It's both amusing and tragic, in my view, to observe current and former U.S. military officials and their media minions insisting that Putin's military is failing — not meeting its plan, or botching it's strategy, or tardy in its execution — as if they even know the plan and as if they have any credibility, having failed to win any of the five wars the U.S. has been involved in since WWII. The worst are WH press spokesperson Psaki, Fox favorite Jack Kean, Jake Sullivan at the White House, and Pentagon press spokesman John Kirby (a verbose, uninformed clown).
Here's a great post below by Ayn Rand Objectivist scholar Richard Salsman about the current Russo-Ukrainian War. What's unique about Salsman's analysis of the war is his understanding of the war's full context. The war actually started eight years ago on February 21, 2014 with a US-backed coup of then-Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych followed in short order by a civil war, still ongoing, in eastern Ukraine (the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of the Donbass region) and the return of Crimea to Russia in a coup de main in which only six persons died (three of whom were protesters). Too many Objectivists today -- because they don't know and understand the full context of the war -- believe that Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine last month on a whim. While nobody defends Russia's invasion last month, it didn't occur on a whim. Russia's invasion ratcheted up the 8-year-ongoing Ukrainian civil war. In fact, what's preventing a conclusion to the war are the same factors which led to it: US and NATO military and economic aid to Ukraine, which gives current Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky almost no incentive to make good on his 2019 campaign promise to implement the Minsk II Agreement and reach an understanding with Russia on Ukrainian NATO membership. Finally, I strongly encourage Objectivists to read all of Salsman's foreign policy posts at his Facebook page and elsewhere.

Source – https://www.facebook.com/clarkpatterson/posts/10118568457269660
See the list, below. Abominable. The U.S. arming despot Zelensky.

Zelensky is the man who this month unilaterally conscripted all Ukrainian males, age 18-60, and forbade them to leave the country; he’s the despot who yesterday banned all opposition parties and media outlets; the alleged democrat and freedom fighter adored by American Republicans and Democrats alike. Buffoons and frauds all.

Arming this despot, this former comedian? Why? His TV show was called “Servant of the People” and that’s what he called his populist party before he won election in 2019 with a mere 30% of the first-round vote. And now the joke is on those who voted for him. Do any in the media today ask who they voted for, as they flee Ukraine and demand American help?? No.

This means the U.S. is at war with Russia. Utterly insane - and against U.S. interests, security.

What else can the arming mean? The criterion for engagement isn’t “boots on the ground” (although that’s soon likely, if not true already; how else are rank amateurs in Ukraine to be trained in the use of the weapons?)

NOTE — if facts matter to you. The U.S. doesn’t win wars anymore; it hasn’t won one since 1945 (Gulf War doesn’t count because Saddam remained). Why? It doesn’t declare war anymore (as the U.S. Constitution requires), thus, doesn’t debate it in advance; then, when it fights, it imposes restrictions on rules of engagement. Yet groupthink bi-partisan support for all this. Very, very wrong.
Zelensky zombies and puppets in America and Europe keep touting him as the poster child of freedom and democracy; yesterday, like Hitler, Chavez and other despots before him, he banned 11 opposition political parties plus some media outlets. He did not ban fascist parties (Svoboda) or neo-Nazi gangs (Azov Battalion) but incorporated them into his government and lame army. Last month he conscripted all males between 18 & 60 and banned them from leaving the country, including with their fleeing families. Mass arrest and kidnapping of amateurs, to be used as cannon fodder; targeting civilians in war; so “liberal.” Why all the lying about Zelensky and Ukraine? Party groupthink: part support for the “model” - one today’s American Democrats seem to prize. Some of them have sought to silence-jail opposition views (Tucker Carlson), networks (Fox, Newsmax), and party leaders (Trump).

Source – https://www.facebook.com/richard.salsman.7/posts/4968558886571829
We can disagree in a healthy way. Well, here is a deeply flawed interpretation, in an Objectivist publication:

“Consider the Russian regime’s two main arguments for its aggressive behavior. One is the claim that the potential eastward expansion of NATO threatens Russia’s national security.... NATO is a defensive alliance, and none of its members are going to initiate an attack against Russia. A peaceful Russia is no more threatened by a NATO-backed Ukraine than Turkey is.” — Thomas Walker-Wirth (The Objective Standard).

