



## Zelensky and NATO plan to transform post-war Ukraine into ‘a big Israel’

### Description

**USA/UKRAINE: The NATO-backed Atlantic Council has proposed apartheid Israel as a blueprint for a hyper-militarized Ukraine. The paper was authored by Obama’s former ambassador to Tel Aviv, now an Israeli spy-tech consultant.**

Just forty days after Russia’s military campaign began inside Ukraine, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky told reporters that in the future, his country would be like “a big Israel.” The following day, one of Israel’s top promoters in the Democratic Party published an op-ed in NATO’s official think tank exploring how that could be executed.

Zelensky made his prediction while speaking to reporters on April 5, [rejecting](#) the idea that Kiev would remain neutral in future conflicts between NATO, the European Union, and Russia. According to Zelensky, his country would never be like Switzerland (which coincidentally abandoned its Napoleon-era tradition of nonalignment by sanctioning Russia in response to its February invasion).

“We cannot talk about ‘Switzerland of the future,’” the president informed reporters. “But we will definitely become a ‘big Israel’ with its own face.”

For those wondering what a “big Israel” would actually look like, Zelensky quickly elaborated on his disturbing prophecy.

“We will not be surprised that we will have representatives of the Armed Forces or the National Guard in all institutions, supermarkets, cinemas — there will be people with weapons,” Ukraine’s president said, predicting a bleak existence for his citizens. “I am sure that our security issue will be number one in the next ten years.”

Though the web post was based on comments Zelensky made to reporters, the president’s office mysteriously excised a section of his remarks in which he declared a future Ukraine would not be “absolutely liberal, European.” Instead, along with his vision for a heavily militarized Ukraine, the post emphasized Zelensky’s readiness to join NATO “already tomorrow.”

For NATO’s power brokers, however, Zelensky’s intimated willingness to join the military alliance was

perhaps the least remarkable aspect of his statement. Instead, within 48 hours of his comments, the Atlantic Council – NATO’s semi-official think tank in Washington – published a “road map” exploring how to transform Ukraine into “a big Israel.”

Authored by Daniel B. Shapiro, the former US Ambassador to Israel under President Barack Obama, the document posited that “the two embattled countries share more than you might think.”

Just as former US Secretary of State Alexander Haig presented Israel as “the largest American air craft carrier in the world that cannot be sunk,” Shapiro put forward a vision of Ukraine as a hyper-militarized NATO bastion whose national identity would be defined by its ability to project US power against Russia.

## Israel and Ukraine: “old, loyal friends”

Despite Israel’s reluctance to join the Western sanctions campaign against Russia, it has aided Ukraine’s militarily, sending [two](#) large shipments of defensive equipment since February of this year. In the past, however, Israel’s support for Ukraine in its fight against Russia has been more than defensive.

Back in 2018, over 40 human rights activists petitioned the Israeli High Court of Justice to stop arming Ukraine after members of the neo-nazi Azov Battalion were caught brandishing Israeli-made weapons. As Israel’s Ha’aretz [noted](#) at the time, “The militia’s [Azov] emblems are well-known national socialist ones. Its members use the Nazi salute and carry swastikas and SS insignias... One militia member said in an interview that he was fighting Russia since Putin was a Jew.”

Zelensky, a Ukrainian Jew, was apparently unperturbed by Israel’s alleged arming of Nazi elements in his country. One year after his 2019 election, he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to launch what he called a “prayer for peace,” and to attend an event entitled “Remember the Holocaust to fight anti-Semitism.” Ahead of the junket, Zelensky heaped praise on Israeli society, remarking in an interview that “Jews managed to build a country, to elevate it, without anything except people and brains,” and that Israelis are a “united, strong, powerful people. And despite being under the threat of war, they enjoy every day. I’ve seen it.”

“There are many countries in the world that can protect themselves, but Israel, such a small country, can not only protect itself, but facing external threats, can respond,” Zelensky said, adding that he had visited the country “many times.”

