcing it underground and seizing its assets.^[61] It also removed Russian as the second official language of Ukraine, ended instruction in schools in the Russian language, eliminated Russian language courses, and began mandating that all workers in the public sector speak Ukrainian, even in majority-Russian speaking regions.

Ukraine declared a national holiday to celebrate the UAP^[62], the organization responsible for the brutal massacre of as many as 300,000 Poles^[63] in eastern Ukraine during WWII. The annual celebrations include parades featuring torchlit Nazi demonstrations and shouts of "Return Ukraine to Ukrainians!"—a UAP slogan.^[64]

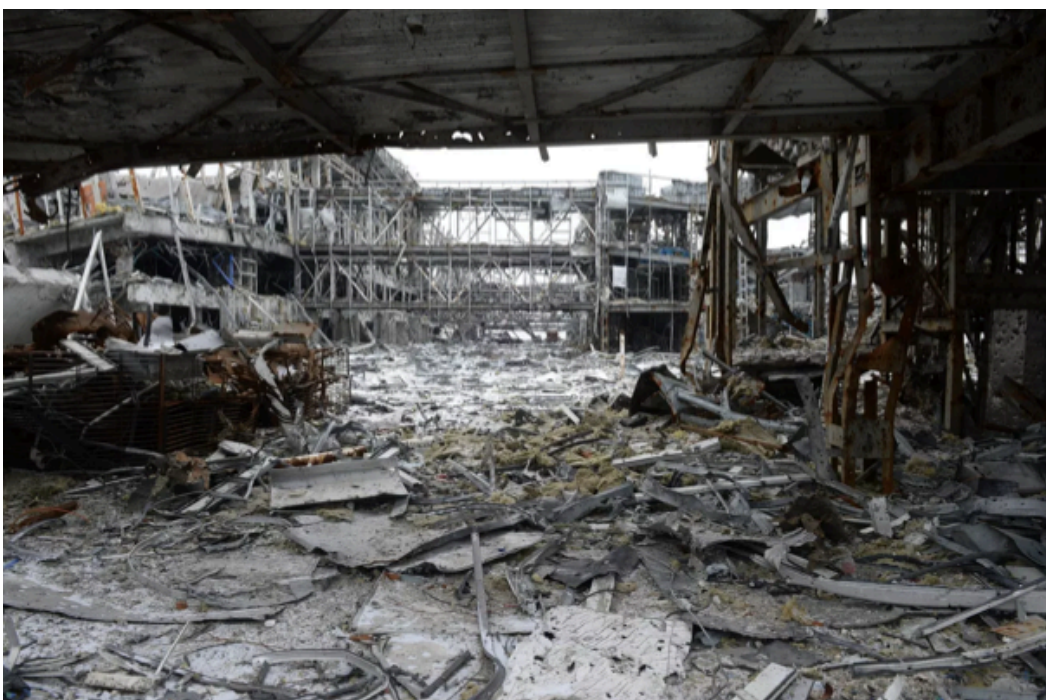
Ukraine moved to ban dozens of opposition political parties, and arrested the heads of the Youth Communist League and the Anti-Fascist Union, who may both face the death penalty for "spreading propaganda".^[65]

In addition to this, the Azov Battalion opened a summer camp for children in 2014 which includes military training in combat scenarios, while indoctrinating them in anti-Russian ultranationalism and neo-Nazi ideology. The camp operates at state expense.^[66]

Azov stands out among many of the most extreme ultranationalist and neo-Nazi groups folded into Ukraine's armed forces after 2014. After the invaluable role they played in overthrowing the government in hand-to-hand combat with Yanukovich's security forces, many Azov leaders were given high honors by the new government they helped install. Some were featured on national TV and even traveled around the world on speaking tours. Azov would grow into an international "movement", spreading its ideology overseas^[67] and recruiting white-supremacists from all over the world to support the Azov "movement" in Ukraine and abroad.^{[68] [69] [70]} This group's brutal human rights record^[71] led the US Congress to finally vote to cease funding to Azov in June of 2015, only to quietly resume funding and arming them just months later.^[72]

While daily shelling of the Donbass region continued, diplomats from Ukraine, the DPR, the LPR, and Russia were meeting behind the scenes to negotiate a ceasefire. When the Ukrainian government advanced a "special law" in August of that year to facilitate implementation of the ceasefire agreement being drafted in Minsk, Svoboda and other far-right groups led violent clashes which left three Ukrainian soldiers dead and dozens wounded.^[73]