The essay title declares a “fundamental difference” between Russia and Ukraine, but is there one, really? Mainly, I’d say, that the former provides a military for itself and the latter does not (preferring instead to beg or harangue Americans into providing it). A military-free sovereign is NOT a true sovereign; military provision is a basic minimum for any government, the first in any list of “public goods” taught in Public Economics 101. Also, both Russia and Ukraine are relatively unfree economically and are mostly corrupt politically (check the easily-retrievable metrics online).

1st. NATO’s expansion eastward toward Russia’s border has not been merely “potential” but ACTUAL. And NATO is a military alliance, not a nerd trade zone, and leftover from the antagonistic Cold War, which ended in 1991.

2nd, to characterize NATO as “purely defensive” vis a vis a post-Cold War Russia is preposterous, because its premise is that Putin’s Russia is akin to Stalin’s USSR. It is no more that than is Xi’s current China akin to Mao’s Red China. Is there no awareness of the history or a sense of perspective on these matters? To mis-classify a possible friend and ally (Russia, 1991)— as a mortal enemy is not only to be non-factual, non-logical, and non-objective, it is to actively insult and provoke a would-be friend, to invite him to distrust you, to make him conclude you’ll treat him as the devil, and this more likely in an offensive than solely defensive manner, to “preempt” and forestall manifestations of his evil.

This is Hamiltonian REALISM in foreign policy — taking things as they are, not as one wishes they might be — “let’s make the world safe for democracy,” let’s deny that Ukraine is corrupt, unfree, and using NATO to taunt Russia)!!! — not Jeffersonian rationalism (hubristically and hypocritically invoking “freedom,” playing with words, while conflating categories, concepts, and political regimes).
See Biden quote below. A contest between autocracies and democracies? What about democracies that VOTE FOR AUTOCRATS? Biden doesn’t explain that one. Yet it’s not so uncommon or unimportant, historically. Ever heard of Democratic Socialism? AOC? That’s Biden’s party. Which is he? A Democrat or autocrat. per Republicans, libertarians? What was Trump, per Democrats? Authoritarian, they said; if true, how could that happen in a... democracy? Not willing to admit it. Democrats simply lied, attributed it to a foreign autocracy (the “Russian collusion” hoax).

Majorities VOTED for Hitler in Germany, Chavez in Venezuela, Putin in Russia (four times, yet still not an autocracy, since there are free and fair elections, alternative parties, a parliament, an independent judiciary). Brits in the three decades after WWII repeatedly voted for a Labour Party that nationalized everything in sight. Did the introduction of democracy (mere voting) bring liberty in the Middle East during the “Arab Spring” (2019-2012)? Did liberty follow the US condoned toppling of autocrats in places like Iran, Iraq, Libya?

And why would “technological change” warrant autocracy, as Biden (or Xi?) suggests? And why is a “democratic POLITICAL consensus” (as he puts it) required to have technological (or economic) change? Instead of constitutional republics (ensuring the rule of law, private property, individual rights), autocracies and unrestrained democracies ALIKE are incompatible with capitalism, with a free, PERMISSION-LESS society. Moreover, American democracy brought or condoned authoritarianism in the slavery South, in the 1820s-1850s. And who can deny that authoritarianism has increased in America at least since 9/11, due in large part to government-caused crises, emergencies? In political science circles it’s called the phenomenon of “democratic backsliding.”

Biden (2022.03.17): “I think we’re at an inflection point in history, in a genuine struggle between autocracies and democracies, and whether or not democracies can be sustained. I’ll speak with Xi (China) tomorrow, who does not believe democracies can be sustained in the 21st Century. Things move so rapidly, technology’s changing so much. Democracies don’t have time to arrive at consensus, that’s why autocracies will succeed.”
Richard Salsman  
March 17 at 3:19 PM  
[Link to Facebook post](https://www.facebook.com/richard.salsman.7/posts/4956810954413289)

---

**Healthy Debates**

Why the Cold War didn’t really end if NATO didn’t end

Richard M. Salsman, Ph.D.  
Senior Scholar, The Atlas Society  
March 16, 2022 / 90 minutes (audio)  
[Link to Facebook post](https://www.facebook.com/richard.salsman.7/posts/4956178897809828)

---

Richard Salsman  
March 17 at 10:20 AM  
[Link to Facebook post](https://www.facebook.com/richard.salsman.7/posts/4956178897809828)

