

The Case Against Russia: *History's Greatest Criminal* Facts and Arguments for the Prosecution

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Executive Summary

Russia, despite its propaganda to the contrary, remains the last colonial empire in the world and continues to pursue aggressive and genocidal wars of conquest to expand its power. Its recent wars in Chechnya and Georgia and its present full-scale war against the western democratic nation of Ukraine – the most serious geo-political crisis since the Second World War – prove its intent and threaten to destabilize the western alliance and encourage other totalitarian states like China and North Korea to engage in similar violent expansionist wars of conquest. Russia must be stopped. Without attacking Russia directly, the decolonization of its empire, euphemistically called the Russian *Federation*, will undercut Moscow's financial base and end its imperial ambitions. Encouraging and recognizing the independence of the republics of the "federation" that are in fact captive nations of Russia's imperial-colonial system is entirely in keeping with the decolonization model of the civilized world that emerged following the defeat of the Nazi and USSR totalitarian ideologies. A safe and prosperous world depends on it.

Summary:

While much of the world focuses its critical judgements on the periods of European and Ottoman Imperialism, most people appear totally unaware that one of the most violent and destructive Imperial systems of them all was [the Russian Empire](#). That its historical legacy and continuing imperial practices remain under the radar is by design. Russia's brutal policy of cultural repression and forced assimilation known as [Russification](#), left few voices alive or free to speak to the atrocities committed by the Russian State. Its numerous indigenous cultures have nearly all been [systematically exterminated](#). Large and small, the nations that fell to Russian military conquests, inevitably suffered the same fate: annihilation through physical or cultural genocide or Russian imperial occupation. The occupation of numerous nations by Russia continues today.

Like the man behind the screen in the *Wizard of Oz*, Putin is terrified that the careful image of power that Russia has constructed will be exposed as a sham with no substance. Russia's wealth and with it, its power, is largely derived from oil, gas, coal, minerals, timber, etc., that are extracted not from the territory of the Russian Republic but from the Russian-occupied republics like oil-rich [Tatarstan](#), gas and mineral-rich [Bashkortostan](#) and coal-rich [Tuva](#) in Central Asia, among many others. [A map of the Russian federation](#) showing the numerous political associations Russia has with formerly independent peoples, cultures, and nations is a complex mosaic of [republics](#), [oblasts](#), [krais](#) and [okrugs](#), and other "[federal subjects](#)" that spread from the borders of Europe across Asia – the vast Russian Empire that Vladimir Lenin tried to remake on paper into a "federation" of "willing" partners. Czarist Russia was an aggressive imperial system that built itself into a global power through the steady targeting of weaker neighbouring states that it attacked one-by-one, expanding southward and eastward across the far east to the Pacific, and over the Pacific to Russian-Alaska. Pre-communist, Czarist Russia was the head of an empire. Russia, today, is not the largest *nation* in the world that spans 11 time zones. It is the expanse

of the Russian *empire*, not of Russia that stretches 11 time zones. Conflating Russia with its empire – presently referred to as “the Federation” – and calling all of it “Russia,” as many world leaders, academics and virtually all public information sites about Russia do, is as false and ill-informed as saying that England (Imperial pre-war England) spanned 24 time zones. Russia is no more Alamy or the Altai Republic or Yakutiya or the Republic of Adygea than India or Burma or Uganda or Zimbabwe are England.

While European nations were decolonizing and the massive empire of the Ottoman Turks was forcibly dissolved, Russia doubled-down and concealed the reality of its empire by rebranding its colonies in 1922 as “autonomous republics” with full rights of self-determination. While their status change was on paper only and Moscow – the capital of the Empire – continued to exercise absolute control over their affairs and their resources, the ruse was successful. People forgot Russia operated an active imperial colonial system. In deep competition with Britain, France and America to become a global hegemon, Russia defined itself as the anti-western and anti-capitalist alternative. As the admitted features of 19th and early 20th century western powers were imperialism and colonialism, Moscow hid its own imperialist policies and its colonial reality behind the rubric of being an anti-imperial and anti-colonial crusader of oppressed peoples – while the brutality of its oppression of its subject peoples was in reality worse than anything experienced within the empires of any of its competitors.

In like fashion, Moscow’s oft-repeated narrative – and its most celebrated holiday – is its alleged victory over Nazi Germany. Its anti-fascist stance, like its anti-colonial and anti-imperial posturing, is belied by the fact that it was an ally of Nazi Germany and a cobelligerent in instigating the Second World War, not a victim; and by the fact that it achieved all of its pre-war goals, planned with Hitler, for the seizure of the eastern half of Europe. Hardly a crusader of freedom, the death tolls and destruction that Moscow has successfully led the world to believe were its cost for fighting the war were in fact, borne far more directly and severely by Ukraine, than Russia, and it was Ukraine’s armies together with the armies of Belarus – not Russia’s– that were the first to enter Berlin, ending the war. Like much of Russia’s self-proclaimed history, its “Great Patriotic War” narratives are fictions; but it was only Russian troops, who remained after the German defeat to occupy the country, who participated in the organized mass rape of German women and girls – the largest mass rape in history.

Fighting desperately against the tide of civilization, Putin launched yet another violent imperial attack against its peaceful neighbour and true adversary of fascism, Ukraine, in 2014. Notwithstanding Moscow’s several and often contradictory justifications for its initiation of war, its actual motives are, once again, classic imperialism. No different than the wars its leaders launched in the past, Putin is seeking the wealth of Ukraine and the industrial power its seizure would add to the Russian armories, to advance Moscow’s unwavering ambition of becoming Europe’s hegemon.

Should Russia fail to achieve its stated goals in crushing Ukraine’s resistance, the republics watching closely, will be similarly encouraged to stand up to Putin and challenge Moscow’s authority. And this time, their success in achieving independence stands a chance. In that sense only has the war with Ukraine become an “existential” battle for Russia.

The republics have the resources, some independently, others collectively, to be self-sustaining and prosperous nations, but they are mostly kept in a state of penury with tens of millions of their people living without paved streets, running water, toilets or sewage while the value of their resources is funnelled in classic imperial-colonial fashion to Moscow. The impoverished, 19th century conditions of the republics is by design. At the collapse of the Soviet-Union in 1991, which was itself an extension of the Russian empire beyond the borders of the Federation, the republics added their own voices to those of the Soviet states in demanding separation from Moscow's rule. They, too, wanted to be free. They were not so lucky. They had no one speaking for them. One wonders why, if "Russia" is so wealthy, the immense resources of the "country" are not expended to develop it? The simple answer is that these regions are not Russia – they are not part of the "country" but of the empire – and their development would only serve to empower their independence movements and destroy the empire that Russia relies on for its power and status, if not its very existence. Poverty keeps them weak and dependent on Moscow's good graces.

Putin is terrified that the nascent independence movements of the republics will grow. If they break away from Moscow's control, as they want to, Moscow's power is over, together with the centuries long nightmare we know as the "Russian World." To counter that threat to Russia, Putin recently abolished the rights that the republics had since 1922 of pursuing independence. Their pre-revolutionary status as outlying regions of the empire has been restored. So, too, should we in response, recognize that reality and work in a focused and supportive manner to end the world's last "great" empire.

They are waiting for that day.

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PREMISE

Given Russia's unbroken history of brutal colonialism and its present imperial ambitions to expand its domination of smaller nations to achieve global superpower status, the goal of Russia's decolonization ought to be a moral imperative of the utmost importance for all the nations of the world that are opposed to great power abuses and violent imperialism.

There is a wealth of evidence to support the premise that, contrary to popular belief and Russian propaganda, Russia is extremely weak and will completely collapse as soon as the republics – formerly recognized as its colonies – are liberated.

Global peace and security depend on it.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The three "Great" empires of history were the British, the Mongol and the Russian.

BRITISH: The **British Empire** (16th to 20th century) included the American Colonies, the territories of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Burma, Sudan, South Africa, Kenya, Botswana, Jamaica, Grenada, Fiji and numerous other African, Caribbean, and Asian states. What the British brought to its colonies were British law and a Justice System, representative government, economic development, medicine, science, education including advanced research, water, sewage and health systems, road and rail infrastructure, and integration into a global economic and political system and, most importantly – whatever the deprivations of British Colonialism – eventually freedom and independence.

- Importantly, for all the negative press Britain is subjected to for its colonial history, one of the most salient features of British Imperialism is that *today* some 56 countries, formerly colonies, spanning the globe and comprising some two and a half billion people, *choose* to remain connected to each other and to Britain through their voluntary membership in the British Commonwealth. Despite the criticism levelled at Britain for its past, [Britain offered something of value throughout its colonial empire that offered lingering benefits.](#)
- Whatever criticism one may wish to lay at the feet of British Colonialism, it must also be acknowledged that many of the most advanced and democratic nations today were developed inside the British Empire by adopting its legal and political structures.

MONGOL: Unlike the British Empire, the much earlier **Mongol Empire** (13th and 14th century) offered little to its subject people except a change in despotic rulers. Similar to the subsequent Russia Empire which was in many respects its successor, [the Mongol Empire](#) was the largest contiguous empire in history, stretching from Eastern Europe across Asia to the Sea of Japan, north to the Arctic and south into Iran, India, China, Tibet, Korea, and parts of southern Asia. The Mongols referred to their Empire as the "Nation of the Great Mongols".

- Although [brutally ruthless](#) in crushing any opposition to their rule – the terror tactics of extreme violence being one that the Russians learned to emulate – the Mongols were nevertheless far more tolerant of ethnic, cultural and religious differences among its subjected nations than the subsequent Russians. Another similarity between the Mongol and Russian Empires – and one that distinguished it from the British Empire – was the function of Empire itself. For the Mongols as well as the Russians, empire had a two-fold purpose: first, and foremost, it was to privilege those in the centre of power through the payment of taxes that went directly and almost exclusively to their benefit; and secondly, to accumulate power. Power had two primary functions, to dominate and occupy weaker states, thus expanding its territorial boundaries, and to repress internal dissent to safeguard the privileges of the ruling class. In other words, Empire benefited the Emperor. Like Russia today, everyone in the privileged class owes their status to their relationship with the Emperor/Czar/Khan and thus self-interest guaranteed their loyalty. The quality of life for those in the outlands and periphery, whether they even lived or died, is of no consequence or interest to the state.
- The fact that Vladimir [Putin has everyone he considers a threat to his authority murdered](#) or imprisoned is a testament to his absolute authority as the present ruling Czar of Russia, a title that many Russians use without irony. Like Stalin, Lenin, the Czars and the Mongols before them, Putin rules with an impunity the Russians are very familiar with.

