

Repeating 1970s Strategy of Grand Chess-Master Brzezinski: Biden Appears to Have Induced Russian Invasion of Ukraine to Bankrupt Russia's Economy and Advance Regime Change

But Will the Strategy Succeed This Time?

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Today, the dangers of military escalation are beyond description.

What is now happening in Ukraine has serious geopolitical implications. It could lead us into a World War III scenario.

It is important that a peace process be initiated with a view to preventing escalation.

Global Research condemns Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A Bilateral Peace Agreement is required.

Jimmy Carter's National Security Council adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski famously bragged about having induced a Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 by supporting Islamic fundamentalists with the goal of “giving the Soviets their Vietnam.”

The collateral damage of the war—the destruction of Afghanistan and growth of al-Qaeda—was inconsequential to the “grand chess-master,”^[1] who told a reporter:

[“what is more important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some agitated Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?”](#)

Brzezinski died in May 2017, but his spirit lives on in the Biden administration which appears to have followed his blueprint, substituting Afghanistan with Ukraine.

Its strategy appears to have been to induce a Russian invasion of Ukraine with the goal of bogging Russia down into a quagmire while crippling its economy through sanctions that hold the prospect of bringing Vladimir Putin down.

The task is particularly urgent given

a) the growing geopolitical alliance between Russia and China which threatens to end the era of U.S. unipolar power definitively;

b) the growing financial crisis in the U.S. and West and prospect of economic decline or collapse.

Putin has been hated by the U.S. since he began to take back Russian control over Russia’s economy following a decade of privatization under his predecessor Boris Yeltsin that resulted in plunder by foreign capitalists and oligarchs tied to the West.

In February 2007, Putin gave a speech in Munich denouncing U.S. hyper-militarism, disdain for international law and its attitude of [“might makes right,”](#) which, he said, had left the rest of the world afraid.

Praised before in *The New York Times* as a “sober westernizing leader,” Putin subsequently became Public U.S. Enemy #1—a status enhanced when he confronted U.S. backed forces in Syria and saved the country from the fate of Libya and Iraq.^[2]

Poking the Russian Bear One Too Many Times

The U.S. media leaves the impression that Putin invaded Ukraine based on his own diabolical whims, leaving out the entire back story.

Future historians will recognize that the U.S. provoked the current war by:

(1) Refusing to abide by Putin’s legitimate demand that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) not be expanded to Ukraine or anywhere further to Russia’s border—going against a promise made in 1990 by U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker that NATO would not expand “one inch eastward.”



Source: [statista.com](https://www.statista.com)

John J. Marsheimer of the University of Chicago noted that [“my sense is that Putin...would not have invaded Ukraine if the Biden administration had given a written guarantee not to expand NATO into Ukraine,”](#) and pledged to stop arming and training Ukraine’s military, which Biden refused to do.^[3]

(2) Supporting the Maidan Coup and Ukraine’s War on Eastern Ukraine.

In February 2014, the Obama administration supported the Maidan Square insurrection that resulted in the overthrow of Ukraine’s pro-Russian leader Viktor Yanukovich after he [spurned an International Monetary Fund \(IMF\) loan that came with conditions detrimental to Ukraine](#). The post-coup regime—led by billionaire Petro Poroshenko who has been indicted on treason charges—triggered a conflict with Russia when they invaded Donetsk and Luhansk provinces with U.S. backing after they voted to secede.

(3) Supporting Ukraine as it violated the Minsk peace ceasefire protocols.

On Monday February 21, Russia [reported that it had captured a Ukrainian soldier and killed five others after they crossed into Russian territory in Rostov](#), just over the border with Ukraine. Several hundred American mercenaries were reported to have arrived in Ukraine that week.