In a birthday message later that year to Israel’s then-Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, Zelensky commented that “old loyal friends are more valuable than ever. Ukraine and Israel have a friendship such as this.”

Since the escalation in fighting between Kiev and Moscow in February of this year, dozens of Israelis have traveled to Ukraine to join the country’s Foreign Legion.

In August, the Canadian government-backed Kyiv Independent published an investigation which accused Ukraine’s Foreign Legion of stealing arms and goods as well as carrying out sexual harassment and other forms of abuse.

Meanwhile, Zelensky has continually heaped praise on Tel Aviv, especially after an Israeli Supreme

Court decision to lift restrictions on citizens traveling to Ukraine.

“The rule of law and respect for human rights is exactly what distinguishes a true, developed democracy!” the Ukrainian President tweeted following the July ruling.

## **A hyper-militarized apartheid state as a model for Ukraine**

By April of 2022, Zelensky’s admiration for the Israeli state had apparently reached new heights. Immediately following his declaration that Ukraine would soon become “a big Israel,” Washington’s former ambassador to Tel Aviv, Daniel B. Shapiro, published a blueprint for Zelensky to achieve that dream at the Washington DC-based, NATO-sponsored Atlantic Council.

“By adapting their country’s mindset to mirror aspects of Israel’s approach to chronic security challenges, Ukrainian officials can tackle critical national-security challenges with confidence and build a similarly resilient state,” Shapiro, an Atlantic Council “distinguished fellow,” wrote.

The nearly 900-word outline offered eight bullet points detailing how Ukraine can become more like Israel, a country recently described by Amnesty International as an “apartheid state.” The points included advice such as to place “security first,” maintain “Intelligence dominance,” and remember that “technology is key.”

According to Shapiro, a central component of Israel’s security strategy is that “the whole population plays a role.”

“Civilians recognize their responsibility to follow security protocols and contribute to the cause,” Shapiro wrote of the Israeli population. “Some even arm themselves (though under strict supervision) to do so. The widespread mobilization of Ukrainian society in collective defense suggests that the country has this potential.” These comments align directly with Zelensky’s prediction that in a future Ukraine, “people with weapons” will be present in nearly every aspect of civilian life.

Like the propaganda touting Israel’s “success” as a security state, Shapiro’s blueprint imagined Ukraine’s citizenry united by a “common purpose” with help from Tel Aviv’s “high-tech innovation” in the military and intelligence sectors. His game plan portrays Israel’s advancements in security to as an almost mythical achievement owing purely to the feisty, innovative spirit of its citizens, overlooking the single greatest material factor in its success: unprecedented levels of foreign military assistance, particularly from the United States. Indeed, without US taxpayers virtually subsidizing its military through yearly aid packages amounting to untold billions of dollars, it is difficult to see how a country the size of New Jersey would have attained the status of the world’s leading surveillance technology hub.

Even as Shapiro urged Zelensky to maintain “active defense partnerships,” he simultaneously downplayed the role foreign aid has played in preserving Israel’s settler-colonial imperatives, arguing that the “single principle” informing Tel Aviv’s security doctrine is that “Israel will defend itself, by itself—and rely on no other country to fight its battles.”

Shapiro must have forgotten that principle when he [tweeted](#), “Thank God Israel has Iron Dome” — a reference to Israel’s air defense system that US taxpayers funded to the [tune](#) of \$1 billion in 2021

alone, on top of \$3.8 billion in military assistance earmarked for Tel Aviv that year.

In his advice to Zelensky, Shapiro also emphasized that “Ukraine will need to upgrade its intelligence services” in a similar manner to Israel, which “has invested deeply in its intelligence capabilities to ensure that it has the means to detect and deter its enemies—and, when needed, act proactively to strike them.”

## **A US diplomat stays behind in Israel, goes to bat for its top spying firm**

Shapiro would know a thing or two about the Israeli intelligence apparatus. In mid-2017, after opting to remain with his family in Israel, rather than return to the country that had employed him as a diplomat, he [joined](#) the Israeli tech firm NSO hacking firm as an independent advisor. There, Shapiro helped evaluate potential clients for NSO’s notoriously invasive digital spyware, known as Pegasus. NSO’s many government clients include the Saudi Monarchy, which has used its Pegasus system to monitor and persecute human rights campaigners and journalists.