RUSSIAN: In addition to the characteristics of the Russian state noted above it must be emphasized that the Russian state itself – and the Empire it subsequently created – came into existence under the Golden Horde division of the Mongol Empire and was modelled after it.

- **Founding of Muscovy:** [Muscovy](#), a small fortified town on the banks of the Moskva River, meaning “wetland”, was established by the Mongols as the center of a vassal state organized to pay homage and tribute to its Mongol rulers. Retained by the Mongol overlords as tax collectors, local Muscovites, who were members of [Finno-Ugric tribes](#) and the [Vyatichs Slavic tribes](#) living in the region of present-day Moscow, were granted privileges and exercised some authority over their neighbours, learning through long association about the hierarchies of power and the administration of Empire. Eventually the Mongol Empire weakened enough that the Muscovites were able to organize and rebelled, overthrowing the Mongols.
- **Birth of “Great Russia” and End of the “Nation of Great Mongols”:** Turning the tables on their former lords, the Russian rulers, no longer Khans but Czars – the Russian language equivalent – began pushing the boundaries of their own Empire deeper and deeper into what had long been Mongol strongholds until “Great Russia” as the Czars called their empire, was now occupying the place of the “Nation of the Great Mongols”.
- **Not Corruption But Tribute:** When people speak of Russian “corruption” it must be emphasized that this is not an aberration or breakdown of an otherwise modern socio-economic system but [is in fact the system](#) the Mongols designed for the benefit of those in power. Of course, regional

governors and local authorities take their share before passing it on, which in classic colonial fashion ensures their commitment to the maintenance of the system.

- **Centralization of Power and Wealth in Muscovy/Moscow:** The centralized system of power and wealth that characterized the Mongol Empire describes Russia today where the resources of the numerous states and autonomous districts of the entire Russian Empire (now “Federation”) are funnelled directly or indirectly through corporate control into the pockets of the ruling oligarch class in Moscow while [tens of millions](#) in the outlying regions subsist on poor diets and live hardscrabble lives with [no running water](#), central heating or indoor toilets.
- **Muscovy Appropriates Ukraine’s History:** The Czars who took over from the Khans, understood the necessity of a solid patrimony. Lacking any history of their own, beyond the fealty their vassal state of Muscovy owed to their Mongol overlords, the Muscovites having now an empire of their own in the later 18th Century, wanted a grand history that would reflect the “greatness” of their own empire and so they began the [appropriation of Ukraine’s history](#) for their own.
- **Muscovy Rechristened Itself “Russia”:** The name “Russia” (and hence “Russians”) was appropriated by the Muscovites on October 22, 1771, when Muscovy declared itself the “Russian Empire” and the Muscovites renamed themselves “Russians”. The Muscovites and Muscovy [consciously stole the name of Rus and Ukrainian history](#) in a move of deliberate self-aggrandization. *(Note: Some accounts give an earlier date for the appropriation of the Ukrainian name.)* Muscovites then, and present-day Russians, have nothing to do with historic Rus or Ukrainians. They are a different people with different genetic roots, radically different histories and different cultural and social values.
- **Rus was Ukraine, Never Muscovy:** From the 9th Century – hundreds of years before the founding of Muscovy – Rus was Ukraine, and from the 10th Century on was known as [Kyivan Rus](#), and ruled over by Kyiv’s grand princes, men like Volodymyr Sviatoslavych, known as [Vladimir the Great](#), who reigned from 978 CE until his death in 1015 CE and [Yaroslav the Wise](#), (1019 CE to 1054 CE). Of historical significance is the fact that the currency that these Grand Princes of Kyiv minted over a thousand years ago contained the historic Ukrainian symbol of [the trident known in Ukrainian as tryzub](#).

IMPERIAL LESSONS LEARNED BY THE RUSSIANS: Moscow’s close association with the Mongol Empire had taught the Russians a few things – mistakes the Mongols made that the Russians would not. The Mongol Empire had collapsed in part because it had overextended itself dissipating its energies, and because it was too tolerant. Once conquered it allowed its subjugated territories – most important the Muscovy Region – to retain some regional autonomy including its distinct ethnic identity. It was that ethnic identity that allowed Muscovites to identify with each other as distinct from the Mongol ruling class, and then to unite to overthrow the Mongols.

This cannot be stressed enough: [The Mongols allowed the nations they conquered to retain their national characteristics](#). The Russians did not.

- Russian colonial conquest was more brutal and absolute than that of their predecessors. Russia didn't rule over its conquered peoples, it **annexed** them and forced them through terror tactics to abandon their national identities and re-identify as "Russian". [Russification](#) was the Russian imperial model for its empire. Mongol genocides were instrumental in enforcing obedience to the Khanate. Russian genocides had an altogether different purpose, to eradicate ethnic identities generally.
- **Silencing a People through Genocide and Control of Information:** Taking the lesson of imperial collapse from the Mongols, the Russian imperial design was not only the political control of its colonized nations but to the extent that Russian leadership could implement Russification without uprisings throughout the empire, their social, cultural, linguistic and historical roots (especially the history of their colonization and Russian abuses) were degraded and their peoples systematically relegated to minority status if not annihilated. The Russian imperial model of genocides, both physical and cultural, and their replacement by ethnic Russians together with the deliberate mixing of populations through forced mass transfers around the empire has had the intended effect of consolidating Russian ethnic dominance over virtually all the indigenous people of most republics. As George Orwell famously wrote about totalitarian states, perhaps borrowing the line from Stalin himself: "He who controls the past controls the future." Russian propaganda and control over information is the one field where Russia excels. As described elsewhere so complete was Russian control over information and education that most Kazakhs were totally unaware of the recent history of the genocide the Russians committed against their nation even though survivors were still alive to tell the stories – but were still afraid to. Not until Kazakhstan regained full independence from Russia did the truth finally emerge.
- **The Tuvan Republic:** One exception to the minority status of the indigenous populations in the republics is the Tuvan Republic and the Tuvan people. Before being ruled by the Russians, the Tuvans, a Turkic ethnic group indigenous to Siberia – and interestingly, close genetic relatives to the indigenous peoples of the Americas – were ruled by the Mongols from the beginning of the 13th century until the mid-18th century when they were integrated into the Chinese Qing dynasty. In 1911 the Tuvans were encouraged by Tsarist Russia to rebel against the Chinese. The separatist movement Russia helped the Tuvans organize was successful in breaking them free of Chinese control only to be recolonized by Russia and incorporated into the Russian Empire. Their majority status in the Tuva Republic stands alone inside the Russian Federation, where elsewhere the Russians succeeded in displacing the indigenous populations with majority "Russian" populations, making future independence based on cultural and ethnic differences problematic to say the least. Nevertheless, there remain better reasons: justice. The long reign of colonial subservience and impoverishment for the enrichment of Moscow, demands it.

"MODERN" RUSSIA IS AN IMPERIAL STATE: There are over 190 ethnic groups within the Russian Federation and there are 83 ["federal subjects"](#) (essentially separately recognized political entities). Of

those 83, there are [21 national republics](#) – originally home to various colonized ethnic groups – and [5 autonomous okrugs](#) and an [autonomous oblast](#).

- Rebuttal to Russian Denials of its Imperial Character:** The Federal Republics are not co-equal with the Russian Republic. Russian propaganda of the 20th century and continuing into the 21st century has vigorously denied it is a colonial empire. They point out, for example, that because at least part of the Russian imperial model was the *assimilation* of conquered peoples into the Russian World wherein everyone becomes “Russian” there was no differentiation between colonizer and colonized – an equality that recognized no distinctions. The rebuttal however is that the model was predicated on the superiority of the *Russian* world view, not those of its colonized “other” and the effect of forced assimilation was the degrading and ultimate extinction of other cultural groups. In effect, the genocide of all other linguistic and cultural traditions within the Federation. Moreover, however the *ideal* may have been expressed, the reality has always been that ethnic Russians are at the top of the Imperial hierarchy and all conquered and occupied nations rank as inferior and its people excluded from any genuine sharing of power.
- No State Freely Submitted to An Association Status with Russia:** Another argument Russians have made regarding the Federation system is identical to the Russian assertion that the former Soviet Union was also a free association of nations, being equal partners who shared the same communist utopian vision. The desperate flight of every single “Soviet” nation that made up the Soviet Union away from Russia to the Europeans following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 put the lie to this assertion. Willing partners don’t flee for their lives, nor, incidentally are they pursued, as Russia pursued them. In the case of the Federation, Russia’s argument is the same, namely that the nations or republics contained within the Russian Federation were likewise fully compliant with their association with Russia, and – like the separate nations of the Soviet Union – free to leave that association whenever they wished. Proof, they say, was in the Constitution of the Federation and in the association agreements of the USSR. The rights of member states of the USSR and member states of the Russian Federation however were paper rights only with no substantive mechanism to enforce them. Never in fact consensual, membership in each of these two Russian Imperial systems was always cohesive and compliance was forced on all of them through military occupations, murder of dissidents and opposition leaders, and the threat of continued violence. Just as Putin has made it clear in his speeches that the equal and independent nation status of the member states of the Soviet Union was a façade and that they in fact “belonged” to Russia, like property, and, as property, that Russia has the right to “recover them” by force – irrespective of what the people in those countries themselves want – so, too, has the independent status of the republics within the Federation always been a myth and the Russian Constitution merely a mask concealing what was and still remains is a brutal colonial system.
- Russia’s Empire Joined the Communists to Overthrow the Czar on Condition of Decolonization:** Under Russian Imperial Czarist occupation, the subject nations of the Russian Empire held out no hope for independence. Until the Communist Revolution. The communists purported to be anti-imperialist and anti-colonial. In order to gain their support for the

overthrow of the hereditary monarchy, [Vladimir Lenin](#) promised them that in the new communist constitution his government would guarantee independent republic status with the right to self-determination. The communist regime clearly understood that these states were colonies of the Russia Empire and that Russia “had” a violent imperial history.

