

Western Dissent from US/NATO Policy on Ukraine Is Small, Yet the Censorship Campaign Is Extreme

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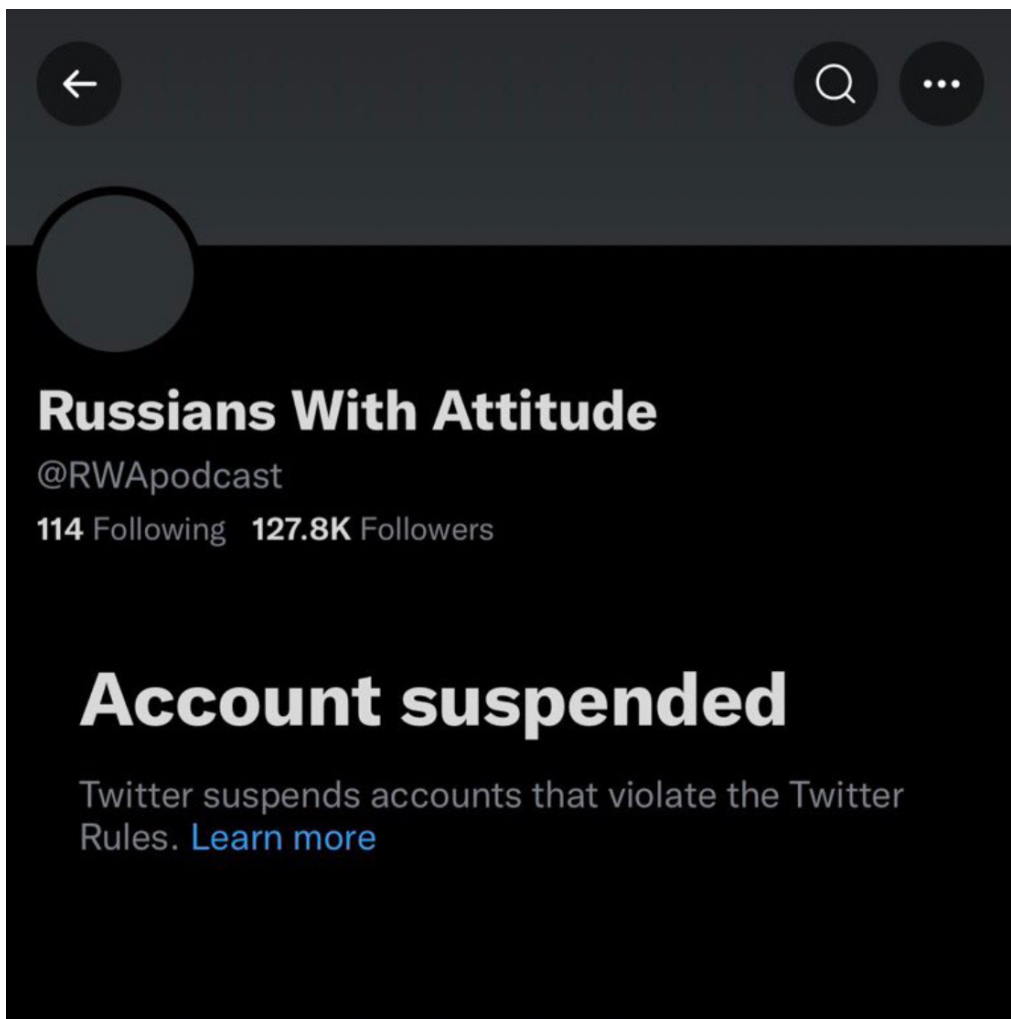
Preventing populations from asking who benefits from a protracted proxy war, and who pays the price, is paramount. A closed propaganda system achieves that.

If one wishes to be exposed to news, information or perspective that contravenes the prevailing US/NATO view on the war in Ukraine, a rigorous search is required. And there is no guarantee that search will succeed. That is because the state/corporate censorship regime that has been imposed in the West with regard to this war is stunningly aggressive, rapid and comprehensive.

