

# Russia's Strategic Aims - In Consequence to a Collapsing U.S. Empire

Weak leadership has lifted the lid on the European Pandora's box, Alastair Crooke writes.

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*Things are getting psychotic. As you listen to EU leaders, all parroting identical 'good news' speaking points, they nonetheless radiate basal disquietude – presumably a reflection of the psychic stress from, on the one hand, repeating 'Ukraine is winning: Russia's defeat is coming', when, on the other, they know [the exact opposite](#) to be true: That 'no way' can Europe defeat a large Russian army on the landmass of Eurasia.*

Even the colossus of Washington confines the use of American military power to conflicts that Americans [could afford to lose](#) – wars lost to weak opponents that no one could gainsay whether the outcome was no loss, but somehow 'victory'.

Yet, war with Russia (whether financial or military) is substantially different from fighting small poorly equipped and dispersed insurgent movements, or collapsing the economies of fragile states, such as Lebanon.

Initial U.S. braggadocio has imploded. Russia neither collapsed internally to Washington's financial assault, nor fell into chaotic regime change as predicted by western officials. Washington underestimated Russia's societal cohesion, its latent military potential, and its relative immunity to Western economic sanctions.

The question worrying the West is what the Russians now will do next: Continue to attrit the Ukrainian army, whilst simultaneously de-stocking NATO's weapons inventory? Or roll out the gathering Russian offensive forces across Ukraine?

The point, simply put, is that the very ambiguity between the *threat* of the offensive and *implementation* is part of the Russian strategy to keep the West off-balance and second-guessing. These are the psychological warfare tactics for which General Gerasimov is

renown. Will it come; from whence, and where will it go? We do not know.

Russia's timing will not be shaped by the western political calendar; but when, and if, an offensive becomes propitiate to Russian interests. Furthermore, Moscow has its eye on two fronts: the financial war (which may argue for a slower military roll out to allow levels of economic pain to accrete) and the military situation (which may, or may not, favour the slow incremental, extirpation of the Ukrainian capacity to fight at all). Former Senior Adviser to the U.S. Defence Secretary, Colonel Douglas Macgregor, sees a big force roll out – and soonish. He may be right.

This latter consideration must be set against the bigger picture: Russia primarily is engaged in the roll-back of U.S. hegemony, and pushing NATO out from the Asian 'Heartland'. Russians have known for some time that the 'Global Order system' is not sustainable (post-WWII structures are already clearly visible in the rear-view mirror). And both Russia and China appreciate that there is no graceful – or short cut – way to undo such a large system.

The latter know that the West cannot be trusted and is destined to fall. For some years, Russia and China have been restructuring their economies and building their militaries – preparing for the inevitable collapse of the U.S. empire (whilst keeping fingers crossed that the 'fall' will not entail Apocalypse).

In practice, both Russia and China have been at pains to moderate that collapse, as far as possible. No one benefits from an uncontrolled implosion of the U.S. However, the U.S. is taking steps too far with its Ukraine project, and Russia is going to use this conflict to facilitate the end of the U.S. empire – there is really no other option.

As Kelley Beaucar Vlahos in the *American Conservative* [underlines](#), U.S. factions have been preparing Russia's 'burial' for many years. Indeed, one of most damaging facts to emerge from Matt Taibbi's '[Twitter Files](#)' exposé has been: "how aggressive congressional lawmakers and federal agency officials were – in pushing a cynical narrative that brought the social media giant to heel whilst setting up the Russian bogeyman that haunts U.S. foreign policy and posturing in the Ukraine war today".

That concocted story of Russia trying to destroy U.S. democracy brought public buy-in for a new war with Russia.

This existential fight can't stop now: It might be argued that the Europeans and Americans are in a bubble of everything is optics and 'all' is PR immediacy and theatre – and we all need to play this game. They may well also be projecting the same zeitgeist onto the Russians and the Chinese, believing that they must think similarly: No values, no belief in anything, except whatever plays best on MSM.

Looked at from this perspective, it truly is a cultural clash – one reflecting the western incapacity for empathy. The West genuinely may think that Putin's attention is focussed above all on *ratings* – just as it is for Macron, Scholz and Biden – and that when hostilities end, it will be business as usual. They may genuinely not understand that this *is not* how the rest of the world thinks.