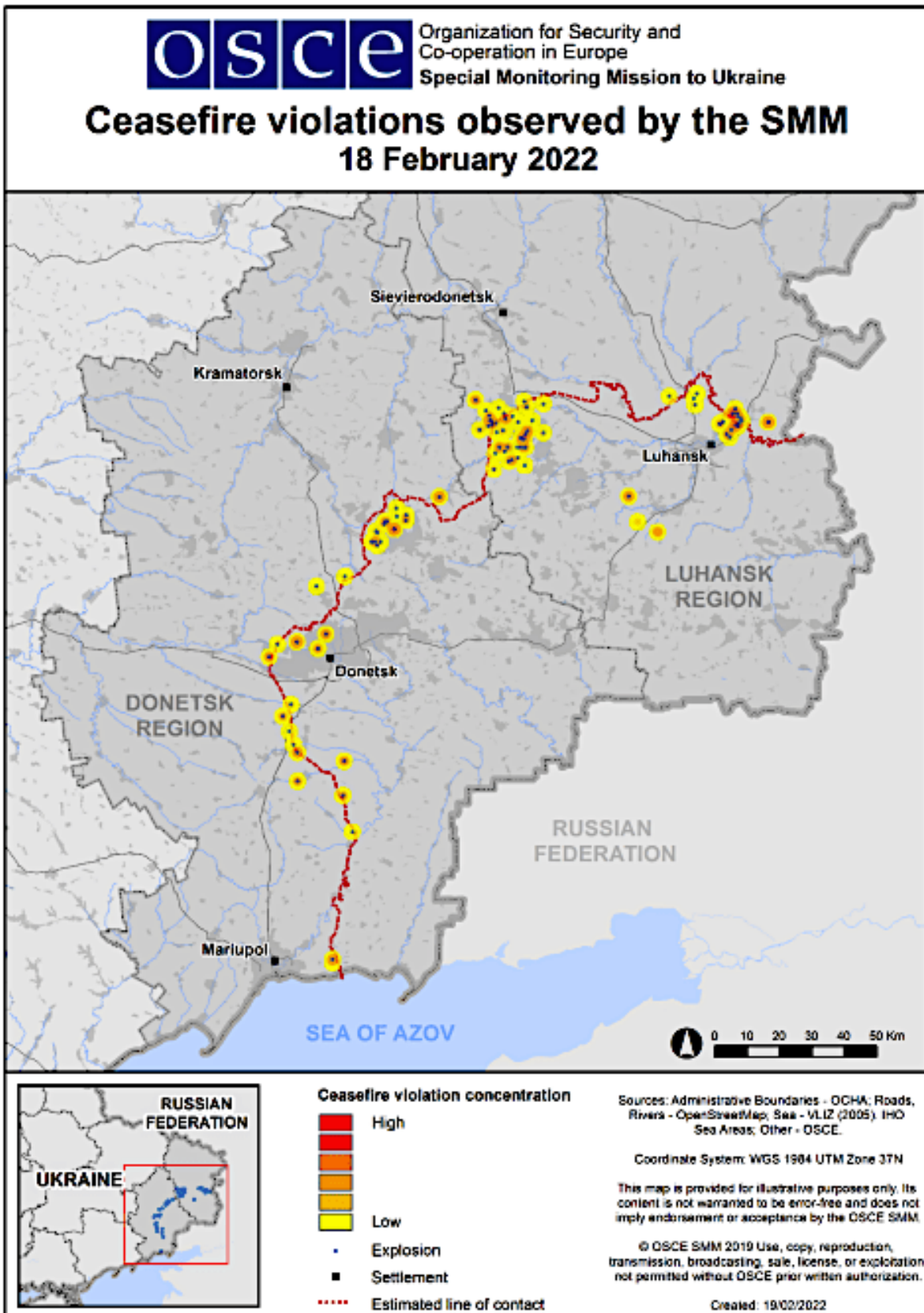


American mercenary in Donbass [Source: wprost.pl]

Photojournalist Patrick Lancaster [provided photographic evidence of Ukrainian army shelling of a school in the Donbass](#) in violation of the Minsk peace agreements signed by both Ukraine and Russia.

Lancaster's report is corroborated by Organization For Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) maps, which show that shelling violating ceasefire arrangements indeed were [carried out mostly by the Ukrainian government](#).

