

Ukraine's Silent Resume Will Cause America's Waterloo – or Recoup it's Global Deterrence Credibility

Opinion by Victor Rud.

written by [Victor Rud](#) May 15, 2024 4 comments



No one country has been as fundamentally determinative in restoring America's global primacy as Ukraine when it renewed its independence in 1991.

This ensured the collapse of the USSR, stopping America's precipitous strategic slide and a gusher of an estimated \$13 trillion spent in the Cold War.

It also restored the U.S. to an uncontested global primacy that wasn't seen since the end of WWII, making America "great again." Small wonder.

Ukraine is not Vietnam or Iraq or Afghanistan. It's the largest country in Europe and that offered a democratic constitution to the world that pre-dated America's Philadelphia by 77 years.

Ukraine's own version of a Magna Carta pre-dated London's by 200 years.

What is that worth? And what happens to our global deterrence credibility if we walk . . . or continue with the handcuffs on a nation that's being eviscerated?

Consider the future tense, as well, with Russia reaffirming that Ukraine is the fulcrum for destroying all that we fought for in the cataclysms of the 20th century.

A Russian document from April 2023 essentially restates its 1997 blueprint to takedown the U.S. through the invasion and occupation of its psycho sphere and subversion of its support of Ukraine.

The outcome of Russia's war against Ukraine will "to a great degree determine the outlines of the future world order."

The U.S. must at long last absorb the several imperatives that Ukraine presents. They are hugely more than the "rules based international order," and are unique in Washington's foreign policy experience.

Like leverage in a crashing stock market, they are an exponential multiplier in destroying our credibility, our allies' trust and our enemies' respect, and therefore restraint. Yet those factors have not been articulated on the Hill, any administration, or the media.

If they aren't fully absorbed, the U.S. may yet ultimately throw Ukraine under the bus. The fallout of America's ignoble stampede from Afghanistan, or the debacles in Vietnam and the Middle East, will then be insignificant by comparison.

Do we remember the 1990's? With the dissolution of the USSR, Washington (and Europe) denied and dismissed Ukraine and instead pivoted backwards in a bi-partisan sprint toward a Belle Epoque of their imagination.

The U.S. took the lead in putting Russia back on its feet, integrating it in a catalog of international institutions without a syllable of contrition, apology, or accountability from Moscow.

Former Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kovalev: "Russia could have lost everything — both its statehood and international status. America helped us not only to preserve all this, but also to elevate our status."

The U.S. was convinced that commerce and trade, with an adequate dose of "Can't we just be friends," would reverse Russia's DNA. It was a hallucination with the opposite results.

Russia ensnared and compromised much of the West's political and economic life, confirming a GPS for China today.

The warning of a 1993 U.S. Naval Post-Graduate study was stark:



“The willingness to allow Russia to become the sole nuclear and economic power to emerge from the Soviet Union is a dangerous prospect for Western security.

“The United States will have assisted in creating a regime that is a serious threat to the democratic community of states.

“Were Russia to embark on a campaign to reconstitute, what options would the West have? Ukraine provides the United States with a potential regional counterweight to Russian territorial expansion”

To no avail. The next year, 1994, the U.S. hectored the country that “made America great again” into surrendering (to Russia) the world’s third largest nuclear arsenal.

This was not, as today in Iran, a matter of seeking to forestall simply a prospective nuclear capability.

Ukraine also imploded a massive nuclear industrial base and what was the USSR’s largest ICBM plant. Moscow used it to manufacture the missiles it placed in Cuba. How much is that worth?

Washington promised that “Ukraine’s security problem will be solved once Ukraine gives up its nuclear arsenal.”

Three years before Russia’s 2014 original invasion of Ukraine, Putin declared to President Clinton that Russia wouldn’t be bound by “the deal.” And six months before that invasion, Putin intoned, If you have the bomb, no one will touch you.”

Clinton’s mea culpa last year in having forced Ukraine’s surrender is of no help. What conclusions do we think North Korea and Iran have reached?

Washington influencers responsible for the debacle are still making policy today, backfilling that Ukraine didn’t control the nuclear launch codes, so it didn’t make any difference.

Then why the angst at the time? Why wasn't America's fear instead of Moscow?

After all, for years Washington's alarm was increasingly about the Kremlin's growing nuclear capacity, which is precisely what Ukraine had stymied in 1991. Now add that it's precisely Moscow's unilateral nuclear blackmail that we've succumbed to in our paralysis over "escalation."

Fear of "loose nukes" was another refrain. But Moscow is the quintessential terrorist state. Since the 1970's it has been curating "Islamic terrorism" against the West, and the U.S. in particular.

We've been flailing for decades but Ukraine is the only country that's battling the root of it all.

Again in 1997, after spending six months in Russia, Ayman al-Zawahiri the mastermind of 9/11 diverted from returning to Egypt and decamped to Afghanistan.