On a virtually daily basis, any off-key news agency, independent platform or individual citizen is liable to be banished from the internet. In early March, barely a week after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the twenty-seven nation European Union — citing “disinformation” and “public order and security” — [officially banned](#) the Russian state-news outlets RT and Sputnik from being heard anywhere in Europe. In what Reuters called “an unprecedented move,” all television and online platforms were barred by force of law from airing content from those two outlets. Even prior to that censorship order from the state, Facebook and Google were already banning those outlets, and Twitter immediately announced they would as well, in compliance with the new EU law.

But what was “unprecedented” just six weeks ago has now become commonplace, even normalized. Any platform devoted to offering inconvenient-to-NATO news or alternative perspectives is guaranteed a very short lifespan. Less than two weeks after the EU’s decree, Google [announced](#) that it was voluntarily banning all Russian-affiliated media worldwide, meaning Americans and all other non-Europeans were now blocked from viewing those channels on YouTube if they wished to. As so often happens with Big Tech censorship, much of the pressure on Google to more aggressively censor content about the war in Ukraine came from its own workforce: “Workers across Google had been urging YouTube to take additional punitive measures against Russian channels.”

So prolific and fast-moving is this censorship regime that it is virtually impossible to count how many platforms, agencies and individuals have been banished for the crime of expressing views deemed “pro-Russian.” On Tuesday, Twitter, with no explanation as usual, suddenly banned one of the most informative, reliable and careful dissident accounts, named “Russians With Attitude.” Created in late 2020 by two English-speaking Russians, the account [exploded in popularity](#) since the start of the war, from roughly 20,000 followers before the invasion to more than 125,000 followers at the time Twitter banned it. An accompanying podcast with the same name also exploded in popularity and, at least as of now, can [still be heard on Patreon](#).



What makes this outburst of Western censorship so notable — and what is at least partially driving it — is that there is a clear, demonstrable hunger in the West for news and information that is banished by Western news sources, ones which loyally and unquestioningly mimic claims from the U.S. government, NATO, and Ukrainian officials. As *The Washington Post* [acknowledged](#) when reporting Big Tech’s “unprecedented” banning of RT, Sputnik and other Russian sources of news: “In the first four days of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, viewership of more than a dozen Russian state-backed propaganda channels on YouTube spiked to unusually high levels.”

Note that this censorship regime is completely one-sided and, as usual, entirely aligned with U.S. foreign policy. Western news outlets and social media platforms have been [flooded with pro-Ukrainian propaganda and outright lies](#) from the start of the war.

A *New York Times* [article from early March](#) put it very delicately in its headline: “Fact and Mythmaking Blend in Ukraine’s Information War.” Axios was similarly understated in [recognizing this fact](#): “Ukraine misinformation is spreading — and not just from Russia.” Members of [the U.S. Congress](#) have [gleefully spread](#) fabrications that went viral to millions of people, with no action from censorship-happy Silicon Valley corporations. That is not a surprise: all participants in war use disinformation and propaganda to manipulate public opinion in their favor, and that certainly includes all direct and proxy-war belligerents in the war in Ukraine.

Yet there is little to no censorship — either by Western states or by Silicon Valley monopolies — of pro-Ukrainian disinformation, propaganda and lies. The censorship goes only in one direction: to silence any voices deemed “pro-Russian,” *regardless of whether they spread disinformation*. The “Russians With Attitude” Twitter account became popular in part because they sometimes criticized Russia, in part because they were more careful with facts and viral claims than most U.S. corporate media outlets, and in part because there is such a paucity of outlets that are willing to offer any information that undercuts what the U.S. Government and NATO want you to believe about the war.

Their crime, like the crime of so many other banished accounts, was not disinformation but *skepticism about the US/NATO propaganda campaign*. Put another way, it is not “disinformation” but rather viewpoint-error that is targeted for silencing. One can spread as many lies and as much disinformation as one wants provided that it is designed to advance the NATO agenda in Ukraine (just as one is [free to spread disinformation provided](#) that its purpose is to strengthen the Democratic Party, which wields its [majoritarian power in Washington to demand greater censorship](#) and [commands the support of most of Silicon Valley](#)). But what one cannot do is question the NATO/Ukrainian propaganda framework without running a very substantial risk of banishment.