Despite the efforts of the far-right to sabotage peace talks, the Minsk Agreement was finally signed by both parties in September, 2015. It called for a ceasefire in the Donbass and Ukrainian recognition of the DPR & LPR as autonomous regions within Ukraine. Less than 48 hours later, top officials in the Obama Administration issued provocative threats and accusations against Russia and Ukraine to evade implementation and violate the ceasefire.^[74] At the same time, the CIA began covertly training an armed insurgency on the Donbass front in eastern Ukraine after Russia annexed Crimea.^[75] Meanwhile, Kiev continued its intense bombing campaign of the Donbass region. Refugees began fleeing to Russia by the tens of thousands.^[76]



Donetsk Airport after shelling by neo-Nazi militants, January 21, 2015 (Photo: Sputnik)

In 2017, Montenegro joined NATO. Two years later, in 2019, Volodimir Zelensky was elected President of Ukraine on a platform of peace and reconciliation.^[77] He spoke Russian on the campaign trail and spoke of the brotherhood and affinity between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples. However, these dreams were short-lived, as the reality of the political situation forced Zelensky into increasing concessions to the far-right.^{[78] [79]}

In May of 2021, Ukraine recklessly hosted the biggest NATO war games in years^[80] in eastern Ukraine near the front of the ongoing war in the Donbass. 20 Western countries joined in these war games. This was just a month after Kiev petitioned NATO to accelerate its “Membership Action Plan”.^[81]

In August of 2021, Zelensky began engaging in peace talks with Russia over the war in the Donbass. Neo-Nazis staged an armed riot in Kiev, trashing the Presidential office building.^[82] Luckily, Zelensky wasn’t there that day, but the message was received all the same: *No negotiations. No compromise.*

A month later, in September, Ukraine again hosted NATO war games^[83] near the front in the Donbass. Again, 20 countries took part in these war games, in a wildly provocative escalation.

Zelensky’s administration continued peace talks with Russia through January 2022. At a meeting with Russian counterparts, Ukraine’s representative declared that “the fulfillment of the Minsk Agreement means the country’s destruction”.^[84]

Shortly after that, Kiev massively increased its shelling^[85] of the Donbass and began massing troops, signaling an upcoming military offensive. On February 24th, The DPR & LPR again appealed to Russia asking for military assistance to repel the coming offensive by Kiev.^[86] This time, with a groundswell of support for the Communist Party, Russia recognized the DPR & LPR as independent republics, and began the “special operation” to neutralize neo-Nazi forces, officially siding with the Donbass in Ukraine’s ongoing civil war. As in Syria, Russia was now embroiled in a full-blown proxy war with the USA and its NATO lackeys.

Over the next two months, Zelensky began earnest negotiations to end the war. He wanted collective security guarantees not just from the West, but from Russia. In exchange, he promised to stop seeking membership in NATO.^[87]

These talks were cut short by threats by far-right groups in Ukraine—threats which were echoed by outlets like the New York Times, who said that Zelensky “would be taking extreme political risks even to entertain a peace deal” with Russia, as his government “could be rocked and overthrown” by far-right groups if he “agrees to a peace deal that in their minds gives too much to Moscow.”^[88] Just days after Zelensky attended peace talks in Belarus in early April, Boris Johnson visited Kiev and “urged” Zelensky not to negotiate with Putin.^[89]

Russia claims that it is “demilitarizing and denazifying” Ukraine.^[90] Western media calls this “absurd Russian propaganda.” Our TV and print media refer to Nazi units like the Azov

Battalion as “freedom fighters.” We are told they are fighting for democracy and the future of the Western world. Our media insists that Russia is invading Ukraine because it’s an expansionist, imperialist power led by an autocrat—having nothing to do with the US, NATO, or Kiev’s prior actions. We’re told that Putin is simply unreasonable and deranged. Our media has absolutely failed us (while performing its intended function—namely, manufacturing consent for war—admirably).

So what does all this mean for the anti-war left?