He became Osama bin Laden's lieutenant and the mastermind of 9/11. There promptly followed the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Africa, the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole, the 2005 London bombings, and more.

Did someone forget about Moscow's fingerprints in the Boston Marathon bombing? The cost for America's war against terrorism for only the 20 years after 9/11 was an estimated \$8 trillion. Who trained Hamas?

(For good measure, four months after Putin bemoaned the collapse of the USSR, in 2005 the U.S. also helped destroy Ukraine's conventional weaponry, including 1000 anti-aircraft missiles. "For the safety of the Ukrainian people" "was the explanation given by then Senator Barack Obama.)

There's more.

As America was building up Russia, Russia published its 1997 manifesto to take America down. It called for exploiting "destabilizing internal political processes, "racism," and "isolationist tendencies" in American politics. "Iran is to be a key player in a Russian-Islamic alliance against America."

The key postulate was Russia's destruction of Ukraine. In the very same year, President Clinton lobbied the G7 to include Russia in an expanded G8. How do China, North Korea or Iran assess Washington strategic acumen?

The multipliers only continue. Russia is the largest country on the planet, occupying 40 percent of Europe and one-third of Asia. Only one of Russia's sub-regions in Asia is larger than Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran, combined, or larger than France, Spain, Japan, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Greece, Sweden and North Korea (also combined).

Its European part swallows India and Turkey, combined. It's 46,000 larger than Gaza and its border would encircle the earth one and one-half times. Russia doesn't need more land.

But the war isn't a real estate dispute. Putin: "[T]his operation means the beginning of a radical breakdown of the U.S.-style world order."



His fulcrum is the destruction of Ukraine not just as a state and but also the extermination of a nation. Russia's vitriolic calls for the genocidal extermination are a "holy war" for the "complete de-satanization" of Ukraine.

But it's America that is the ultimate target. And with the half-year paralysis of one branch of government, thereby checkmating another branch, the U.S. was bearing down on the crowbar against itself. There is no precedent in history.

Further, securing Ukraine's independence would be a counterweight to Russia, allowing the U.S. to address China. If the U.S. fails, Europe's contribution to its defense against China will be pre-empted by Europe's defense requirements vis a vis Russia. But even the prodigious commentary on the precedential impact of a walk-away from Ukraine on China and Taiwan understates the danger.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida warned in a recent speech in Congress of the precedential impact in East Asia of an American betrayal of Ukraine, but he missed a dichotomy that is hugely weighted against America.

Unlike Ukraine, Taiwan is not a UN member and is not internationally recognized as a sovereign state other than by a handful of micro-states such as Eswatini, Palau and Tuvalu. (In 1979, the U.S. withdrew recognition of Taiwan in favor of Peking.)

Issues of sovereignty and territorial integrity therefore don't apply to Taiwan as they do in Ukraine, which is a founding member of the U.N. and is internationally recognized. If we walk in Ukraine, what of our deterrence credibility in Taiwan?

And even with the generic, often perfunctory, argument about preserving the "rules-based international order" there's redemption to be had.

For generations Washington has somberly intoned the catechism. “The international system that the United States so carefully constructed is coming apart at the seams” was candidate Biden’s warning four years ago.

But there’s a hypocrisy in it all. Washington renounced that system when it endorsed the infamous Minsk Accords after Russia’s initial invasion in 2014.

They would impose upon the victim, Ukraine, the very limitations on its sovereignty and other penalties that international law instead imposes on the aggressor, Russia. The U.S. capitulated to Putin’s reality reversal. Washington did it again by bulldozing acceptance of Russia’s membership on the UN Security Council in violation of UN rules requiring voting admission.

“We have to champion liberty and democracy, reclaim our credibility,” was another Biden commitment.

How can it be that only a year later, and on the seventh anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, Biden’s administration’s Interim Global Security Guidelines never once mentioned “Ukraine?” Redemption is paramount.



Again, from Biden’s statement: “For 70 years, the United States . . . played a leading role in writing the rules, forging the agreements, and animating the institutions that guide relations among nations and advance collective security and prosperity.”

The price for it was paid first and foremost by Ukraine, which lost more humanity than any other country in WWII, more than the military losses of the U.S., Canada, the British Commonwealth, France, Italy, Germany and Japan, combined.

Ukraine had more military personnel fighting Nazi Germany than the U.S. Army in Europe. Little wonder, given that Hitler’s purpose for WWII in Europe was Nazi Germany’s conquest and occupation of Ukraine. What is left of that “order,” and the “democratic West,” if it abandons Ukraine?

Finally, how does America redeem its 100-year Orwellian legacy in Ukraine? Washington first betrayed Ukraine a century ago, when Moscow's invasion of Ukraine was pivotal in rehammering the defunct Russian Empire into a "Soviet Union."

America reneged on contracted and paid for aid. Ukraine collapsed in the face of Russia's invasion and reoccupation of the country. It was a bloodbath, and the consequences for the world were near cataclysmic.

