

# America's Midas Touch. Scott Ritter

By [Scott Ritter](#)

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[Scott Ritter Extra](#)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

***America today believes that when it comes to foreign policy, we are possessed with the “Midas Touch”—everything we do turns to gold. But the reality is, just like King Midas of old, everything we touch dies.***

King Midas was a Phrygian King believed to rule in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium BC, whose territory encompassed the area of what is modern day Anatolian Plateau around the present-day city of Ankara.

Publius Ovidius Naso, the Roman poet better known as Ovid, told the tale of King Midas in volume 11 of his 15-book anthology of Greek logical narrative, *Metamorphoses*. There, Midas befriended the satyr Silenus who, as a reward for Midas' hospitality, granted the Phrygian King a wish. Midas wished that everything he touched turned to gold. The wish was granted, and soon Midas was overjoyed by his ability to instantly create wealth. However, the fulfilled wish soon became a curse, for when Midas tried to eat food or drink, he could not do so, because it turned to gold at his touch. When his daughter tried to console him, he touched her, turning her into gold, thereby killing her. Midas finished his life alone, parched and starved.

There is no better analogy for America's self-anointed role as global hegemon than that of King Midas.

We hold a privileged position, and yet we want more, so much so that our insatiable greed for power and wealth leaves us blind to their consequence.

We call the “American Midas Touch” by many names—we are the exceptional nation, the indispensable nation, the guardian of the rules based international order we ourselves wrote.

Democracy is our “gold,” and we seek to reach out and “touch” as many nations as possible with the wonderful “gift.”



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