- **Lenin’s Decolonization was Delusive:** This needs to be stressed: there is no question that what are now the republics of the Russian Federation were recognized by the Russian authorities themselves to constitute subjugated nations in the colonial model. [Lenin promised to reverse that](#). Clearly understanding the imperial mindset of his people, which [Lenin termed “Great Russian Chauvinism,”](#) and the threat the “superior nation” ideology posed to everyone – including those nations of the Russian empire already captured by the ambitions of Czarist leadership, which he termed “the dominant exploiting classes of the nation” – Lenin promoted the Bolshevik revolution to what he called “the oppressed nations” within the Russian Empire. If they joined in the revolution, they would for the first time enjoy rights to equality and self-determination.
- **Lenin Formally Recognized the Rights of the Republics to Pursue Full Independence:** Banking on Lenin’s promise and with the hope of achieving real autonomy, these subject nations were convinced to join cause with the communists to overthrow the Czarist regime. True to his word, in 1922, Lenin’s new constitution recognized these nations as “autonomous republics” with their own constitutions, right of self-government and ultimately separation; however, the working power dynamic behind this public image was little different than their former status. As before, Moscow retained absolute authority and no dissention was allowed. Yes, the republics had their own parliaments and governing structures but they remained subservient to Moscow, and their leaders although “elected” never opposed the system and were in reality *appointed* by Moscow. It is important to acknowledge as well the reality that, in common with all colonial states, the leaders of these republics, all men chosen by Moscow, were bought and controlled by Moscow. With their personal privileges and power derived from their close cooperation with the authorities in Moscow they were mere puppets of the Russian authorities. In any case, no real opposition was allowed and the election process has always been a sham. Like [Russia’s “show trials”](#) in which guilt and punishments were decided in advance and the “trial” held merely for show, so too were the election outcomes always predetermined by the communist party. After a decline in conducting show trials through the 90’s [Putin has brought the practice back](#). Its message is a warning to others that no one is safe unless Putin wills it.

MOSCOW SUCCESSFULLY LOBBIED TO HAVE FEDERATION TREATY RECOGNIZED: The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 saw a [resurgence of independence movements among the republics](#). Relying on their constitutional right to sovereignty which had been granted to them by Stalin, and with Moscow weakened – but not defeated – most took the opportunity to declare sovereignty on the coattails of the countries of the Soviet Union that were then breaking free. In response, and fearing the loss of its original inner empire as well as its outer empire, Moscow negotiated treaties with the republics to keep them from pursuing their goals for full autonomy. Whatever pressure, coercion, threats, lies or bribes were brought to bear on the leaders of the republics, Moscow got its way. The

new treaties continued to guarantee their right to autonomy – lulling dissenters into believing independence was not being abandoned but merely postponed – while recognizing other important rights the republics wanted regarding self-government, control over natural resources, and economic development. The formally named [Federation Treaty](#) which was signed in 1992, between the Russian government and 86 of 89 (at that time) of the [Federal Subjects](#) – with Chechnya and Tatarstan refusing to participate and continuing to seeking full independence instead – was then incorporated into the existing Russian constitution and publicized as a reorganized “federal system.” Thereafter Russia successfully sought and gained international recognition as a new post-Soviet “federal” system: the Russian Federation.

- **Colonial Status of Republics Reasserted:** It didn’t last. Like virtually all Russian treaties, the Federation Treaty was entered into solely to preserve Russian state power. When that power was consolidated, the Treaty terms were ignored and whatever authority and powers had been vested by it in the individual republics, reverted back to the exclusive prerogative of Moscow. Under Vladimir Putin’s rule, [centralization of power](#) was pursued with the aim of eliminating any possibility of the further diminishment of the power of Moscow to control the territories of its empire – no longer even a Soviet-styled “Federation”. In short, the Czarist, colonial status of the republics was re-established. Of the two republics of Chechnya and Tatarstan that had declined to sign the new association treaty with Russia, as events subsequently proved, they fared no better.
- **First Chechen War After Chechnya Asserts Right to Independence:** Chechnya’s attempt to break free and establish itself as a fully independent nation was met first with Russian attempts to covertly overthrow the independence government of [Dzhokhar Dudayev](#) followed by a full-scale invasion by Russian forces and war between Russia and the tiny republic which lasted from December 11th 1994 until August 31, 1996. Known as the [First Chechen War](#), the Chechens fought so fiercely and effectively against the Russian army that despite Russia’s scorched earth and terror tactics – condemned by [international human rights organizations](#) – the Russians were unable to defeat the Chechens and were forced, instead, to withdraw and to sign several peace treaties which involved among other terms, Russia agreeing to pay reparations for the damage their war caused and the return of prisoners. Dudayev didn’t live to participate in the peace treaties. After having survived other Russian assassination attempts, on April 21, 1996, while speaking with Konstantin Borovoy, a deputy of the State Duma in Moscow on a satellite phone, his call was intercepted and Russia launched two missiles at his location, killing him.
- **Second Chechen War:** Not content to allow Chechnya its hard-fought independence, Russia took the opportunity the peace treaty gave them to spend the next two years reconstituting and re provisioning its army and, in violation of the treaties it had signed, it attacked Chechnya again in 1999 with even greater violence and destruction than before. This [Second Chechen War](#) lasted for ten years, from August 1999 to April 2009, and resulted, ultimately, in the defeat of the Chechen government, mass killings of the Chechen people, displacement of large numbers of Chechen men and – in scenes reminiscent of the [Russian mass rape of German women in Russian-occupied east Germany](#) following the defeat of the Nazi government – Russian soldiers began [the systematic rape of Chechen girls and women](#). [Men, too, were publicly raped](#) to

further degrade the people of Chechnya and to instill in them a lasting fear of Russians. As in every conquest by Russian forces, rape was planned in advance by the Russian authorities and used as a weapon of war. In the end 15% to 20% of the Chechen population was killed and Russia's brutal "victory" meant Chechnya's resubmission to Russian suzerainty. All of the Russians who had committed [multiple war crimes](#) against the Chechen people were given amnesty by the Russian government. None of Russia's crimes were ever prosecuted.

THE LESSONS OF THE RUSSO-CHECHEN WARS: To anyone paying attention to Russia's history of brutal imperialism, the messages of Russia's recent wars with Chechnya are very clear: Russia cannot be trusted. No peace treaty with Russia has been or will be honoured. Without its former Soviet and Eastern Bloc Empires, Russia is an extremely weak state that, notwithstanding all the resources it could draw on, was only able to defeat the tiny republic of Chechnya after two, years-long wars of attrition. It ultimately defeated Chechnya – crushing Chechens' desire to be free – only by reason of its ability to deceive the Chechens while fielding a greater number of soldiers in the Second Chechen War who waged a relentless campaign aimed at the attritional massacre of the Chechen population and the total destruction of the infrastructure of Chechnya.

- **Russia's Invasions Of Chechnya Closely Mirror Russia's Invasion of Ukraine:** Those paying attention will note the very close similarities, of the Russian-Chechen Wars, including a Russian breach of a peace treaty – expressed explicitly by Russia as a recognition of Ukraine's territorial integrity in the Budapest Memorandum and its subsequent violation by Russia – followed by a full-scale invasion, its scorched earth tactics targeting the civilian population, its mass murders, and its intent to force an unwilling and independent-minded people to submit to the will of Russia's imperial state, with the military campaign Russia is now waging in Ukraine against the Ukrainians. Almost an exact repeat with different victims.
- **Russia is Bankrupt without Its Empire Supporting It:** Without the last tier of the empire it still occupies, which consists of the republics that make up the Russian "Federation," Russia proper – the original state of Muscovy – is bankrupt and powerless. In the classic Imperial model, it is only the wealth of the republics, like Tatarstan, the revenues from the sale of their gas, oil and minerals that is confiscated by Moscow, that finances the Russian entity and keeps the state functioning. Knowing its vulnerability and the tenuous loyalty of the republics to Moscow, Russia's policy towards independence aspirations by any of the republic has been to wage total war. To compensate for its genuine weakness, upon defeat of its targeted opposition, Russia always follows up its victory with revenge killings, mass rape, and other degradations from which its victims will never recover.
- **As an Imperial Entity Russia Cannot be Understood in Modern Terms:** Anyone proposing Ukraine needs to surrender territory and part of its population to Russia to pacify Moscow's ambitions has no idea what Russia is. As the world's last aggressive Imperial state with its roots deep in 18th century "great power" politics, Russia has no parallel in the world and cannot be understood in modern terms. Despite its images of modernity, its high-rises, western shops, imported cars, and its oligarch-glitteati parading across European capitals, Russia is not a

modern state. It has not emerged from its 18th century imperial mindset and will not and cannot be integrated into the modern world of co-equal states. The very idea of equal co-existence with its neighbours is anathema to the imperial mentality.

