

# Whither the War in Ukraine with Russia

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*War is one of the constants of history and has not diminished with civilization or democracy. In the last 3,421 years of recorded history only 268 have seen no war. We have acknowledged war as at present the ultimate form of competition and natural selection in the human species....Peace is an unstable equilibrium, which can be preserved only by acknowledged supremacy or equal power.*

*Will and Ariel Durant, The Lessons of History, 1968*

Have you ever noticed how autocracies delight in parading their military power in annual parades? They show off their bigger and supposedly better weapons, thousands of soldiers in perfect formation in shiny new parade uniforms. They also advertise their strength with firepower demonstrations including artillery, missiles, aircraft, and ships to intimidate their would-be adversaries. However, we know that looking good on parade is not the same as performing well in battle. Just look at Russian military performance in Ukraine. Lousy command and control, disastrous logistical support, poor medical evacuation and care for casualties, and poorly trained soldiers being fed into battle ill-prepared for the rigors of combat thus sustaining enormous casualties. But they look good on parade.

At present, supporting Ukraine in their war against Russia is really an economy of force operation for the United States. What the Biden administration is doing is like the pre-WWII lend-lease program when we supported Great Britain, Russia, and France in their war against Germany. We supplied equipment, not manpower. Yes, it's expensive in dollars (treasure) but not in manpower (blood). As history has shown, if Ukraine were to lose, Russia would not be satisfied, they would be emboldened. They would lick their wounds, re-group, replace depleted stocks of weapons and munitions and eventually seize more territory. In the meantime, they would attempt to undermine NATO and the EU by pursuing policies in conjunction with other bad actors (China, Iran, North Korea, et.al.) to undermine European unity and cast doubt on America's will to come to the defense of its alliance partners in Europe and in the Pacific.

Our support of Ukraine is depleting our wartime stocks and is putting a strain on our defense-industrial base. The GAO found in 2022 that "DoD's industrial base policy office does not yet have a consolidated and comprehensive strategy to mitigate risks to our industrial base." And this was before our massive weapons and ammunition support to Ukraine following the Russian invasion. U.S. stocks have been depleted faster than they are being replaced resulting in readiness challenges. Additionally, the rising cost of materials and consolidation of U.S. defense contractors, has further weakened our defense industrial base. We may have "won" the Cold War by employing the strategy of peace through strength, but some have suggested that our strength vis-à-vis our major competitors has seriously eroded.

NATO's expansion over the last 30 years has contributed to paranoia in the Kremlin. They feel surrounded. Couple this with former Warsaw Treaty Organization partners who have embraced democracy and capitalism on Russia's doorstep. This has resulted in Russian attacks on Georgia, the taking of Crimea and the Donbas region, and now the invasion of Ukraine that threatens the stability of the European continent.

If Russia were to be defeated decisively and Putin was replaced, America, along with its allies, might be able to establish a new world order like we did after WWII that resulted in 30 years of relative peace.

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