And again. In 1932-33, Moscow broke the back of Ukrainians resistance by starving an estimated 4-10 million souls, dehumanizing the nation as mere "ethnographic mass."

Rafael Lemkin, father of the UN Genocide Convention, condemned it as "classic example of Soviet genocide." Simultaneously the U.S. extended diplomatic recognition of the despotic regime and were putting the USSR on its economic feet.

Strategic sagacity is not America's calling card. On November 16, 1933, (a) Washington declared legitimacy and approval of the regime sworn to its demise, concurrently with (b) that regime's genocide of the very nation that was America's biggest asset in ensuring against that very demise, and (c) as the U.S. was pouring massive capital into the USSR's economic foundation to ensure its viability and crusade against America. It's vertiginous.

The genocidaire's corresponding commitment to America was "to refrain from . . . any act overt or covert liable in any way whatsoever to injure the tranquility, prosperity, order, or security of the whole or any part of the United States, in particular any agitation or propaganda."

How did that work out?

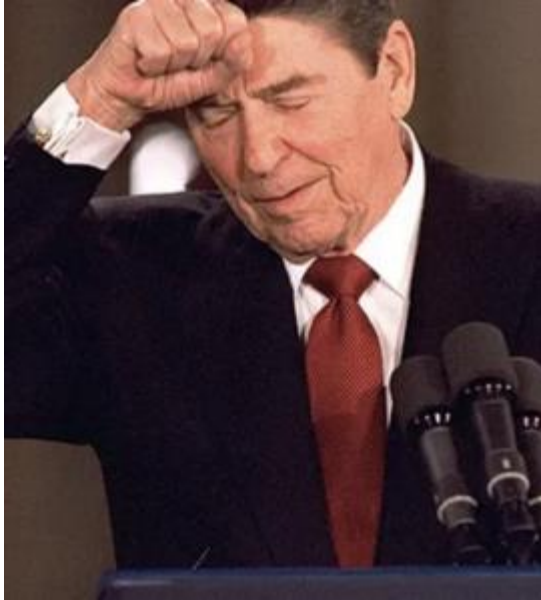
And yet again. After WWII, in "Operation Keelhaul" Washington joint-ventured with the NKVD, the KGB's/FSB's predecessor, in a dragnet of the very same genocide survivors and others who escaped Soviet and Nazi tyranny and found themselves in Displaced Persons camps in Europe.

"The sobriquet, "Operation Keelhaul," says it all: America punished the truth tellers who saw America as their deliverance and whose warnings **we ignored.**"

You would have thought that, finally, Washington has learned from its experience. Its besetting sin is that not even a year had passed from the Congressional applause of President Zelensky's visit to the onset of the paralysis inuring directly to the benefit of the internationally indicted war criminal in the Kremlin.

It was a head-snapping reversal. Were it at least the consequence of considered debate. Instead, the dog whistle of one private citizen out of 336 million, and who has aligned himself with Putin, herded acolytes on the Hill into a Pavlovian conga line.

President Reagan would be aghast.



In the “citadel of democracy” (as Prime Minister Kishida had referred to Congress) “reflex control” and “conditioned response” were doing their work.

In Ukraine, even more humanity was killed, children raped and kidnapped, territory lost, and morale devastated. In the world, America’s reputation, respect and trust continued its collapse.

America’s enemies’ disdain and self-assurance was further catalyzed, and their risk aversion miniaturized.

America’s recent Ukraine aid package is just a down payment on the redemption of its global deterrence credibility. Much more will be needed to negate the consequences of its foot shuffling and lamentations since Russia’s 2014 invasion of the European democracy.

It was that very fecklessness that helped catalyze Russia’s full-bore invasion eight years later and the ensuing unrestrained war against Ukraine.

The six-month paralysis of Congress bodes ominously for the future. A majority of Republicans in the House, and one-third in the Senate, voted against that aid. That implicates half of America’s political system, with a trend line against future support.

What will friend and foe conclude if America again condemns Ukraine to the coffin air of Lubyanka? Is aid only to allow Ukraine to tread water and negotiate a “settlement?” That would simply hang a price tag for a war criminal driving a tank through the stop sign toward slaughter.

The U.S., and the West in general, must take seriously the warning from 1991:

“Whether Russian led integration on the territory of the former USSR will pose a serious, long-term military challenge to the West, depends in large part on the role that Ukraine plays or is compelled to play. . . . Ukraine will do much to determine whether Europe and the world in the twenty-first century will be as bloody as they were in the twentieth.”

Meanwhile, 97% of Russian missile/drone/aerial bomb strikes, stuffed with Silicon Valley tech, continue the horrors.

Incendiary bombs ignite ever more Ukrainian children into running, screaming torches that light the path to either America’s redemption or its Waterloo.

Main Image: [UP9](#) via Wikipedia.



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