- **Tatarstan Intimidated by Threat of War Signs New Association Treaty with Russia:** The message of the Russo-Chechen Wars was not lost on Tatarstan, the other republic that originally resisted continued association with Russia. They, too, eventually signed a bilateral treaty with Russia similar to the Federation Treaty that Moscow signed with the other republics. The treaties had an expiry date of 2017 written into them, which these states understood to mean they would then renew their independence plans or negotiate new association treaties with Moscow. They trusted Moscow to live up to its agreements.
- In 2017, [the last bilateral treaty](#) that was signed between Russia and the [Republic of Tatarstan](#) ended.
- **Federation Treaty Abolished in 2017; Full Colonial Status Returns:** Upon the expiry of the bilateral treaty with Tatarstan in 2017, the leaders of Tatarstan wished to extend it, as it had provided the republic, the wealthiest of the republics, with sufficient assurances of economic and political autonomy to satisfy the ethnic population that continued association with Russia was in their best interests. To the surprise and dismay of Tatarstan's leadership, however, Putin refused to extend the treaty or to renegotiate a new treaty. In the absence of a new treaty, the "legal" relationship between Russia and Tatarstan under which Russia had recognized Tatarstan as an autonomous polity with rights of self-determination, simply ceased. In the absence of a continuation of the treaty recognizing Tatarstan's right to independence, no such recognition now existed. The effect of the termination of the treaty was to revert all the benefits of autonomy that the treaty had bestowed or recognized, back to Moscow. Whatever autonomy Tatarstan had pre-2017, is gone. In classic colonial fashion, the wealth and decision-making over Tatarstan and the other republics once more belongs exclusively to the rulers and oligarchs in Moscow.
- **Return of the Empire:** The Russian Empire is back, with its gloves off.
- **Russia's True Nature as the World's Last Empire Must be Acknowledged:** Given global opinion, however ill-formed, that Russia's Czarist *empire* had dissolved upon the formation of the "Federal" system granting the former colonies the right to full independence, the undisputed fact that these same colonies/republics *no longer* have any such rights recognized by the Russian state, ought to result in a reversal of that global understanding. The only evidence-based conclusion is that Russia is a colonial empire.
- [That debate has started.](#)
- **Support Rights of Tatarstan, Chechnya and Russia's Other Colonies to Full Independence:** The refusal of Putin's Russia to renew any of the association treaties with the republics, which

effectively ended Russia's official recognition of the autonomous and semi-autonomous status of these nations, has sent shock waves across the Federation. What option have they now? They either surrender whatever ambitions they had for increased autonomy within the Russian Federation or they resist Russia's imperial power grab to seek full independence and face the same fate suffered by Chechnya, Georgia, and now Ukraine: relentless war, complete with mass killing, mass rape and torture chambers. And likely ethnic cleansings. Genocide. Without international support the republics have no realistic option but to submit to Russian authority. And, at the present time, there is no international support. Indeed, most of the world still operates on the assumption that the Russian "Federation" continues to exist and are unaware that the Federation model – whatever its real import – has been eliminated, the rights of the republics terminated, and that Russia has reverted to its historic and ruthless Imperial system of control by raw violence and oppression.

THE THREE TIERS OF EMPIRE OF THE SOVIET UNION: It is a mistake to think of Russia today as an entirely separate and distinct political entity from Pre-Revolutionary Czarist Russia and Soviet Russia. The Empire that Russia created in the 19th Century survived throughout the Soviet period and remains intact today, together with all the methods of political repression, cultural suppression, mass expulsions, and murder that Russia's rulers always employed.

- Underlying all iterations of the Russian state is the same imperial colonial mindset, the same extreme methods of control and the same ruthless determination to repress and degrade everything that is not "Russian".
- The Communist Revolution (1917-1923) succeeded only in replacing a hereditary aristocratic elite with a new political one. And arguably one that opened the pathway to a more violent breed of ambitious and ruthless rulers whose hold on power depended solely upon their ability to crush all opposition rather than as part of the historic "divine right" patrimony the Czars employed.
- **Second Tier of Russian Empire:** Under the Soviet system Russia continued to expand its empire, reaching now into its next contiguous neighboring states to the south and east. With the capture of multiple new states, Russia now occupied two classes of nations. The first remained the core states of the Russian Federation, but encircling them now was another **second tier** of nominally independent countries that were joined with Russia under the rubric of a shared communist ideology, namely, the **Soviet Union**.
- **Third Tier Of Russian Empire:** In examining the underlying nature of Russia's political system and the extent to which it concealed the reality of empire, it's important to note that through the 20th century Russia also constructed a **third tier of nations** around its Russian core, some of which fell within the imperial vision Russia shared with Nazi Germany of European conquest and, when occupied by Russian forces at the end of the war, were clearly vassal states as demonstrated by their absolute control by Moscow. These were the [Eastern Bloc countries](#), which were composed of European nations – East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary,

Romania, and Albania – that Russian forces occupied during the course of World War Two and refused to leave following the cessation of hostilities. Operated by puppet governments loyal to Moscow, these nations were forced to submit to Russian control from 1947 until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. That they were not in a free association with Russia was dramatically exposed, first by Hungary in 1956, during the [Hungarian Uprising](#), also known as the Hungarian Revolution, when Hungarian attempts to express its independence from Russian control was met by columns of Russian tanks and mass killings of Hungarians. In 1968, in Czechoslovakia, the government of Alexander Dubcek introduced liberalization measures to put a “human face” on socialism which included secret ballots, toleration of political dissent, civil liberties and [various democratization measures](#). Known as [the Prague Spring](#), the measures were broadly welcomed in the country but abhorrent to Moscow which responded to Czechoslovakia’s attempts to change Russia’s rules, as Russia did in Hungary, by ordering tanks and the military to seize Prague and other Czechoslovakian cities. A half-million Soviet troops invaded Czechoslovakia to end its liberalization program. Not all of “Eastern Bloc” nations were directly controlled by Moscow. The Eastern Bloc included several communist nations of Asia, the Americas and Africa that, whether they had the popular support of their people or not, followed the ideology of Marxist-Leninism, and were all tyrannies in their own right, most famously, Cuba, China, North Vietnam and Syria.

- **Russia’s Three Tiers of Empire Belie Its Propaganda Image as an Anti-Imperial Crusader:** Herein lies one of the modern world’s greatest deceits and concealed crimes. Russian propaganda created and promulgated the myth – supported by a global network of totalitarian states, communist sympathizers, anti-capitalists and anti-imperialists – that the states that made up the **Union of Soviet Socialist States** were *willing* members and equal partners in a new socio-political-economic system that was in competition with the Western liberal democratic capitalist system. In its fierce competition for **global dominance** – itself a very strong imperial goal – Russia held itself out as an anti-imperialist crusader, portraying itself through its vast network of political agents as a freer, fairer and more humane alternative to the Western capitalist nation model. As everyone inside the Soviet-Russian captive states understood clearly – witness the examples of Hungary and Czechoslovakia – but millions of deceived people in the free world did not, it was a monstrous and cruel lie.

EXAMINATION OF THE FIRST TIER: RUSSIA’S “INTERNAL” COLONIZATION: Russia has worked ceaselessly for a century – beginning with Vladimir Lenin’s adoption of a post-revolution constitution formally reconstituting the Empire into a “Federation” of autonomous states to convince the world that it supports de-colonization efforts and the legitimate rights of colonized states to seek redress from former colonizers. Like most of its propaganda, promulgated successfully by state-funded disinformation campaigns and “Russian Studies” courses in universities across the globe, nothing is further from the truth. As noted, Putin has, recently, formally abolished the “Federation” model, returning Russia’s autonomous regions to their former status as colonies.

- The Blue Water Rule: Colonization Recently Re-Defined to Exclude Russia and Other Empires:** [Vladimir Lenin](#) himself, the communist revolutionary who overthrew the Czarist Romanov dynasty to seize power as the first leader of Soviet Russia from 1917 to 1924, identified Russia as a Colonial Empire but understood it as a form of “internal colonialism.” Colonialism has most often been conceived of as an overseas project in which the colony is separated from the imperial centre by saltwater. Known as [the “blue water rule”](#) it was a definition arrived at for political purposes that almost exclusively targeted white Europeans and excused non-European states that included Arabian, African, Asian and several indigenous cultures in the Americas that had seized and occupied contiguous nations from being stigmatized as “colonial” systems, even though the relationship that existed between the core and the periphery was frequently more invasive and caused permanent, irreversible damage through the absorption and hence extinction of the colonized population, than overseas colonies which offered greater autonomy due to the distances involved. [Robert Blauner](#) responded to this artificial distinction by expanding the concept of internal colonialism – of which Russia as well as other empires like China’s and the Ottoman (which benefited from the “blue water rule”), were prime examples. The main difference between European [colonialism](#) and [internal colonialism](#) is the source of the exploitation. In the former, the control comes from outside the nation-state, while in the latter it comes from within the expended borders of the annexed territories. This distinction has often been used by Russia to deny that its occupation of dozens of distinct nations occupying the Russian periphery, constituting the entities within the Russian “Federation” – as well as Russia’s deliberate extinction of numerous, contiguous indigenous cultures – was not colonialism.
- Start of the Russian Empire:** Historically, the Russian Empire began under the rule of [Ivan IV Vasilyevich](#) (1530 –1584), commonly known as **Ivan the Terrible**, the first Czar of Russia who was crowned at 16 years of age in what was then a small medieval state centred around [Muscovy](#) (Moscow), and located within the north-western part of the Mongol Empire. Under the control of the [Astrakhan Khanate](#), one of several khanates administered by the [Golden Horde](#) which ruled over that part of the greater [Mongol Empire](#), Muscovy was a transit hub for trade carried on by the Astrakhan Tartars between Muscovy, [Kazan](#), [Crimea](#), [Central Asia](#) and the [Transcaucasus](#) Region. Vasilyevich introduced a form of local self-government to the [Muscovites](#), adopted a legal code, and most importantly for the ambitions of Vasilyevich and his council, established the first Muscovite standing army known as the [streltsy](#).
- Overthrowing the Golden Horde:** Warring against Scandinavia and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in the north and the disintegrating empires of the Mongol [khanates](#) of the south, the streltsy’s first major victory was the [siege of Kazan](#) in 1552 followed by a military victory over the [Khanate of Astrakhan](#) whose ruler was a direct descendent of Genghis Khan. Although later counter-attacks by other forces of the Golden Horde resulted in the sacking of Muscovy, Ivan-the-Terrible’s army ultimately prevailed. The defeat of these two khanates and the occupation of their territories marked the end of Mongol (Tartar) rule over the Muscovites and the beginning of the Muscovite (Russian) Empire.

