

They Lied About Afghanistan. They Lied About Iraq. And They Are Lying About Ukraine.

The U.S. public has been conned, once again, into pouring billions into another endless war.

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Global Research, July 07, 2023

[ScheerPost](#) 2 July 2023

Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)

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The playbook the pimps of war use to lure us into one military fiasco after another, including Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and now Ukraine, does not change. Freedom and democracy are threatened. Evil must be vanquished. Human rights must be protected. The fate of Europe and NATO, along with a "rules based international order" is at stake. Victory is assured.

The results are also the same. The justifications and narratives are exposed as lies. The cheery prognosis is false. Those on whose behalf we are supposedly fighting are as venal as those we are fighting against.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine was a war crime, although one that was provoked by NATO expansion and by the United States backing of the 2014 "Maidan" [coup](#) which [ousted](#) the [democratically elected](#) Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. Yanukovich [wanted](#) economic integration with the European Union, but not at the expense of economic and political ties with Russia. The war will only be solved through negotiations that allow ethnic Russians in Ukraine to have autonomy and Moscow's protection, as well as Ukrainian [neutrality](#), which means the country cannot join NATO. The longer these negotiations are delayed the more Ukrainians will suffer and die. Their cities and infrastructure will continue to be pounded into rubble.

But this proxy war in Ukraine is designed to serve U.S. interests. It enriches the weapons manufacturers, weakens the Russian military and isolates Russia from Europe. What happens to Ukraine is irrelevant.

“First, equipping our friends on the front lines to defend themselves is a far cheaper way — in both dollars and American lives — to degrade Russia’s ability to threaten the United States,” [admitted](#) Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell.

“Second, Ukraine’s effective defense of its territory is teaching us lessons about how to improve the defenses of partners who are threatened by China. It is no surprise that senior officials from Taiwan are so supportive of efforts to help Ukraine defeat Russia. Third, most of the money that’s been appropriated for Ukraine security assistance doesn’t actually go to Ukraine. It gets invested in American defense manufacturing. It funds new weapons and munitions for the U.S. armed forces to replace the older material we have provided to Ukraine. Let me be clear: this assistance means more jobs for American workers and newer weapons for American servicemembers.”

Once the truth about these endless wars [seeps](#) into public consciousness, the media, which slavishly promotes these conflicts, drastically reduces coverage. The military debacles, as in Iraq and Afghanistan, continue largely out of view. By the time the U.S. concedes defeat, most barely remember that these wars are being fought.

The pimps of war who orchestrate these military fiascos migrate from administration to administration. Between posts they are ensconced in think tanks — Project for the New American Century, American Enterprise Institute, Foreign Policy Initiative, Institute for the Study of War, The Atlantic Council and The Brookings Institution — funded by corporations and the war industry. Once the Ukraine war comes to its inevitable conclusion, these Dr. Strangeloves will seek to [ignite](#) a [war](#) with China. The U.S. Navy and military are already [menacing](#) and [encircling](#) China. God help us if we don’t stop them.

These [pimps of war](#) con us into one conflict after another with flattering narratives that paint us as the world’s saviors. They don’t even have to be innovative. The rhetoric is lifted from the old playbook. We naively swallow the bait and embrace the flag — this time blue and yellow — to become unwitting agents in our self-immolation.

Since the end of the Second World War, the government has [spent](#) between 45 to 90 percent of the [federal](#) budget on past, current and future military operations. It is the largest sustained activity of the U.S. government. It has stopped mattering — at least to the pimps of war — whether these wars are rational or prudent. The war industry metastasizes within the bowels of the American empire to hollow it out from the inside. The U.S. is reviled abroad, drowning in debt, has an impoverished working class and is burdened with a decayed infrastructure as well as shoddy social services.

Wasn’t the Russian military — because of [poor morale](#), [poor generalship](#), [outdated weapons](#), [desertions](#), a lack of ammunition that supposedly [forced](#) soldiers to [fight](#) with shovels, and severe supply [shortages](#) — supposed to collapse [months ago](#)? Wasn’t Putin supposed to be [driven](#) from power? Weren’t the [sanctions](#) supposed to [plunge](#) the ruble into a death spiral? Wasn’t the severing of the Russian banking system from [SWIFT](#), the international money transfer system, supposed to cripple the Russian economy? How is it that inflation rates in [Europe](#) and the [United States](#) are higher than in [Russia](#) despite these attacks on the Russian economy?

Wasn’t the nearly \$150 billion in sophisticated military hardware, financial and humanitarian assistance [pledged](#) by the U.S., EU and 11 other countries supposed to have turned the tide

of the war? How is it that perhaps a third of the tanks Germany and the U.S. provided were swiftly turned by Russian mines, artillery, anti-tank weapons, air strikes and missiles into charred hunks of metal at the start of the vaunted [counter-offensive](#)? Wasn't this latest Ukrainian counter-offensive, which was originally known as the "spring offensive," supposed to punch through Russia's heavily fortified front lines and regain huge swathes of territory? How can we explain the tens of thousands of Ukrainian military casualties and the [forced](#) conscription by Ukraine's military? Even our retired generals and former CIA, FBI, NSA and Homeland Security officials, who serve as analysts on networks such as CNN and MSNBC, [can't say](#) the offensive has succeeded.