First, let’s get the facts straight: This war has been going on for 8 years. 14,000 were killed and as many as 39,000 wounded *before 2022* according to the UN^[91], one-third of which were civilians. After the coup in Kiev in 2014, Ukraine has become a puppet state of U.S. influence in the region. The US has been funneling them arms, training their armies, and influencing the privatization of their industry and resources for 8 years^[92] ^[93]. Far-right ultranationalist and neo-Nazi ideology has become alarmingly mainstream in Ukraine, and the state has tolerated and supported these groups and tendencies.^[94]

Russia *does* have legitimate grievances in Ukraine which we would do well to consider. Their actions have been logical and predictable. In fact, the CIA predicted all of it. In 2008, CIA director William Burns said, in a classified document released by Wikileaks^[95]:

“Ukraine and Georgia’s NATO aspirations not only touch a raw nerve in Russia, they engender serious concerns about the consequences for stability in the region. Not only does Russia perceive encirclement, and efforts to undermine Russia’s influence in the region, but it also fears unpredictable and uncontrolled consequences which would seriously affect Russian security interests.

...A radical new expansion of NATO may bring about a serious political-military shift that will inevitably affect the security interests of Russia.

...Foreign Minister Lavrov stressed that Russia had to view continued eastward expansion of NATO, particularly to Ukraine and Georgia, as a potential military threat.

...While Russia might believe statements from the West that NATO was not directed against Russia, when one looked at recent military activities in NATO countries (establishment of forward operating locations, etc.) they had to be evaluated not by stated intentions but by potential.

...In Ukraine, these [strategic policy considerations] include fears that the issue could potentially split the country in two, leading to violence or even, some claim, civil war, which would force Russia to decide whether or not to intervene.”

So far, more than \$54 billion has gone to support the proxy war in Ukraine. Adjusted for inflation, this is roughly one-third of the total amount of support given to the USSR during WWII while the USA and the Soviet Union were allied in opposing Nazism.

This aid includes military equipment, ammunition, logistical support, and battlefield intelligence (including Elon Musk’s Starlink satellite system). Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) troops, including many of the most infamous ultranationalist and neo-Nazi battalions, are also being trained by US and NATO military personnel in neighboring countries. The United

States, which once heroically allied with the Soviet Union to fight Nazis, is now ironically aligning itself with the grandchildren of the Nazis to fight the grandchildren of the Soviets.

US politicians have repeatedly made it clear in interviews and press conferences that their stated purpose for dragging this war on indefinitely is that they are determined to weaken Russia by any means necessary^[96]; they are willing to let Ukraine fight to the very last Ukrainian, and for the country be totally devastated like Syria^[97], if it means weakening one of its biggest geopolitical adversaries.

This war isn't between Russia and the people of Ukraine. It's a conflict which began as a war between Ukrainians—those who supported the coup government in Kiev, and those who supported the separatist movements and who wanted nothing to do with the coup government they hadn't cast any votes for—and has escalated into a proxy war between Russia and the US and NATO, with NATO forces supplying Ukraine with 100% of its weaponry at the time of writing. The US military has actually given Ukraine so many weapons that its reserve stocks are nearly depleted.^[98]

The Biden Administration is willing to subject Ukraine to utter devastation to secure a dubious strategic geopolitical advantage, disregarding the countless Ukrainians that have and likely will continue to die in the process. Even in the rest of Europe not directly affected by the war, the cost of living is skyrocketing. Millions will suffer as they cannot afford to heat their homes this winter. And as with every escalation of conflict involving nuclear powers, the extinction-level horrors of thermonuclear war become increasingly likely.

We cannot allow this war to escalate any further. We need peace and we need it now! A negotiated peace settlement and an ending of US military support for Ukraine in this proxy war is an urgent necessity. It is urgent not just for the people of Ukraine, but for Europeans who are suffering through economic fallout, and Americans who are funding this war with our tax dollars—tax dollars which could be fixing our dilapidated infrastructure, providing housing, healthcare, and education to those most in need. This war is immoral, and the goals of the US and NATO are indefensible. We stand at the brink of nuclear war, and for what? So a few Western capitalists can count their blood-stained lucre by the firelight of Ukrainian misery? So they can get filthy rich by looting Ukraine?

We say, enough!

NO WAR WITH RUSSIA!

NO WAR WITH CHINA!

NO WAR, PERIOD!

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Bryan Davies is a member of CPUSA.

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