- Birth of a Messianic Nightmare: Muscovy as *the Third Rome*:** Less than ten years before the birth of Ivan IV Vasilevich (aka Ivan-the-Terrible) a messianic notion had taken hold in the religious community of the Muscovites. It was almost exactly 100 years since Constantinople had fallen on May 29, 1453, after a siege of the city by Muslim armies led by Sultan Mehmed II, the ruler of the Ottoman Empire. The [conquest of Constantinople](#) – a city built by [the Roman Emperor Constantine](#) and for over 1000 years the centre of the Byzantine Empire – sent shockwaves throughout the Christian world. The [Ottoman Turks](#) had won. The [Byzantine Empire](#), also known as the *Eastern Roman Empire*, was the continuation of the Roman Empire, and an empire of Christian faith and power. The defeat of Constantinople marked the defeat of the Byzantine Empire. A thousand years of Christian Imperial rule was over. In the minds of some of the medieval priests in Muscovy, however, the grand notion was formed that Rome, the Roman Empire, could be resurrected – had to be – and that the centre of the new Roman Empire would be Muscovy. This vision of a religious-imperial crusade, combining faith and power to restore the entirety of the original Roman Empire – Europe – became the spiritual driving force for the new generation of Muscovian leaders [beginning with Ivan-the-Terrible](#) and continuing today under the dictatorial rule of Putin and his “spiritual” advisors [Patriarch Kirill](#) and [Alexandre Dugin](#). Muscovy/Moscow’s destined role was to become [the Third Rome](#). Achieving that status by any means possible, war, genocide, terror, state brutality, was all legitimized as the means to achieve the “great” [purpose of saving the world](#) from its own moral degeneracy. To Dugin and Kirill, killing Ukrainians, committing genocide of the entire nation, is “restoring the natural moral order.”
- Peace with the Ideology of Third Rome is Impossible:** For reasons that are unclear, Moscow’s belief in its own imperial destiny whether expressed in terms of modern raw-power hegemony over Europe or in the medieval terms of assuming ancient Rome’s rule over Europe – evidenced frequently by its expressed desire to conquer all of Ukraine and then move on to the next European conquest until all of Europe is brought under its control and/or “saved” from its own illegitimate existence – has not been understood or examined by western leaders. Those who suggest “peace” with Russia through concessions made by Ukraine, have [no idea](#) about the degree to which Moscow is committed to achieve its final imperial goals. They are not looking at Russia’s recent history nor listening to the powerful voices, like Dugin’s inside Russia, who are [not concealing their intentions](#). Unlike modern nations that have broken free of their past, Russia alone remains fully committed to an aggressive imperial goal set 500 years ago. There is no making peace with that ideology.
- Ivan-the-Terrible Crowns Himself as the First Caesar of the Third Rome:** When Ivan-the-Terrible crowned himself the first Czar of Russia he cemented the ideology of the Third Rome into Russian national consciousness. Czar is the Russian language translation of Caesar. Ivan IV achieved two important things by this. Firstly, he gave the fledgling empire a leader with a title they could look up to that purported to make them the heir to the great empire of the Romans and secondly, he gave them legitimacy. To that point in their history the Muscovians had the start of an empire and some income from it, but as former traders and tax collectors for the Mongols, they were missing what all European nations had, namely [aristocratic history](#). Desperate, as they have always been throughout their own history for a legitimacy that could

equal that of Ukraine and the other established European nations and empires, by crowning himself as Caesar of new Rome, he laid the foundation for a new Russian “aristocracy”. Known until then as “Grand Prince” over Muscovy, a title he inherited when he was 3 years old after the death of his father in 1533, by changing his title, and anointing himself as the first Czar of Russia, he created a new monarchy.

- **Creation of the Romanov Dynasty:** After the death of Ivan IV, his son inherited the role of Czar but he in turn died without heirs leaving a power vacuum in a culture that only understood autocratic rule. In that dynastic crisis that began in 1598, a council of local strongmen, known as the Zemsky Sobor and depicted in an early painting as numbering 23, voted on March 3, 1613 and elected from among them a man named Mikhail Romanov to the hereditary position of the new Czar. Thus the House of Romanov was born and remained the new Russian monarchs until the Bolshevik Revolution.
- **Building the Aristocracy: Marrying Up:** Apart from “elections” and self-promotion the Russians utilized the well-established practice of arranged marriages and of hypergamy – marrying up into established “aristocratic” lineages – to fill out their own empty ranks. Thus, “Catherine the Great,” the daughter of a somewhat impoverished but “princely” German family was nevertheless of “noble” birth and hence possessing the status desired by Grand Duke Peter, the heir to the throne and future Czar, when he married her, bringing more legitimacy to the Russian nobility and closer blood ties to the Germans. Of course, the marriage did not turn out well for him.
- **The First Ruling Empress:** Only 6 months after Peter ascended the Russian throne, Catherine arranged a coup, had him imprisoned, forced him to sign an abdication in her favour and then had him killed in 1762, leaving her in sole command as Empress of Russia. The largest territorial expansions of the Russian empire following the conquests of Ivan the Terrible, occurred under her rule. A ruthlessly ambitious woman, her rule, lasting 34 years until 1796, was characterized by military campaigns against the neighbouring, contiguous states of Sweden, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the Ottoman Empire. As she pushed the boundaries of the Russian Empire southward and westward, expanding Russia's borders into central Europe and into the steppes beyond the Urals and along the Caspian Sea, she succeeded in building the Russian Empire into the dominant power in south-eastern Europe – hence the title given to her by Russian imperialists as “*Catherine the Great*.” The nations and people conquered and destroyed or subjugated by her Imperial ambitions, like the Circassians, however, had a very different characterization of her.
- **Genocide of the Circassians:** Setting her sights on seizing Circassia, a nation located in the north-western part of the Caucasus region, north of Georgia and Azerbaijan, Catherine the Great demanded the Circassians submit to her authority. They refused and in 1763 she had Russian forces invade. Known as the Russian invasion of Circassia or the Russo-Circassian War, it was the longest war in Russian history, lasting over 100 years, with fighting continuing throughout 33 years of Catherine’s reign, and ending finally in 1864 during the reign of Alexander II, with the extermination or genocide of the Circassian people.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE CIRCASSIAN INVASION and RUSSIAN ATROCITIES: While the Circassians were an independent people indigenous to the Caucasus with their own history, language, religion (predominantly Muslim) and culture, the Russians refused to recognize Circassia as a sovereign state and *insisted* the Circassians were “Russians” who were under “rebel occupation.” Using various slurs such as “mountain scum” and “subhuman filth” to degrade and dehumanize the people, the Russians pursued the same policy of genocidal terror that they utilized in their invasions of the Chechens and are using in their present invasion of Ukraine. As detailed in Wikipedia ([and elsewhere](#)), with references, [the military encouraged the rape of Circassian women by Russian soldiers](#) who impregnated them and often killed and mutilated them after torturing them. Circassian men were beheaded and impaled. Russians pursued a policy of the wholesale slaughter of civilian populations while the Circassians continued for generations to resist.

- **Russian Justification for War:** The genocidal campaign was described variously by Russian apologists [Adolf Berzhe who portrayed the expulsion of Circassians as essential for "Russian security"](#) or [Rostislav Fadeyev](#) who described the campaign as "one of the most vital tasks in Russian history", and by Russian Czar Alexander II in 1861, fully 98 years after the war had started, as ["a core imperial policy of Russia."](#)
- **After 200 Years Russian Denialism Continues:** The surviving Circassian diaspora must still contend with the lies of modern Russian propagandists who continue even today to engage in historical revisionism by insisting among other things that the genocide [is a myth constructed as part of an anti-Russian information war, and that Circassians voluntarily joined the Russian Empire](#).
- The number of Circassian dead estimated as between 625,000 and 1.5 million together with those forcibly expelled from the region has been estimated at 98% of the original population, very roughly estimated to be as high as 3,500,000 people. And, just as the Russians did in the Ukrainian Donbas and Kuban regions following their focused genocide of Ukrainians there (in the Holodomor), [Russian Tsar Alexander II](#) publicly declared the state implementation of settler-colonial settlement of the now emptied lands.
- Until today the Circassian genocide is unknown to most of the world’s nations and Russia continues to [harass and arrest Circassian activists](#) who try to [bring the genocide and some redress, to public attention](#).

THE LESSONS OF THE RUSSIA’S IMPERIAL WAR AGAINST CIRCASSIA: Russia’s historical campaign to assimilate Circassia into its empire and failing that, to remove Circassia from the map of the world, exterminating its people, and annex its depopulated lands as part of Russia is the precursor model for both the Chechen wars and Russia’s genocidal campaign to eradicate Ukrainian statehood and Ukrainian identity. [The similarities in the Russian military campaigns](#) against the Circassians in the 18th and 19th centuries and the Ukrainians in the 21st century are striking. Russia’s imperial motives, false narratives justifying the war, its state policy of terror tactics, its mass displacement of civilian populations, and Russia’s fierce determination to achieve their goals regardless of cost (war losses to the Russians in the Circassian war was very high, as it was in its wars with Chechnya and is in its war

against Ukraine, approaching one million), are virtually identical. All that separates them is time and geography and the use today of advanced weapons with increased killing capacity.

- **An Examination of the Three Wars Establishes that it is the Culture of Imperialism and Not the Leadership that Underlies Russia’s Brutal Ongoing Imperialism:** The undisputed facts of the Russian-Circassian war – accepted by international historians although still denied by Russian propagandists – demonstrate a remarkable consistency over the centuries, continuing to the present date, of Russian imperial philosophy, state-sanctioned terror tactics, dehumanizing of the population, torture and violence against civilians and military personnel, advocacy of war crimes, and broad-based genocidal campaigns, all of which in turn demonstrates a deep contempt generally for all of Russia’s colonized populations, regardless of the nature of Russia’s political leadership. Whether Czar, Czarina, dictator, General Secretary, chairman, prime minister or president, and whatever the political structure under which the Russian rulers exercise power, the inescapable conclusion is that it is *the culture*, a Russian mind-set, out of which Russian leadership emerges along with its abusive practices, rather than the leadership that constructs the practices. Of course, the top and bottom both have influences on each other, but generally Russia’s long history of imperial crimes is the result of imbedded bottom-up cultural attitudes, values and beliefs, rather than top-down political power that dictates the character of the Russian World.
- **Despite Stalin’s Atrocities and Maybe Because of Them He was Loved and Respected By Russians:** Despite committing some of the greatest atrocities in history against his own people, when Stalin died, [the masses of Russia wept bitterly at the loss of their “great leader.”](#) It points, once more, to the culture, with its ideologies of power, control and national superiority that are buried within the Russian psyche, that needs to be changed – together with the false narratives of Russia’s innocence – not simply the leadership.

Vladimir Putin isn’t Vladimir Stalin, yet his policies, practices and autocratic strong-man rule including promotion of loyal allies and murder of opponents, increasingly appears Stalinist. In Russia, power has never been shared horizontally through democratic processes or an exercise of civil rights, but has always been expressed vertically, with absolute power concentrated at the top and a subservient, submissive, and disempowered class occupying the bottom rungs.