I’ve been told recently that my view of a proper US foreign-military policy (driven by Hamiltonian realism and rational self-interest — see my recent, prior FB posts) is a “minority view” in Objectivism. Didn’t know that, because I interpret independently (of other’s opinions, not of the facts). But if you’re interested and know what this entails, let me know, with citations, links, I’d guess, based on prior controversies, that others want a heavy-handed US military intervention (regarding the Russia-China war on Ukraine), for the US to altruistically operate a multi-billion dollar Ukrainian soup kitchen, to play world cop, to retain, further bolster and further expand NATO eastward, towards Russia — to “make the world safe” not for capitalism but for an idyllic Jeffersonian democracy (rule by the “demos,” or “the people,” even if they are uninformed or lacking in virtue). It’s a model that has failed miserably and repeatedly, while hurting America, but it still animates those who’ve convinced themselves that they’re exhibiting patriotism and geopolitical morality, virility.

---

Source – [Facebook post](https://www.facebook.com/richard.salsman.7/posts/4956178897809828)
Richard Salsman
March 17 at 5:13 AM ·

This is an act of war by the United States, which is in the interest of a foreign power, not of the United States. There appears to be bi-partisan support in Washington, applauded my the MMIC (Media-Military-Industrial-Complex), for a wider war. Besides suggesting to Zelensky that Ukraine could enter NATO (in their White House meeting last September), here Biden effectively admits to triggering the Russia-Ukraine war:

Biden (today): “The American people are answering President Zelensky’s call for more help, more weapons for Ukraine to defend itself, more tools to fight Russian aggression, and that’s what we’re doing. In fact, we started our assistance to Ukraine before this war began.”

Repeat with emphasis: THE U.S. STARTED SUPPLYING MUNITIONS TO UKRAINE — EVEN THOUGH UKRAINE IS NOT A NATO MEMBER — BEFORE RUSSIA INVADED UKRAINE.

It’s likely that all or most of this, if sent to Ukraine, will end up in the hands of the Russian army, which now has a public list to guide its interventions-seizures. In August 2021 Biden left $83 billion of war materiale in Afghanistan, left it to the enemy — the Taliban - which the US military could not (because not allowed to) defeat. Having armed the Taliban, Biden will likely next arm Russia. Then US munitions makers will have still more munitions to make and sell to the Pentagon, and sell easily because it now gets $725 billion in the U.S. budget (FY2023) to do what, exactly? Defend America?

Source — https://www.facebook.com/richard.salsman.7/posts/4955555291205522
Folk hero Zelensky — the inexperienced comedian-clown “leader” of Ukraine, who couldn’t get more than 30% first round votes in 2019, the man-child who spent three years not reducing Ukraine’s corruption (as promised) but poking and provoking the Russian bear, threatening to join NATO — will now go begging to the US Congress, hoping to stir the bleeding hearts (and warmongers) of both parties, demanding that the US provide his nation with a national defense. It’s not in America’s self-interest to do so, nor is it permitted by the US Constitution. But we live in a post-Constitutional America where “anything goes” (including American prosperity, credibility, fiscal integrity, prestige, and lives).

Just as Zelensky didn’t put “Ukraine first,” Biden doesn’t put “America first.” Each is an irresponsible stance for any national political leader to take; it is gross negligence at best, treasonous at worst. But they’ll attribute any such critique to “Putin puppets.” The real puppet is Zelensky — a puppet of the US and NATO. Now he’ll tell the US Congress that he’ll dance if they only fund the tune.
Here is the BW interview of Putin in late 2001, soon after his first election in Russia and after the 9/11 attack on America. I challenge anyone to interpret him as anything other than a sincere ally of the US, especially against terrorism, thanks in part to President GW Bush. The mutual animosity came later, starting in 2004 when NATO expanded further eastward toward Russia, then again in 2008, when US-backed NATO pledged to add Georgia and Ukraine (on Russia’s border). Then the U.S. backed the 2013 violent coup in Ukraine that ousted its duly elected president (because he was friendly-peaceful towards Russia). That’s why Putin took Crimea in 2014; it was not unprovoked: Ukraine was becoming brutal, undemocratic, hostile to Russia. Meanwhile, it remained so corrupt that it wasn’t eligible for membership in NATO, yet Zelensky kept suggesting it would get a NATO bailout or military backing whenever it wished.