Within this mindset exists, "*War is business' ... Tanks a lot, Now Give Us F-16s!*" No sooner had the U.S., Germany and other NATO powers announced the major release of main battlefield tanks for Ukraine, than Kiev immediately started [demanding](#) the supply of F-16

warplanes. Indeed, Ukrainian defence official Yuriy Sak brazenly [commented](#) about the relative ease of the “next big hurdle” of acquiring F-16s fighter jets:

“They didn’t want to give us heavy artillery, then they did. They didn’t want to give us HIMARS [missiles], then they did. They didn’t want to give us tanks, now they’re giving us tanks. Apart from nuclear weapons, there is nothing left that we will not get.”

This is a prime example of ‘war as business’ syndrome – and politics is about amassing money. That means F-16s are up next, and that means Poland – F-16s would not be based at an airbase in Ukraine. And extending the battlespace to Poland, inevitably would lead to more ‘war as business’: Tanks, APCs and F-16s. The Military Complex will be rubbing its hands in glee.

Predictably, the war-zealots’ frustration with the collective West’s failure to stem the tide of Ukrainian defeat is growing, and has been further compounded by the *Rand Corporation* (Pentagon-funded) [report](#) last week which amounted to a forensic rebuttal of the justifying rationale for the war in Ukraine. Emphasising that, though Ukrainians are doing the fighting, their flattened cities and decimated economy *does not comport with Ukrainian interests*.

The Report warns that the U.S. should avoid ‘a protracted conflict’, declaring Ukrainian victory as ‘improbable’ and ‘unlikely’ – and significantly warns of the conflict bleeding into Poland. The contingency that the U.S. risks inadvertently sliding towards nuclear war over several ‘issues’ is also highlighted.

On this last point, the *Rand Report* is prescient: The head of the Russian delegation to the OSCE this week [has publicly warned](#) that should western armour-piercing depleted uranium, or beryllium projectiles be deployed in Ukraine – as were used by the U.S. in Iraq and Yugoslavia with devastating consequences – Russia would view a such deployment as constituting the use of dirty nuclear bombs against Russia, with ensuing consequences.

If there were any doubts about Russian ‘Red Lines’, and where they lie, there can be none now. Just to be clear, ‘consequences’ equals a possible Russian nuclear response. The West has been warned.

If frustration at the failing Ukrainian military project be ‘the cause’, desperation is the sequel.

“Like you, I am, and I think the administration is, very gratified to know that Nord Stream 2 is now, as you like to say, a hunk of metal at the bottom of the sea”, Victoria Nuland opined last week. This statement shows impotence, more than anything else (translated, Nuland is saying, OK folks, we are *not* impotent as – wink, wink – we still managed to destroy the gas pipeline for the EU).

The whole PR campaign for more tanks looks more like an attempt to give extra morale to Ukrainians and their supporters in Europe (given that the tanks will not change the course of war) – a ‘going through the motions’, effectively nothing more significant. Ditto for the political [proposals](#) put forward by Secretary of State, Blinken, and Victoria Nuland last week. They look to have been drafted knowing they would be rejected in Moscow – and they were.

Yet to give the Blinken-Nuland combination their due, if neo-cons are hopeless at the execution of their war projects – which almost invariably end disastrously – they are brilliant

at manipulating States into becoming their accomplices - contrary to their own national interests.

Where the neocons *have* been given free-range is on destroying Europe, politically, economically and militarily. The U.S. itself (and the wider world) must be absolutely astonished at the degree of European subservience, and the absolute control of EU leadership that these neo-cons have exercised.

NATO's members were never strongly united behind Washington's crusade to fatally weaken Russia. The EU (especially French and German) populace has no stomach for body bags. But the neo-cons correctly espied the European Achilles Heel: It was Poland, Lithuania, the other Baltic Republics and the Czech Republic. The U.S. neo-cons allied themselves with this radical Russophobic faction who want Russia dismembered and pacified, and to seize the levers of EU foreign policy away from France and Germany. The latter sat silent and impotent at Bucharest in 2008, when the NATO 'door' was thrown open to Georgia and Ukraine. Why did they not then express their reservations which they say they had at the time?

Weak leadership has lifted the lid on the European Pandora's box, for all the old ghost European animosities, jealousies and naked ambitions to waft out as dark vapours. Is there anyone who can close its lid now?

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