It is when the powerless are given weapons and the licence to kill, that they eagerly commit the most horrendous crimes imaginable on helpless Ukrainian civilians and military prisoners. As true today as it was two centuries ago.

EUROPE DECOLONIZED; RUSSIA DOUBLED DOWN: Contrary to the myth of a voluntary union of independent nations, the reality of the Soviet Union was that these other “socialist” states suffered a fate far worse than mere colonization for resources extraction. They were virtually slave nations to the Russian central leadership. Citizens of this tier of colonized nations had no rights that could not be voided at the whim and will of the ruling communist elites. It was one of the most brutal empires in history and surpassed the horrors of the German Nazi period in duration, extent and violence.

- Khrushchev Denounces Western Imperialism While Asserting the Soviet Union Stands for Peaceful Co-Existence:** Between 1945 and 1960 while European decolonization saw three dozen new states in Asia and Africa achieve autonomy or independence, Russia stepped up its campaign to conceal its own three-tiered empire – then composed of the republics of the Russian Federation, the nations of USSR and the nations of the Eastern Bloc – by its own anti-colonial rhetoric. Regarding that period and the competition between the Soviet and the American systems for public and international support, the [U.S. Department of State wrote in the Office of the Historian](#): “The process of decolonization coincided with the new Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, and with the early development of the new United Nations. Decolonization was often affected by superpower competition, and had a definite impact on the evolution of that competition.” An example of that competition in which Nikita Khrushchev, head of the USSR, targeted the West for its role in colonization, was a speech given by Khrushchev in 1961 at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow, and widely reported, in which he said, that “peaceful coexistence for the Soviet Union means intense economic, political and ideological struggle between the proletariat and [the aggressive forces of imperialism in the world arena](#).” The speech was, of course, just a few years after the violent invasion of Hungary by Khrushchev’s tanks and troops sent to crush an independence movement in a small state occupied forcefully by Russia’s Soviet system. The hypocrisy was not lost on the dozens of states and millions of people trapped inside Russia’s own imperial model.
- The Soviet Union:** The Soviet Union, like the inner Russian Federation/Empire, was a closed system. Similar to a prison camp, people were not free to come and go, borders were sealed, police shot to kill anyone attempting to escape and enormous resources were put into operating internal surveillance systems. Everyone was being watched. What happened within the walls of this Russian Empire was a state secret known only to the Russian rulers and their NKVD enforcers, later renamed the KGB and now called the FSB, all iterations of the Russian Secret police. The Russians have never declassified their records and if they kept records of their state-sponsored killings and genocides, they have never released them, so estimates are very rough, but the estimates of people that the Russians and their subordinates murdered range from [a low of 28 million to a high of 127 million](#). Millions upon millions. The numbers of persons killed and the horrors attendant on each of those individual deaths is staggering. The horror is so deep that the human mind struggles to register it. The list of [war crimes and crimes against humanity](#) that Soviet Russia committed is extensive, includes people from every one of Russia’s occupied nations and demonstrates an [unbroken pattern of Russian state violence](#) from Czarist Russia through to the present.
- The Gulag:** Almost immediately after the revolution started in 1917, the Russians began the organization of a [vast internal prison system](#) known as the “Gulag”. Comprising hundreds of concentration camps scattered across the Empire, Russian secret police seized millions of people, confiscated their property, and shipped them into the gulag system as [slave laborers](#) to survive on their own if they could while they were forced to work in Russia’s underdeveloped hinterlands to extract resources and create and build state industries. Russia buried the fact that it enslaved millions of people by identifying them as criminals or enemies-of-the-state or

counter-revolutionaries who were impeding the progress of the Russian World in its never-ending bid for world leadership.

- **Internal Displacement:** Was the world aware of the existence of the Gulag, or of the fact that Russia enslaved millions of people for over 40 years as unwilling, unpaid labour? Or of the fact that Russians had [internally deported large numbers of people](#) (estimated at 6 million) – ethnic Koreans, Crimean Tartars, Lithuanians, Germans, Poles, Estonians, Belarusians, Latvians and Ukrainians, Crimean Greeks, Chechens, and others – and forcibly “resettled” them usually by dropped them off from cattle cars into remote areas of the far east where many of them froze to death or starved?

The mixing of populations between different republics was another Russian strategy to destroy the identity and cultural cohesiveness of occupied nations.

- **The Holodomor Genocide:** Was the world aware that over the course of two years in 1932 and 1933 acting under the authority of Stalin the Russians turned the entire Ukrainian nation into a concentration camp? Stalin’s plan, resurrected by Putin today, was the elimination of Ukrainian identity and its replacement by a Russian one. In the Eastern Ukrainian lands where war rages today, the death tolls of the Holodomor left the farms vacant, allowing Stalin to export Russians – many of them Russian criminals released from prison for that purpose – [to colonize Ukraine’s now vacant farms](#). While the entire population of Ukrainians were starving and the country teetered on the brink of total annihilation, between five million and ten million perished from hunger. That event known as [the Holodomor](#), meaning death-by-starvation, is recognized today as a deliberate genocide but at the time and for many years afterwards Russia had managed to conceal its’ crime.
- **Effects of Genocide:** Were it not for repeated genocides, including those committed by German Nazis, Ukraine’s population today would be close to that of Russia’s.
- **Kazakh Genocide:** Nor was Ukraine alone in being decimated by an engineered genocidal starvation campaign. Moscow determined that the Kazakhs, too, to ensure the security of Russia, needed to be crushed. The dead can’t rebel. Between 1931 and 1933 Russian forces occupying Kazakhstan engineered the complete confiscation of food and animals from the Kazakhs just as they were doing in Ukraine. [Forcing death by starvation on the Kazakh people](#), those who tried to escape the genocide by fleeing over the borders into China were shot and killed by Russian soldiers who guarded the borders. As in Ukraine, numbers of dead are only rough estimates, but estimates place the toll at between 1.5 million and 2.3 million. With the smaller Kazakh population these numbers represented proportionately a larger death toll than Ukrainians with [as much as 40% of the population being killed by Russians](#).
- **Russian Disinformation:** As with the Holodomor, the Kazakh genocide was so well concealed from the world by the Russians that [even in Kazakhstan the extent of the killing and its horrific details were largely unknown until very recently](#). So total was Russian control over information, education and communication inside Kazakhstan – as well as information leaving the country –

that it took the collapse of the Soviet Union and the liberation of Kazakhstan for the people to rediscover their own near history. Until then anyone investigating it or writing about it would have been killed by the Russian authorities.

- **Murder of Critics:** Note that the long-standing [Russian prohibition of criticizing the state](#) or bringing its failings to the public attention remains, as always, a serious offence. The image of Russia as a powerful and successful state that can compete with America and the European nations not just militarily but economically and socially, is one that has been carefully crafted and remains core to its ambition to place itself as Europe's new hegemon. For Russia, image is at least as important as genuine power, perhaps ever more so as it offers nothing of real value to its people. In its battle for domination, if an enemy can be convinced a battle is not winnable and gives up without a fight, Russia wins. It is that same strategy it is pursuing in its war with Ukraine and, in light of it, anyone criticizing the Russian invasion of Ukraine or its grossly immoral genocidal intent is subject to severe penalties.
- **The Myth of the Russian Ally: Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact:** Equally staggering to the raw data on Russia's horrific imperial history is the fact that all of this should have been front and centre in assessing Russia's present character and its intentions while dealing with Russia but, instead, it has been largely overlooked. Because western democracies were nominally allied with Russia in the Second War, people forget, too, that Russia started the war. That it was not opposed to Hitler or to Nazism but, on the contrary allied with Hitler's Nazi state and shared its vision – as an equal partner – for European domination. The pre-war agreement between Hitler and Stalin, [the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact](#), was to split control of Europe between them. Germany would take western Europe and Russia eastern Europe. We need to remind ourselves – maybe even tell ourselves for the first time – that Russia was not a victim of the Nazis however much it has so successfully portrayed itself. When Nazi Germany entered western Poland and started the Second War, Russia entered eastern Poland. Poland was the first prize of their joint enterprise.
- **All Russia's Imperial War Aims Realized:** We need to remind ourselves too that while Germany came out of the war with none of its goals realized, its original ally, Russia, came out with every one of its goals realized. In short, Germany lost but Russia won the war they jointly started. After it, Russia now occupied all of Eastern Europe and half of Germany – far more territory than it would have had Hitler not reneged on their agreement. The nuances of Russia's post-war occupation of Eastern Europe as well as its post-war narrative that allowed it to avoid being labelled a victorious aggressor state, fills volumes but here, it suffices to say Russia was not a victim of aggressive imperialism, but an instigator and, in the end, the clear victor.
- **True Victims and Heroes of WWII – Not Russia:** The reader will remember that the strategy of playing victim worked for Russia after its invasion of Ukraine when German Chancellor Olaf Scholz declined to provide German weapons to Ukraine on the premise that Germany had an historical debt to Russia having caused it such trauma in the war, forgetting or failing to realize that proportionally as well as in raw numbers, [Ukraine suffered far more casualties than did Russia](#), with Belarus proportionately suffering more casualties than Russia – figures that Russia deliberately distorted in its favour, post-war, first by identifying all deaths collectively as “Soviet”

deaths and then later replacing “Soviet” with “Russian”, crafting global opinion to believe that the worst impact of the war was suffered by Russia whereas its impact was, in fact, far worse on Ukraine and Belarus. In seeing Russia as the primary victim, and wishing not to inflict more harm on Russians, Germany’s Chancellor completely ignored Germany’s greater debt owed to Ukraine for its [mass killing of millions of Ukrainians](#) as well as the simple need to assist Ukraine in resisting another genocide. Estimates of Ukraine war dead, both civilian and military, are 7 million, higher than the German dead at 6.6 and the Russian dead at 5 to 6 million. Additionally, 2,244,000 Ukrainians were taken by Germany as slave labour to operate Germany’s war industry. From 1939 to 1945, the *combined* casualties of the German occupation *together with* Soviet repression resulted in the deaths of one quarter of the Ukrainian population, or some 10 million persons, of whom approximately 600,000 were Ukrainian Jews. No other nation suffered more than Ukraine. By comparison, France suffered just over 300,000 casualties, both civilian and military, America 242,100, and Italy allied with Nazi Germany, only 300,000. Fully 20% of all war deaths were suffered by Ukrainians leaving not a single family untouched by tragedy.