Map of recorded ceasefire violations

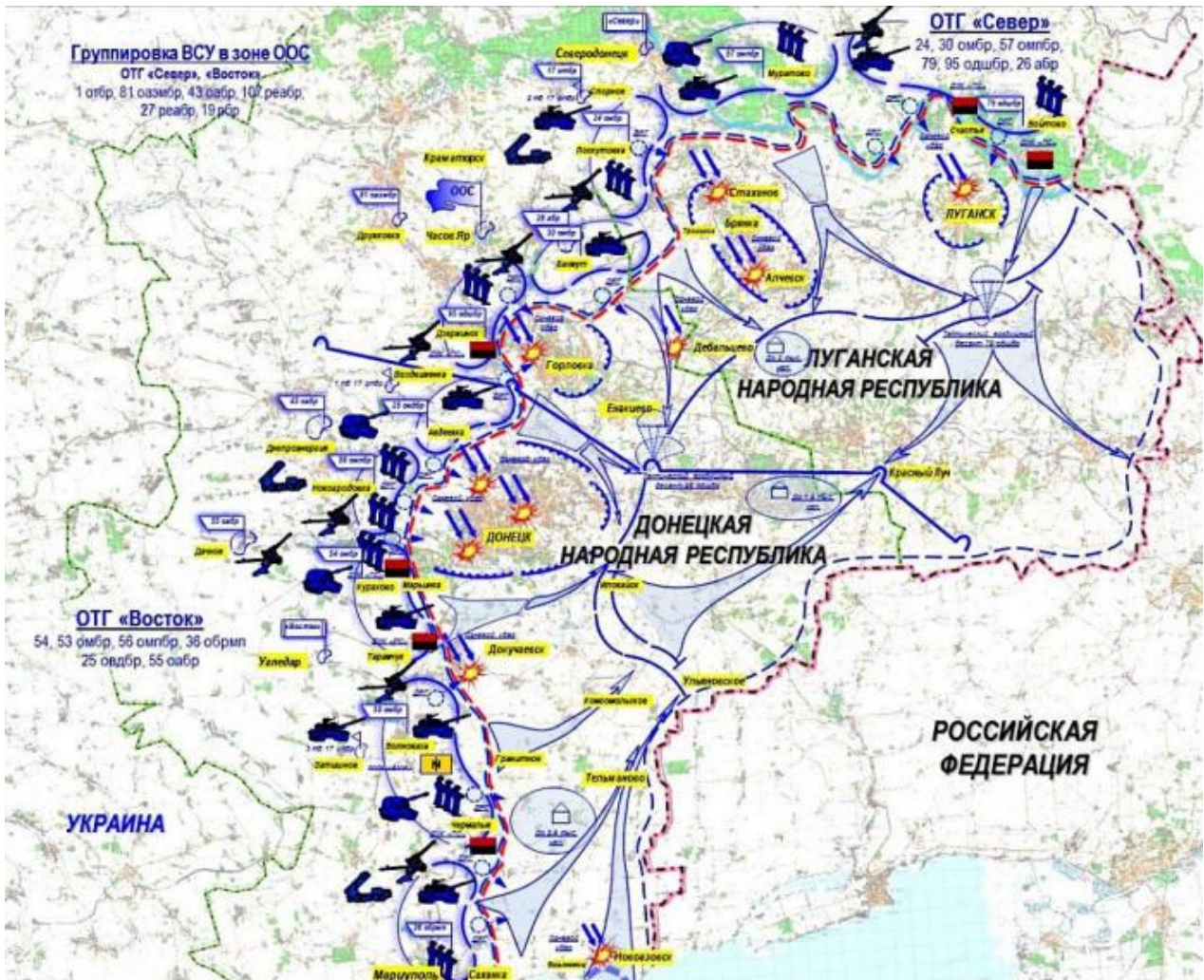


Source: [consortiumnews.com](https://www.consortiumnews.com)

A resident of the Kyivsky district of the city of Donetsk whom Lancaster interviewed, Zoya Tumanova, said that the Ukrainians had shelled her village often since 2015 and burned half of it down. She asked Lancaster: [“when will it end, when will Putin come? When will he come](#)

to save us?"

Tumanova's viewpoint contradicts the Biden administration's narrative about the origins of the war, which unfortunately has been embraced by all ends of the political spectrum in the U.S. [4]



Map showing Ukrainian troops concentrations on Eastern Ukraine's border on eve of Russian invasion of February 24th, 2022. According to the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Ukraine had [massed 122,000 troops on the border with Donbas](#), which was a direct threat to Russia. [Source: [consortiumnews.com](#)]

Mother of All Sanctions—Shutting Down Russia's Economy

On Monday, the Biden administration announced an expansion of economic sanctions designed to [“immobilize Russian central bank assets that are held in the U.S.”](#) and which targeted [the Russian Direct Investment Fund, a sovereign wealth fund that is run by a close ally of Putin.](#)

The Biden administration also announced on Monday that, with numerous other countries, it was removing some Russian banks from the Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) financial messaging system, barring them from transaction.

