



Senator J.D. Vance is the Vice Presidential running mate of former President Donald Trump. Pic: Gage Skidmore Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic

## Is Senator J.D. Vance The Right Man For The VP Job?

In 2016, Senator J.D. Vance, now former President Donald Trump's Vice-Presidential running mate, was once a vocal critic of Donald Trump. Indeed, it appears that Vance called Trump an "idiot," "noxious," and "reprehensible." Vance's disdain extended to questioning whether Trump might be "a cynical a----- like Nixon" or even "America's Hitler." Why would Vance change his views and become an ardent Donald Trump supporter? And why would he become so hostile to aid for Ukraine?

The answers to these questions, in part, are to be found in an analysis of Donald Trump's role in the gradual MAGA transformation of the Republican Party into what increasingly looks like a miniature gangster land, similar to Putin's Russia.

### The MAGA Republican Party

The MAGA Republican party has become a personality cult dedicated to Donald Trump. The wealthy and money (likely including a good amount from offshore Russian sources) increasingly support his domination. Putin's criminality is accepted in Russia, just as MAGA Republicans accept Trump's criminality in America. The truth is lost in both camps, replaced instead by hostility to the views

of others. For no valid reason, MAGA Republicans are scornful of but seek to use the American electoral system to come to power. Just like Putin eliminates his opposition, Trump sees opponents as enemies and speaks of retribution. Add to that the fact that Trump admires Putin, and as three former directors of the CIA have alleged, it appears Trump is leading America into Putin's hands.

## **Trump's Russian Colleagues**

In March 2017, Reuters reported that the Russian elite had invested nearly \$100 million in Trump buildings, with wealthy buyers purchasing luxury condos in properties such as Trump Palace and Trump Hollywood. Additionally, BuzzFeed News highlighted instances where Trump sold properties at significant profits to Russian buyers, including a Palm Beach estate sold to a Russian billionaire for \$95 million. In his book *The Road to Unfreedom*, historian Timothy Snyder further documented Trump's financial dependence on Russian money laundering through real estate deals, particularly involving Trump Tower.

In short, Special Counsel Robert Mueller and congressional committees have documented such Russian ties extensively. As it turned out, these include Trump's receipt of over \$ 2 billion in loans from Deutsche Bank from illicit Russian money, Trump's ties to his former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, Viktor Yanukovich and Putin, and Trump's links to Russian oligarchs and the Russian foreign secret service. Mueller concluded that Trump's ties raise serious questions about potential conflicts of interest and foreign influence involving Trump. What is more, Russian disinformation in the United States is rampant. This "firehose of falsehood" strategy uses many messages and repeated misinformation to create confusion and doubt in American democracy.

## **Trump And Vance**

The foregoing history helps to explain how Trump has risen to power and how he hopes to regain the U.S. presidency in 2024. With the help of Putin and the funds from Russia's oligarchs, Trump has been able to resurrect his dream of a return to the White House. As for J.D. Vance, the explanation of his emergence in Trump's world is very simple. Vance realized he needed Trump's financial support to get elected to the Senate. With the help of funding from Trump, Vance underwent an extraordinary transformation and converted into a true MAGA believer.

That explains J.D. Vance's entry onto the political stage. But why would Vance, as a Senator from Ohio, be so vehement in his opposition to Ukraine? And given the significance of the war in Ukraine today to U.S. foreign policy, why would Vance, as a Vice-Presidential candidate, come out so strongly opposed to aid to Ukraine?

## Why So Hostile To Ukraine?

Vance's understanding and engagement with Eastern Europe have been limited. In February, he refused to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at the Munich Security Summit because he said there was nothing new he would learn there. In a later interview, Zelensky criticized Vance's comments that additional U.S. aid to Ukraine would not change the war's outcome, urging Vance to visit the Ukrainian front lines and understand the dire consequences of withholding support. "Millions will be killed," Zelensky warned, underscoring the humanitarian stakes.

Then, in April 2024, in a New York Times article, Vance argued against a \$60 billion aid package for Ukraine that, despite his views, was later passed by Congress. He highlighted the shortfall of what the U.S. can provide Ukraine against what Ukraine needs to conduct the war successfully. Yet, this perspective ignores the broader international support for Ukraine, especially from Europe. Vance's arguments fall short, considering that most U.S. aid approved for Ukraine will be spent in the U.S., providing jobs in the armaments industry to produce the arms needed.

## A Few History Lessons Short

More than anything, Senator Vance seems woefully ignorant of history. He appears not to appreciate the parallels between Putin's invasion of Ukraine today and Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939, which led to World War II. He does not appear to know that the war in Ukraine has been ongoing for ten years now. He does not appear to know about America's commitment to protect Ukraine's sovereignty in 1994 in the Budapest Accords, where Ukraine surrendered the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal to Russia for guarantees of its sovereignty and territorial security by America, the U.K., China, France and Russia. He does not appear to know that in World War II, some 50 million people died in the fight over European borders, and that is why in signing the Helsinki Accords, the countries who took part, including the USSR as the predecessor to today's Russia and the United States, agreed henceforward to honour each other's borders. He does not seem to comprehend that for these reasons, Putin's naked invasion of Ukraine is one of the most dangerous acts that has been taken since the end of World War II to challenge the international world order set up by the United Nations.

## Putin's Dream

In the recent Presidential debate, President Trump made a revealing admission about what Putin told him in a private conversation before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Referring to Biden's actions in Afghanistan and Trump's view that if he had been President, Putin would not have invaded Ukraine, Trump said, "When Putin saw that, he said, you know what, I think we're going to go in and maybe take my ... this was his dream. I talked to him about about it – his dream. The difference is he never would have invaded Ukraine, never." This reference to

what is now emerging as a '[Mariupol plan](#)' to reinstall deposed Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich into a pro-Russian eastern Ukrainian republic appears to indicate that Trump secretly knew about, and possibly even conspired with Putin, to plan an invasion of Ukraine. That may be understandable, given Trump's fealty to Putin, as outlined above. But that is unforgivable. It also explains why Vance is eager to sacrifice Ukraine for his political future. He is supporting the wrong team. And that is also unforgivable.

## **Trump/Vance Ticket A Disaster For America**

In short, the role of Russia interference in American politics, Trump's concerted effort to transform the MAGA Republican Party into a miniature Putinist Russian gangster land organization, the failure of Senator Vance to do his history homework, his naïve view that Ukraine should enter peace talks with Russia today when Russia launched this current invasion after breaking its previous peace deal with Ukraine reached in Budapest, suggest that the election of the Trump/Vance President-Vice President ticket would be a disaster. Let us remember what 9/11 taught us: that there are many malicious actors whose aim is to destroy America. No country can thrive in isolation today – not even America. While Ukraine needs our help today, in the future, it may be our turn to need the help of our allies again, even Ukraine.

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