- **Ukraine’s Role in Defeating the Nazi Regime:** Russia has for long promoted the myth that it was *Russian* forces who defeated the Nazis by entering Berlin and finally forcing the Nazi surrender, at best a half-truth that most western historians assume to be true and accept unquestioningly. The “misunderstanding” – deliberately fostered by Russia – is based on western confusion between the identities of “Soviet” and “Russian” which are not synonymous but were nevertheless deliberately conflated both to exaggerate the importance of Russia and to degrade the critical role of the peoples of other Soviet nations by ascribing to the “Russians” all of the military achievements and sacrifices of other Soviet armies, primarily the Ukrainian Army (known as “Ukrainian Soviet Front”) and the Belarusian Army/Front.
- **The Russian Myth of Their Great Victory:** What the Russians call the “Victory”, the surrender of Nazi Germany in Berlin on May 8, 1945, is celebrated across the Russian Federation in every village and city as the most important of all national holidays. It is Germany’s defeat that gives Russia and Russians their greatest sense of achievement and identity. The reason why Russia perpetuates this falsehood, as [Katie Davies writes in the Kyiv Independent](#), is important. Control over the narrative has given the Putin regime an endless source of propaganda material with which to foment Russian Imperial Nationalism and to justify its wars of aggression, including of course its invasion of Ukraine.

Davies writes: “The legacy of Soviet victory over Nazi Germany feeds pro-war aggression in Putin’s Russia — and is [celebrated with a religious fervor](#).” The Great Patriotic War which saw the defeat of Nazi Germany is now the Great Patriotic War to defeat a resurrected Nazi state, namely, Ukraine.

- **Until Putin, Russia Recognized the Critical Roles of Ukraine and Belarus in the Defeat of Nazi Germany:** The distortion of these facts is relatively recent. Fifty years ago, the Victory Day parades in Moscow recognized that the defeat of the Nazi regime was due not only to the collective effort of the allied armies and to the massive military aid shipped to the Soviet Union

by America, but also by the massive sacrifices of the Ukrainians and the Belarusians. Today, and since the rise to power of Putin, the Victory Day parades and the official Russian state narratives have dismissed the dominant role played by Britain and America and have completely eliminated the contribution of the Ukrainian and Belarusian Armies to the victory: *Victory* is Russia's alone.

- **Russian Propaganda Since Putin Has Been to Brand Ukraine as a Defender of Nazi Germany Rather than as Democracy's Most Ardent Supporter:** It would hardly further Moscow's narrative of Ukrainian Nazis to acknowledge that it was in fact the Ukrainian and Belarusian Armies that were the first to enter Berlin and end the war. Or that it was the Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples who proportionately suffered the worst deprivations during the war. To recognize Ukraine's wartime efforts is to recognize Ukraine as a state among other European states – a reality Russia has long fought to deny. However, all anti-Ukrainian propaganda aside, the truth is that Russia's claim to the WWII victory is grossly overstated. Without American aid and without the engagement of the Ukrainian and Belarusian Armies, Russia would have been defeated and ceased to exist. Russia is not as powerful as it likes to assert.

It is well beyond the scope of this essay to repeat what war historians have thoroughly documented – those sources are everywhere and are voluminous – but the briefest outline of Ukraine's involvement in the war is necessary to counter Russia's propaganda on this critical issue and to illustrate, in Russia's occupation of Germany, the Russian colonial model which remains extant to this day.

- **The Defeat Of Berlin:** On April 20, 1945, the [1st Ukrainian Army \(Front\) reached Berlin's outskirts](#) from the south and the south-east while the 1st and 2nd Belorussian Armies (Fronts) were encircling Berlin from the east and north-east. Further south and completing the encirclement was the Ukrainian 4th army. As the [Ukrainian and Belorussian armies pushed into Berlin](#), on April 30, Hitler committed suicide and eight days later Berlin surrendered.
- **The Ukrainians and Belarusians were not fighting to defend Russia or the Soviet Communist system but for their Own Survival Against Germany's Planned Genocides:** Although there was some mixing of ethnicities in the various Soviet armies, nevertheless, broadly speaking, the Soviet *Russian* armies were composed of *ethnic Russians*, while the Ukrainian and Belarusian Armies were composed of *ethnic Ukrainians and Belarusians*, respectively, drawn from their own countries and formed and organized separately. It is important to recognize as well that while the Ukrainian and Belorussian (Belarusian) armies were under the ultimate control of Soviet-Russian leadership they were not fighting for the survival of the Soviet system but for their own national survival which Nazi ideology threatened under their [policy of Lebensraum](#) – the territorial extermination of indigenous populations of Eastern Europe, primarily Slavs and Jews and their replacement by Germans. The Nazi policy to commit the genocide of Ukrainians, among others, was not, incidentally, unlike Stalin's policy of the same time period, of organizing the Ukrainian genocide and replacement of Ukrainians by ethnic Russians throughout the Donbas and Kuban regions, known as [the Holodomor](#).

- **The Separate Ukrainian Resistance:** While [7 million Ukrainian soldiers fought the Nazi Regime](#) inside regular Ukrainian (Soviet) army units, tens of thousands of Ukrainians escaped forced conscription into the Soviet armies and instead joined the [underground partisan resistance movement \(UPA\)](#). Like [the French resistance](#), and [the Dutch resistance](#), the goals of the Ukrainian resistance were the liberation of Ukraine from foreign occupation, Russian as well as German.
- **As Soon as Berlin Fell, the Russian High Command Ordered the Ukrainian and Belorussian Armies to Vacate Berlin and Return to their Respective Countries to Demobilize and Disarm:** The Russian authorities in 1945 were well aware of UPA attacks on Russian positions throughout the war, of Ukrainians' hatred of Russians – every Ukrainian soldier knew Ukraine had recently been subjected to one of the worst genocides in history, the [Holodomor genocide](#), that had been perpetrated against them by Stalin's Soviet-Russian regime – and of Ukrainians' deep aspirations to be free of Russian occupation no less than their desire to be free of Nazi-German occupation. The Russians, however, were no less determined than they had been throughout the 1920's and 1930's to crush all expressions of Ukrainian identity. After the Ukrainian and Belorussian armies entered Berlin from the south and south-east, the Russian armies entered from the north-east. As soon as Berlin surrendered, the Soviet-Russian High Command ordered the Ukrainian and Belorussian Armies to immediately leave Berlin, return to their respective countries, and disarm. Then, left alone with the defeated German nation in ruins, now firmly under Russian occupation, the Russians began the wholesale and prolonged rape of the German people.
- **The Mass Rape of German Women and Girls:** It's important to recognize that this mass rape was not carried out by "Soviet" soldiers but by "Russian" soldiers. This was not a "Soviet" crime that involved other soviet nationalities or one that disappeared when the "Soviet" adjective was dropped in 1991 but was and remains a Russian war crime. Estimates are rough – the Russians were not keeping records – but some [two million girls and women were raped](#). Many raped so brutally they died from their injuries. With no escape and no hope for a future free of Russian occupation and torture, many others committed suicide. As intended by the Russian authorities, thousands became pregnant and had to give birth to the children of their rapists. As elsewhere in the Russian empire, Russian occupation took several forms, ethnic population replacement through rape being one of them. This same policy appears to have been followed most recently in Chechnya, when after the final defeat of the Chechens, Russian soldiers also mass raped Chechen women.
- **Russia's Role in Starting WWII:** Equally important in recognizing Russia's role in starting WW2 and in exiting the war victorious, is another critical aspect of post-war analysis and change that Russia has successfully kept from public scrutiny. While the Nazi state suffered defeat at the hands of the Allied forces, was physically crushed and its people forced to accept responsibility for the depravity they demonstrated throughout the period of Nazi rule, the Russians have NEVER acknowledged their massive crimes against humanity, have never been brought to justice and have never atoned for their sins nor taken any responsibility for them. Why? Because the Russian state that committed the crimes is the same Russian state that is in power

today. Not identical of course but its legitimate successor, inheriting its empire, its history, and its tools of state repression including its embrace of state violence to enforce its rule. Russia is not looking back reflectively on a history it now sees as abhorrent, rather [it embraces that same history](#) as its own – and Stalin not as the world’s worst mass killer but as Russia’s greatest leader, [today being honoured by Putin’s regime](#). Russia has not abandoned its centuries old imperial ambition to become a global power dominating “lesser” states as it has done brutally inside both the Federation and the Soviet Union, but continues to look ahead at further conquests.

- **The Last Imperial System:** The critical point here is that of all the world’s former empires – China perhaps also included – Russia stands alone in not abandoning its imperial system. Russia has not apologized nor has it embarked upon a self-examination of its crimes, because it has not turned its back on its history of imperial rule and conquest. Instead, as Russia’s ruler, Vladimir Putin, often states, the surrender of its outer empire without a fight by Mikhail Gorbachev, the last leader of the Soviet Empire – was the greatest geo-political mistake a Russian leader ever made. On December 12, 2021, one year before he launched Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Putin acknowledged that the Soviet Union was not an alliance of equal states sharing a common communist ideology but rather an integral part of [“historical Russia”](#). Some 15 years earlier, on April 25, 2005, presaging the aggressive attempts to follow in reconstituting the former power of Russia, Putin lamented [the collapse of the Soviet empire](#) “was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century.” This was not a state or a regime that had turned its back on empire and Imperialism but one that was determined at all costs to press ahead to recover the empire it had lost and to force the West, if not the world, to recognize its imperial power and submit to it.

RUSSIA TODAY, THE FACE OF FASCIST IMPERIALISM: Putin’s Intent to Reconstitute the Empire of the USSR: After seventy years of elaborate lies the truth is out. Once conquered and occupied by Russia the European states belong to Russia, Putin insists: the spoils of war. More concerning, Putin’s government intends, as is repeatedly stated, to fight to force them back under Russia’s absolute control. No communist ideology, no shared benefits, no betterment of humanity or even of the lives of its own people. Only Stalinist-style mass repression, murder, and enslavement for the benefit of a tiny oligarchic elite who hold more power and enjoy more privileges than the former Czarist dynasties ever imagined: the Russian World. Stripped of its lies and propaganda, its ideology is simply pure power.