Robert Menendez (D-NJ) called this [“the mother of all sanctions.”](#)

After the Russian invasion last Thursday, the Biden administration had [imposed asset](#)

[freezes on Russian government officials and banks and equity restrictions on critical Russian mining, transportation and logistics firms](#). Russian military and industrial companies were further [blocked from buying critical technology such as advanced computer chips](#).

Senior Biden administration officials noted that as a result of the sanctions, [the value of Russia's ruble had already fallen more than 30 percent over the weekend](#) and that Russia's central bank more than doubled its interest rate to try to mitigate the fallout.

They also predicted that inflation would soon spike and economic activity would contract as Russia's currency lost value and the country was cut off from its currency reserves.

George Lopez, a sanctions expert at Notre Dame's Keough School of Global Affairs, stated that ["everyone in the economic sphere, the banking sphere knows we're in new territory—a coordinated shutdown of a country's economy with the strongest arrow being in the heart of the banking sector."](#)

Overextending and Unbalancing Russia

The purpose behind the sanctions was made explicit in a 2019 report issued by the Rand Corporation, the leading Pentagon think-tank, entitled ["Overextending and Unbalancing Russia,"](#) which assessed how encouraging domestic protests, providing lethal aid to Ukraine and undermining Russia's image abroad might weaken and destabilize the country.

The project's researchers, headed by James F. Dobbins, the former U.S. Ambassador to the European Union (1991-1993) who [installed Hamid Karzai as the puppet leader of Afghanistan at the 2001 Bonn conference](#), found that "economic cost-imposing measures" such as sanctions held particularly high likelihood of success and would ["degrade Russia's economy,"](#) particularly if advanced with other countries.

Regime change could be achieved when the Russian population blamed Putin for their hardships and mounted a rebellion against him.

Punishment Rather Than Diplomacy

In late January, two senior Biden administration officials warned Putin that if he invaded Ukraine, harsh sanctions "would lead to an atrophying of Russia's productive capacity over time. It would [deny Russia the ability to diversify its economy."](#)

The goal of punishing Russia rather than averting conflict was apparent on February 26 when [Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky opted out of negotiations over neutral status with Russia and kept Ukraine fighting, possibly under U.S. pressure](#). (The [State Department signaled opposition to a meeting between Putin and Zelensky to discuss a ceasefire](#))

German Chancellor Olaf Scholtz at this time was pressured to a) [prevent the Nordstream 2 pipeline from becoming operational](#) and b) to [send Kyiv 500 "Stinger" anti-aircraft missiles](#) in violation of Germany's earlier pledge to hold back any lethal military aid.

The U.S. also began [providing Stingers](#)—the key weapon supplied to the Afghan mujahidin to fight the Soviets in the 1980s—while the White House was asking Congress to approve a [\\$6.4 billion aid package to Ukraine](#).



Ukrainian soldiers move U.S.-made FIM-92 Stinger missiles and the other military assistance shipped from Lithuania to Boryspil Airport in Kyiv on February 13. [Source: [marketwatch.com](https://www.marketwatch.com)]

Original Sanctions Based on Fraud

When sanctions were first applied under the Magnitsky Act in 2012, Vladimir Putin called them a “provocation” designed to “undermine the future of American-Russian relations.” He also said that they were “shortsighted and dangerous” and an “overt interference into our internal affairs.”

The Magnitsky Act was named after Sergei Magnitsky, who died in a Russian prison after allegedly trying to expose a \$230 million tax scam targeting the company of an American hedge-fund investor in Russia, William F. Browder.

The grandson of former Communist Party chairman Earl Browder, Browder was [convicted in Russian court of failing to pay 552 million rubles in taxes \(\\$16 million\) and illegally buying up shares in Gazprom](#) (Russian natural gas company), for which he was sentenced in absentia to nine years in prison.