And what of the Ukrainian democracy we are fighting to protect? Why did the Ukrainian parliament [revoke](#) the official use of minority languages, including Russian, three days after the 2014 coup? How do we rationalize the eight years of warfare against ethnic Russians in the Donbass region before the Russian invasion in Feb. 2022? How do we explain the [killing](#) of over 14,200 people and the 1.5 million people who were [displaced](#), before Russia's invasion took place last year?

How do we defend the [decision](#) by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to [ban](#) eleven opposition parties, including The Opposition Platform for Life, which had 10 percent of the seats in the Supreme Council, Ukraine's unicameral parliament, along with the Shariy Party, Nashi, Opposition Bloc, Left Opposition, Union of Left Forces, State, Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine, Socialist Party of Ukraine, Socialists Party and Volodymyr Saldo Bloc? How can we accept the banning of these opposition parties — many of which are on the left — while Zelenskyy allows [fascists](#) from the [Svoboda](#) and [Right Sector](#) parties, as well as the [Banderite Azov Battalion](#) and [other extremist militias](#), to flourish?

How do we deal with the anti-Russian purges and arrests of supposed "fifth columnists" sweeping through Ukraine, given that [30 percent](#) of Ukraine's inhabitants are Russian speakers? How do we respond to the neo-Nazi groups supported by Zelenskyy's government that harass and attack the LGBT community, the Roma population, anti-fascist protests and threaten city council members, media outlets, artists and foreign students? How can we countenance the [decision](#) by the U.S. and its Western allies to [block](#) negotiations with Russia to end the war, despite Kyiv and Moscow [apparently](#) being on the verge of negotiating a peace treaty?

I reported from Eastern and Central Europe in 1989 during the breakup of the Soviet Union. NATO, we assumed, had become obsolete. President Mikhail Gorbachev proposed security and economic agreements with Washington and Europe. Secretary of State James Baker in Ronald Reagan's administration, along with the West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, [assured](#) Gorbachev that NATO would not be extended beyond the borders of a unified Germany. We naively thought the end of the Cold War meant that Russia, Europe and the U.S., would no longer have to divert massive resources to their militaries.

The so-called "peace dividend," however, was a chimera.

If Russia did not want to be the enemy, Russia would be forced to become the enemy. The pimps of war recruited former Soviet republics into NATO by painting Russia as a threat. Countries that joined NATO, which now include Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia, reconfigured their militaries, often through tens of millions in western loans, to become compatible with NATO military hardware. This made

the weapons manufacturers billions in profits.

It was universally understood in Eastern and Central Europe following the collapse of the Soviet Union that NATO expansion was unnecessary and a dangerous provocation. It made no geopolitical sense. But it made commercial sense. War is a business.

In a classified diplomatic cable — obtained and released by WikiLeaks — dated Feb. 1, 2008, written from Moscow, and [addressed](#) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, NATO-European Union Cooperative, National Security Council, Russia Moscow Political Collective, Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of State, there was an unequivocal understanding that expanding NATO risked conflict with Russia, especially over Ukraine.

“Not only does Russia perceive encirclement [by NATO], and efforts to undermine Russia’s influence in the region, but it also fears unpredictable and uncontrolled consequences which would seriously affect Russian security interests,” the cable reads. “Experts tell us that Russia is particularly worried that the strong divisions in Ukraine over NATO membership, with much of the ethnic-Russian community against membership, could lead to a major split, involving violence or at worst, civil war. In that eventuality, Russia would have to decide whether to intervene; a decision Russia does not want to have to face. . . .”

“Dmitri Trenin, Deputy Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, expressed concern that Ukraine was, in the long-term, the most potentially destabilizing factor in U.S.-Russian relations, given the level of emotion and neuralgia triggered by its quest for NATO membership . . .” the cable reads. “Because membership remained divisive in Ukrainian domestic politics, it created an opening for Russian intervention. Trenin expressed concern that elements within the Russian establishment would be encouraged to meddle, stimulating U.S. overt encouragement of opposing political forces, and leaving the U.S. and Russia in a classic confrontational posture.”

The Russian invasion of Ukraine would not have happened if the western alliance had honored its promises not to expand NATO beyond Germany’s borders and Ukraine had remained neutral. The pimps of war knew the potential consequences of NATO expansion. War, however, is their single minded vocation, even if it leads to a nuclear holocaust with Russia or China.

The war industry, not Putin, is our most dangerous enemy.

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