It is unsurprising that Silicon Valley monopolies exercise their censorship power in full alignment with the foreign policy interests of the U.S. Government. Many of the key tech monopolies — such as Google and Amazon — routinely seek and obtain [highly lucrative contracts](#) with [the U.S. security state](#), including both the CIA and NSA. Their top executives enjoy [very close relationships](#) with top Democratic Party officials. And Congressional Democrats have repeatedly hauled tech executives before their various Committees to [explicitly threaten them](#) with legal and regulatory reprisals if they do not censor more in accordance with the policy goals and political interests of that party.

But one question lingers: why is there so much urgency about silencing the small pockets of dissenting voices about the war in Ukraine? This war has united the establishment wings of both parties and virtually the entire corporate media with a lockstep consensus not seen since the days and weeks after the 9/11 attack.

One can count on both hands the number of prominent political and media figures who have been willing to dissent even minimally from that bipartisan Washington consensus — dissent that instantly provokes vilification in the form of [attacks on one’s patriotism and loyalties](#). Why is there such fear of allowing these isolated and demonized voices to be heard at all?

The answer seems clear. The benefits from this war for multiple key Washington power centers cannot be overstated. The billions of dollars in aid and weapons being sent by the U.S. to Ukraine are flying so fast and with such seeming randomness that it is difficult to track. “Biden approves \$350 million in military aid for Ukraine,” Reuters [said](#) on February

26; “Biden announces \$800 million in military aid for Ukraine,” [announced](#) *The New York Times* on March 16; on March 30, [NBC’s headline](#) read: “Ukraine to receive additional \$500 million in aid from U.S., Biden announces”; on Tuesday, Reuters [announced](#): “U.S. to announce \$750 million more in weapons for Ukraine, officials say.” By design, these gigantic numbers have long ago lost any meaning and provoke barely a peep of questioning let alone objection.

It is not a mystery who is benefiting from this orgy of military spending. On Tuesday, Reuters [reported that](#)

“the Pentagon will host leaders from the top eight U.S. weapons manufacturers on Wednesday to discuss the industry’s capacity to meet Ukraine’s weapons needs if the war with Russia lasts years.”

Among those participating in this meeting about the need to increase weapons manufacturing to feed the proxy war in Ukraine is Raytheon, which is fortunate to have retired General Lloyd Austin as Defense Secretary, a position to which he [ascended from the Raytheon Board of Directors](#). It is virtually impossible to imagine an event more favorable to the weapons manufacturer industry than this war in Ukraine:

Demand for weapons has shot up after Russia’s invasion on Feb. 24 spurred U.S. and allied weapons transfers to Ukraine. Resupplying as well as planning for a longer war is expected to be discussed at the meeting, the sources told Reuters on condition of anonymity. . .

Resupplying as well as planning for a longer war is expected to be discussed at the meeting. . . . The White House said last week that it has provided more than \$1.7 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since the invasion, including over 5,000 Javelins and more than 1,400 Stingers.

This permanent power faction is far from the only one to be reaping benefits from the war in Ukraine and to have its fortunes depend upon prolonging the war as long as possible.

The union of the U.S. security state, Democratic Party neocons, and their media allies has not been riding this high since the glory days of 2002. One of MSNBC’s most vocal DNC boosters, Chris Hayes, gushed that the war in Ukraine has revitalized faith and trust in the CIA and intelligence community more than any event in recent memory — deservedly so, [he said](#): “The last few weeks have been like the Iraq War in reverse for US intelligence.” One can barely read a mainstream newspaper or watch a corporate news outlet without seeing the nation’s most bloodthirsty warmongering band of neocons — David Frum, Bill Kristol, Liz Cheney, Wesley Clark, Anne Applebaum, Adam Kinzinger — being celebrated as wise experts and heroic warriors for freedom.

This war has been very good indeed for the permanent Washington political and media class. And although it was taboo for weeks to say so, it is now beyond clear that the [only goal that the U.S. and its allies have](#) when it comes to the war in Ukraine is to keep it dragging on for as long as possible. Not only are there no serious American diplomatic efforts to end the war, but the goal is to ensure that does not happen. They are now saying that explicitly, and it is not hard to understand why.

The benefits from endless quagmire in Ukraine are as immense as they are obvious. The

military budget skyrockets. Punishment is imposed on the arch-nemesis of the Democratic Party — Russia and Putin — while they are bogged down in a war from which Ukrainians suffer most. The citizenry unites behind their leaders and is distracted.

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