Shapiro has also enjoyed close ties with Israeli intelligence through the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) think tank in Tel Aviv. During the better part of his four years as a “Distinguished Visiting Fellow” at the institute, its executive director was Amos Yadlin, the Israeli Defense Forces’ former chief of Military Intelligence. Yadlin helped devise the doctrine of disproportionate force employed by the Israeli military against Gaza in which civilians were redefined as the “terrorists’ neighbor,” and thereby stripped of protections under the Geneva Conventions.

In 2018, INSS paid Shapiro more than \$20,000 to testify before Congress on its behalf, despite him not registering as a foreign agent. Like NSO Group, INSS maintains a veneer of independence from the Israeli government even though its founder, Aharon Yariv, also served as the head of Israel’s military intelligence.

In the US, Shapiro had a stint at WestExec Advisors, a consulting founded in 2017 by now-Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and described by Politico as “Biden’s Cabinet in waiting.” Prior to the election of Joe Biden, Shapiro ran cover in the media after the Democratic Party’s platform removed language opposing further annexation of land in the occupied Palestinian West Bank.

## **War — it’s good for Atlantic Council donors**

It is likely no coincidence that Shapiro published his prescription for converting Ukraine into an Israeli-style security state in his capacity as a “distinguished fellow” at the Atlantic Council. If Ukraine is ever transformed into the permanent military fortress he and Zelensky imagine, the NATO think tank’s weapons industry donors stand to benefit immensely.

Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and Boeing were all listed among the Atlantic Council's top benefactors in 2021. Raytheon Chairman and CEO Gregory J. Hayes also happens to sit on the think tank's international advisory board. As Max Blumenthal reported for The Grayzone, the Atlantic Council has also served as a de facto laundromat for money from Ukrainian interests like Burisma to members of Biden's inner circle.

The three aforementioned arms companies, which form the heart of Washington's military industrial complex, have already reaped massive profits from the war in Ukraine. Boeing, which faced a public relations crisis after malfunctions in its 737 Max plane's operating system resulted in two high profile crashes, could be on track to reclaiming its status as the world's top aircraft manufacturer as a result of the conflict.

Though Boeing suffered two consecutive quarterly losses in 2022, by July it claimed to be "building momentum" for a recovery. In June, the aerospace giant secured a contract to supply heavy-lift helicopters to Germany's government after Berlin created a \$107 billion fund for military investment in direct response to the Ukraine war.

Meanwhile, Raytheon and Lockheed Martin both manufacture the Javelin anti-tank missile system that have been dubbed a "symbol of Ukraine's resistance" on the battlefield.

"They've been so important, there's even a story about Ukrainian parents naming their children — not a joke — their newborn child, 'Javelin' or 'Javelina,'" US President Joe Biden [gushed](#) during a May visit to a Lockheed Martin plant in Troy, Alabama, underscoring the company's vital role in the Ukraine war with absurdity.

The US has sent more than 8,500 Javelin anti-tank systems to Ukraine since February at a cost of roughly \$178,000 a pop, according to the Pentagon's 2021 budget. Eager to keep the gravy train flowing, Lockheed Martin is seeking to double production, aiming to manufacture 4,000 Javelin systems a year. Lockheed's 2022 stocks are up more than 20 percent over the previous year, reaching their height just two weeks after Russia's military operation began.

With inspiration from Shapiro's NATO-sponsored "road map" to success, Zelensky's fantasy of a perpetual militarized, high-tech Sparta bolstered by a gun-toting civilian population will require a massive investment in weapons and surveillance technology on the part of the government in Kiev. If this war is any indication, Ukraine will likely look to the Atlantic Council's donors once again as it ventures to fulfill Zelensky's dream of establishing a "big Israel" on Russia's border.

by IAN

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