He provided financial support to Maryland’s Democratic Party Senator Ben Cardin, the original sponsor of the Magnitsky Act, through Ziff Brothers, which gave over \$1 million to Democratic Party candidates in the 2016 election (Browder made stock trades for Ziff in Moscow and was using it to try to purchase shares of Gazprom).

That the sanctions policy was based on fraud was evident in the fact that [Magnitsky specialized in off-shoring money and was a suspect in the \\$230 million tax scam, which Browder may have himself initiated.](#)^[5]



Sergei Magnitsky and William F. Browder [Source: [rt.com](https://www.rt.com)]

Will Putin Go the Way of the Soviets?

For all the blustery talk—Biden said he was intent on turning Putin into a “[pariah](#)” and “[imposing severe costs on the Russian economy](#)” through sanctions—Russia as of this writing is still able to sell Europe natural gas, with [energy payments being exempted from the economic sanctions](#).

Global oil prices of \$100 per barrel continue to produce large revenues.

The Putin government has planned to cushion the blow from the sanctions by building a “[fortress economy](#)” capable of producing vital goods domestically and which has amassed a huge foreign currency reserve, a lot of which Putin still has access to.

Russia’s military advantage in Ukraine is considerable compared with Afghanistan in the 1980s. Russia shares a border with Ukraine, has a major military base in the Crimea, and can count on the support of local allies and [at least 15,000 separatist fighters in Donetsk](#).

In just five days, Russian troops have destroyed a dam blocking water into Crimea and [established a land bridge between Crimea and Donbass](#), taken control of the area around Chernobyl, captured most of the city of Kherson at the mouth of the Dnieper River in the southeast and have begun to advance into the capital, Kyiv.

Russian convoy heads to Kyiv

Vehicles stretch to 17 miles from Ivankiv to Hostomel airport



Source: Maxar, 28 Feb 2022



Russian convoy en route to Kyiv. [Source: [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com)]

How much of Ukraine does Russia control?



Source: Institute for the Study of War (as of 20:00 GMT, 27 February)



Russian convoy en route to Kyiv. [Source: [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com)]

The war, however, may [yet devolve into a quagmire](#) if Ukrainian nationalist forces continue to stand up.

But if the Pentagon's prediction of a Russian victory holds true, then the Russians will have vanquished the ghost of Zbigniew Brzezinski and thwarted the diabolical schemes of his heirs.

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Notes

1. Brzezinski was author of the book *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).
2. *New York Times* quotes from Jeremy Kuzmarov and John Marciano, *The Russians are Coming, Again: The First Cold War as Tragedy, the Second as Farce* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2018), 19.
3. In a September meeting with Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky at the White house, Biden instead [pledged](#) his ["support for Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations" and American support for Ukraine's "being completely integrated in Europe,"](#) (ie. NATO expansion).
4. The supposed radical firebrand Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), for example, rallied behind the Biden policy, tweeting: ["Russia's invasion of Ukraine is indefensible. The U.S. is right to impose targeted sanctions on Putin & his oligarchs."](#) Bernie Sanders (D-VT) who also supported the institution of "serious sanctions" directed against Russia, said this: ["Vladimir Putin's latest invasion of Ukraine is an indefensible violation of international law, regardless of whatever false pretext he offers. There has always been a diplomatic solution to this situation. Tragically, Putin appears intent on rejecting it."](#) However, as John Mersheimer pointed out, it was the Biden administration that rejected diplomacy by refusing to agree to halt NATO expansion in accordance with U.S. promises made 30 years earlier, or stop arms shipments to Ukraine. Former U.S. ambassador Michael McFaul called for censorship of viewpoints that challenged the official narrative of unfettered Russian aggression, tweeting: ["there is a time and place for hearing two sides of an issue. This tragic moment in European history is not one of them. Do not give false equivalency to voices of evil and voices of good."](#)
5. This section is drawn from Jeremy Kuzmarov, "Trying to Unbalance Russia: The Fraudulent Origins and Impact of US Sanctions on Russia" In *Sanctions as War: Anti-Imperialist Perspectives on American Geo-economic Strategy*, ed. Stuart Davis and Immanuel Ness (Netherlands: Brill, 2021), chapter 17.

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