



Hey, Ukraine, Let's You and Him Fight!

Description

WORLD : The war in Ukraine grinds on. And as it does, both those supporting the war and those against it write pieces to try to make their case while never convincing the other side.

Peter Wallison, a hero of the Reagan years for whom I have great respect, weighed in recently with a piece titled "Trump's Ukraine Sellout." Peter is a special friend.

During the Reagan administration, we both survived attempts to defenestrate us. The bad guys lost, and we continued on, doing battle for the Gipper and the country.

Peter went on to write the book on the banking collapse: Hidden in Plain Sight: What Really Caused the World's Worst Financial Crisis and Why It Could Happen Again. Peter is brave and bright.

Nevertheless, I think he's wrong on the Ukraine war.

Like many others in favor of supporting Ukraine ad infinitum, Wallison compares the situation in Ukraine to [the prelude to World War II](#): the allies did not act as soon as they should have to stop Hitler. World War II ensued. Putin, in that argument, is Hitler.

But Putin is not Hitler. People are different. Putin may turn out to be as bad as Hitler, but we don't know that. And because we don't, we shouldn't blindly act as we should have in the run-up to World War II.

It seems fair to say that many, maybe most, Europeans don't see Putin as Hitler. How many NATO countries contribute their full dues?

More have done so in past years (thanks largely to the urging of then President Trump), but eighteen countries still fall short of the alliance's 2-percent-of-GDP requirement, including France (1.9 percent), Portugal (1.48 percent), and Italy (1.46 percent).

Does anyone doubt that if the Europeans really thought Putin was Hitler and feared Russia's winning this war—and then moving westward—they could provide the necessary support to Ukraine in a trice?

Why should the U.S. care more about Putin than the Europeans do? The U.S. bailed out Europe in

World War II as it had in World War I. Why should the U.S. spend its treasure to do so again?

[Is Putin mad](#) enough to try to grab parts of Eastern Europe? Anything could happen, of course; the world is full of surprises. But surely the West should be cautious about waging a massive war today to prevent the unknown possibility of war tomorrow.

Surely there's a difference between wanting to "recover" Ukraine and wanting to "recover," say, Lithuania. Ukraine is known as the breadbasket of Europe and is not part of NATO. Lithuania, about the size of West Virginia, has no special or unique characteristics that would make annexation valuable, but it is part of NATO.

Now many Republicans, if not yet the Republican Party as an organization, have serious reservations about supporting the endless war in Ukraine. For that, Wallison blames Trump.

That's too facile—however much pleasure it may give to blame Trump for everything, including Original Sin. It's also worth noting, and perhaps reminding Wallison, that Putin didn't invade Ukraine on Trump's watch.

Wallison refers to polls that indicate the Ukraine war still has the support of many Americans. That's true, but many Americans also oppose the war, and surely polls are not the only way, nor perhaps the best way, to decide whether to continue to support a war.

There are problems. One is President Biden—or perhaps, assuming he is no longer really the man in charge, his advisors, many of whom are Obama proteges. Biden had a chance before the war began to make it plain to Russia that the U.S. would provide massive aid to Ukraine if Putin invaded.

He did not. So much for the Hitler analogy for this administration. Instead, Biden dithered and showed the same incompetence he displayed in the pull-out from Afghanistan. There is absolutely no reason to suppose that the Biden team is skilled enough to craft policies that will actually help the Ukrainians.

Meanwhile, Biden sticks his finger in the eyes of the Republicans (and a lot of former Democrats) by deliberately leaving our own southern border open to all and then denying any responsibility (who ya gonna believe, me or your own eyes?) for the ensuing tsunami of illegals crossing over that border—rendering hypocritical his insistence that borders are important.

In addition, the U.S. military has been atrophying. E.g., because of DEI, the army and the air force each fell about 10,000 recruits short of their goals in 2023, and the navy about 6,000 short.

The navy is also short of submarines; older ones are being retired faster than new ones are being built. The Navy is seventeen nuclear subs short of Navy requirements, about thirty-three years behind schedule. And we are being urged to send more aid to Ukraine?

The U.S. is also, as has been well publicized, running short of ammunition because of supplying the Ukrainians.

One of the arguments for supporting aid to Ukraine is that, actually, much of the money would be spent in the U.S. rebuilding our stockpiles of ammunition. But then why not simply pass a bill doing only that and leave out the other provisions that send aid to Ukraine?

And there are other problems, too, with the Ukrainians. Sources have told this column that corruption in

the Ukrainian army is way, way up: theft, and then sale, of equipment is rife. Further aid is likely to suffer the same fate as previous aid.

But at this point, perhaps the most important aspect of the war to consider is the enormous death toll of Ukrainian soldiers. Rusty Reno, writing recently in First Things, raises the issue of how many Ukrainians we are prepared to have die in this war.

Is there any number of Ukrainian deaths that would prompt an American enthusiast for the war to say, "Enough is enough?" The destruction of property in Ukraine has been huge and will take decades to replace. (Who will pay for that? Ask not to whom the bill goes)

But what about the people? Are we to encourage the Ukrainians to fight to the last man? Shades of "Let's you and him fight?"

If you were Putin, what would you do? What you might do is keep fighting—not with the intention of winning yet, but only of killing as many able-bodied Ukrainian men as possible so that when you finally did win, there would be few men left to cause ... problems.

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