The US and NATO BLEW IT; they refused to accept victory in the Cold War. The warmongers that dominate both US political parties simply would not have it. What Reagan achieved, they squandered, by their Russo-phobia, by their insistence that NATO expand right up to Russia’s border, by their lawless insurrection-coup in 2013. The Democrats in 2016 couldn’t explain why Clinton lost to Trump, so they attributed her loss to “Russian collusion.”

This was all deliberate provocation — and Zelensky, the ex-comedian-clown-dunce who has headed Ukraine since 2019, having got just 30% of the vote, participated in the Russia taunting, the NATO flirting, the eastward expansion. Don’t forget the US media also, which from left to middle to right has spent years demonizing Putin-Russia, only because Trump didn’t.
Ukraine’s President Zelensky, an ex-comedian/actor and politically inexperienced pretend populist (later divulged as a millionaire with offshore accounts) was elected in 2019 with only 30% of first round votes; 70% of voters didn’t want him. He promised to reduce corruption but didn’t; then flirted with NATO, imported its weapons, poked the bear.

For more than a dozen years Russia has been crystal clear about the threat of NATO’S eastern expansion to its borders since the Bucharest Summit (2008). Zelensky is a naive, foolish amateur who did not reduce corruption, thus remained ineligible for NATO membership, then did little to arm or defend his own country. His approval rating last fall was a mere 31% but get this: it has tripled to 90% since his corruption and ineptitude exposed domestic innocents to foreign bullies. Bush too was much more liked by Americans after 9/11 than before it. Go figure. Massive government FAILURE to do what a sovereign is most responsible for doing - provide for national defense - is APPROVED, applauded. This is what uninformed democracy looks like. A nation votes for a clown, ends with a frown, daps all the way, then begs foreigners for help, harangues them if they don’t, and hopes they too will foolishly self-sacrifice.

Here’s what Zelensky said in front of American-Ukraine cameras when he first met Biden at the Oval Office in September 2021: “I will discuss with President Biden his vision, his government’s vision of Ukraines chances of joining NATO.” REALLY? A direct threat to Russia — and Biden said nothing against this “vision.” In a recent documentary by ABC, George Stephanopoulos says “Zelensky’s vision was a direct challenge to Putin.” Another commentator says “soon after the meeting, Russia started massing troops along its border with Ukraine.”

NATO has used Ukraine as a puppet; it helped foment the coup d’etat of the duly elected pro-Russia Ukraine president in 2014. Look it up. Since 2008 Ukraine has effectively been a client state of NATO (i.e., the U.S.). That’s why the Biden crime family is so well known for “pulling strings” there. Trump’s push against that got him an impeachment proceeding; similarly detested for insisting that Europe play a bigger role in NATO relative to U.S., and that it not rely so heavily on imports of Russian oil/gas. Trump was called a “Putin puppet” for daring to call out the Zelensky puppets who for years have dominated US foreign/military policy. The election of pro-Ukraine Biden and his intensified (albeit fake) Russo-phobia is a key trigger for Putin’s invasion (which most Russians endorse).

Putin gave Biden about a year to restrain his Ukraine puppeteering: he reasonably prefers Ukraine be a neutral buffer zone; if that’s not possible, as NATO-Biden insist, he’d rather simply wreck the place — as he’s doing — than own it, run it, or use it as a stage for westward invasions of other nations. Biden likes all this because it diverts attention from his innumerable domestic blunders; time to blunder elsewhere; blame inflation on “Putin price hikes.” More lies. But watch as they work, watch as Biden’s approval rating rises in the coming months and the Democrats perform far better in Nov. elections than the GOP hopes.

You needn’t excuse/endorse Putin’s brutish pugilism, nor falsely/ridiculously equate him with Stalin or Hitler, to recognize plain facts and reasonable strategic concerns. To acknowledge that NATO, the American warmongers, and Russo-phobes made much of this possible. They’ve also instigated a Russia-China alliance, first economic then, potentially, military. “Make the world democratic” is their war cry, regardless of whether locals want it, or whether it brings liberty (rarely); topple authoritarians, hold a vote, and see what happens. What mostly “happens” is post-toppling chaos, carnage, and cruelty. See Iraq, Libya, Egypt, Pakistan. It never ends because the nation-breakers never learn.

Source - https://www.facebook.com/richard.salsman.7/posts/4941721735922211