- **Inside the “Russian World”:** Anyone who fails to understand that the Soviet Union was but another expansion of the Russian Empire which for decades held millions of persons in a state of captivity, is being wilfully blind or is sadly uninformed. Nor, of course is Putin the architect of Russian imperial ambitions. These ambitions have long formed the core identity of Russianness, the Russian World. The verticality of Russian power structures, with absolute power radiating downwards from the top, is so deeply imbedded in Russian culture, it may well be that imperial power dynamics are now part of Russian cultural DNA. Certainly, a primary feature of military and political power structures is the regular, systemic abuse of lower ranks by higher ranks. It is not Putin’s Russia but Russia’s Putin. After him another iteration of Russian nationalism and Russian imperialism is waiting. It cannot be otherwise, as Russia is and remains an imperialist

system. To give up its imperialist visions it would have to dissemble its vast internal empire. It is ultimately the continued existence of the empire itself that defines the Russians as Imperialists. It cannot be otherwise. And it will never voluntarily agree to dismember its empire and set its republics free. To the contrary, the Russian empire, the Russian World, like all empires, seeks constantly to expand.

- **Russia’s Imperial Ambition to Conquer All of Europe:** Russia’s brutal invasion of Ukraine and its daily bombardments of Ukrainian territory with millions of artillery shells, missiles and rockets with its attendant thousands of deaths is both Russia’s punishment for Ukraine’s successful breakaway independence – a model Russia does not want other parts of its empire to follow – and Russia’s attempt to complete a longstanding national Russian goal, the annihilation of the very identity of Ukrainians as a people. And if successful, Russia will move next to war with and reoccupy or annihilate another of the former Soviet states that is now independent. And so on into the indefinite future. In his essay, [Blood and Iron](#), Andrei Kolesnikov of the Carnegie endowment describes Putin-Russia’s transformation of the present into a return to the past as a fundamental search for identity and purpose, just as Russian dictator Stalin did, by embracing both Czar Nicholas 1’s state ideology of orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality, and Stalin’s demonization of internal and external enemies. Stalin’s war on “anti-patriot groups” is now Putin’s war on “national traitors” and “foreign agents”.
- **Russian Anti-Semitism:** In its search for an enemy to channel the nation’s grievances, Russians have once again identified Ukrainians and Jews for targeted hatred. Quoting Evgeny Dobrenko’s article, [Late Stalinism: The Esthetics of Politics](#), (Moscow: New Literary Review, 2020), Kolesnikov described Russian state propagandists’ virulent antisemitism in the late Stalinist period that equated Jews with Nazis. An unpublished paper edited by [chief Soviet ideologist, Mikhail Suslov](#), described the official state policy towards Jews: “The atrocities committed by the Jewish fascist Zionist gangs against peaceful Arabs exceeded the wrongdoing of the murderers in Hitler’s ranks.” Under Stalin, Russian “Zionists” were the “enemy within” performing “the service of Anglo-American war agitators”. Modern Russia’s re-embrace of Stalinism includes Russia’s long-standing antisemitism. Following Hamas’s horrific October 7, 2023, terrorist attack in Israel, Russian officials celebrated and embraced the Palestinian cause. Russia’s virulent antisemitism is back on full-display. Signalling a potential new pogrom the Russian Justice Ministry in July of 2023 [branded Russia’s Chief Rabbi, Pinchas Goldschmidt, a “foreign agent”](#), a designation intended to label Goldschmidt personally and Russian Jews generally as enemies of Russia. In what now appears as prescient, Goldschmidt had fled Russia over a year earlier while warning Jews still remaining in Russia that their safety could not be counted on. He urged all Jews in Russia to leave [“before it was too late”](#).
- **Jews and Ukrainians as the “Enemy Within”:** By contrast, [Rabbi Avraham Wolf](#), Chief Rabbi of Odessa and Southern Ukraine, asserts that apart from the war, [“Ukraine is the safest country in the world for Jews.”](#) Regarding the Ukrainian people Rabbi Wolf [stated](#) that “previously I loved and respected the Ukrainian people. But now, after the beginning of the war, I’m simply over the moon about them.” His views are echoed by Chief Rabbi of Ukraine [Moshe Reuven Azman](#), both of whom have worked tirelessly to debunk Russian propaganda that claims that Ukrainians

are Nazis and that Russia was “de-nazifying” Ukraine. To his Jewish audiences Azman points out that over 7 million Ukrainians fought in the Soviet Ukrainian Armies *against* Nazi Germany, and that millions of Ukrainians died in the war fighting Nazism. It is not Ukraine, Azman says, which has a Jewish President, but modern Russia that behaves like the “heirs of the fascists” noting further that more than 2,500 Ukrainians have been formally honored by the state of Israel as “Righteous Among the Nations” for risking their lives to save Jews from the Holocaust.

- **Ukraine, The Safe Haven for Jews:** Travelling frequently to Israel, Rabbi Azman expresses outrage that the Putin regime, together with the head of the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Kirill, and Russia’s state media continue to push the propaganda lie among American and other Western audiences, including Israelis, that Ukraine is a neo-fascist or fascist state. Azman has made it his life’s mission to [debunk this Russian propaganda](#) and these false narratives about Ukraine and the Russian invasion.
- **Russian Perversion: Identifying Jews and Ukrainians as Nazis:** Russian Propagandists Kolesnikov describes Putin’s regime as “shamelessly projecting the qualities ascribed to the worst enemies in the country’s history onto today’s enemy.” Stalin’s regime assigned Jews the same role Putin’s regime identifies Ukrainians today: conduits of everything bad in the world. “Hence, the current government of Ukraine is described as Nazi.” Accusing the world’s two populations, Ukrainians and Jews – often one-and-the-same – who suffered the greatest losses in history under the Nazi regime as Nazis themselves is a vile verbal insult without equal. Yet, as abhorrent as it is, it’s effective in creating hate. Many people believe it. Hence Rabbi Azman’s life mission to fight back with truth.
- **Russia’s New Imperial War Goals, More Holocausts:** Russia has committed itself, retooling its economy, educational systems and state departments, to a course of aggressive action towards the West. In the vacuum created by America’s withdrawal as the global hegemon, and without a robust international defence of Ukraine, beginning in 2014 when Russia seized Crimea and started the war with little to no western condemnation, Russia sees opportunity and clearly envisions a realistic pathway to control over Europe. The goal, as its state propagandists repeat daily, is to achieve, if not a global superpower status, at least a European hegemon.
- **Russia’s “Filtration” Camps - Resurrecting Nazi Concentration Camps:** Little different that the selection process the Nazis used with new arrivals at the concentration camps to determine who lived and who died, [the Russians use the obscene term “filtration”](#) to separate Ukrainians considered capable of abandoning their Ukrainian identity and assuming new Russian identities from those who maintain a Ukrainian identity. The “filtration” process set up to de-Ukrainianize Ukrainian territories presently occupied by Russian forces involves interrogations, widespread torture, killings, rape and starvation. [The U.S. Department of State assessed that approximately 2 million Ukrainians have been “processed”](#) through the large networks of camps set up by Russia with untold numbers killed and huge numbers deported to remote locations within the Russian Federation. Approximately 250,000 Ukrainian children have been seized by the Russian authorities, given new Russian identities and shipped off to unknown locations across the Federation and put under the control of unknown people. All of these actions by the Russian

state and its millions of participating citizens are recognized as war crimes and crimes against humanity. As yet completely unpunished and ongoing.

- **Russians Plan a Genocide on a Scale Never Experienced Anywhere:** [The expressed objective of the invading Russian forces](#) is to seize all of the country and to put its entire population of some 40 million persons through its “filtration camps” either killing them or forcing them to assume Russian identity.
- **“Never Again”:** Following the mass murder of Jews and other ethnicities by the Nazi’s in the German concentration camps, the Holocaust, Jewish organizations organized to unite [the world to declare “never again.”](#) Genocidal wars wherever waged had to be stopped. So far, despite the largest re-emergence of a state organized program of mass murder and population re-location since the Second War – despite Russia’s regularly repeated declarations of its intent to exterminate Ukrainian identity and the nation – no effective international effort has been mounted to expel the Russians from Ukrainian territory and to stop their killing. The Ukrainians fight alone with the assistance of some brave individuals from around the world who have volunteered to join the fight against the Russian terror state.
- **Holocaust survivor Roman Shvartsman (DOB November 7, 1936):** In an historic speech delivered on January 29, 2025, in Germany’s Parliament, the Bundestag, Shvartsman, a Holocaust survivor living in Odesa, and Chairman of the Odesa Regional Association of Jews, compared Putin to Hitler as he described the terror and suffering being inflicted on the people of Ukraine and in the faces of the prisoners he has seen who survived Russian torture in captivity. Pleading with the German Parliament to help save Ukraine by providing the weapons Ukraine needs to defend itself he said, “I have seen the Devil and I say, we greatly overestimate him. His power is no greater than the power we give him.” Recounting his experience in World War II, and now in Odesa, Shvartsman said: “On February 24, 2022, Russia attacked our civilians and our cities. Once again, our lives and our freedoms are in danger. Putin is trying to destroy us as a nation just like Hitler tried to destroy the Jewish people in the Second World War. Back then, Hitler wanted to kill me because I was Jewish. Now, Putin is trying to kill me because I am Ukrainian.”
- **Threat Assessment:** In light of the unbroken violence of its past extending into its recent and sustained nationalist aggressions in Chechnya, Georgia, and Ukraine and its resurgent imperial ambitions to regain super-power status by resuming Soviet-Russia’s long-standing competition with the democratic West – no longer a “cold war” – Russia now ranks as the world’s most serious threat to peace and security.

RUSSIA’S PROJECTION OF BEING AN ANTI-IMPERIAL CRUSADER CONCEALS ITS IMPERIAL REALITY: The Russian claims it makes to post-colonial states that it stands with them in their grievances against their colonial history is a recent, politically expedient fabrication by the Soviet Union made credible by the apparent absence of post-Russian colonies. Where, one might ask, if Russia was a colonial empire, are their colonies today? Where are the criticisms by Russia’s post-colonial subjects of Russia’s colonial conduct? Well, the former “colonies” of the European nations in the Western Bloc and the nations of

the former Soviet Union, now free, all speak out and have joined the European Union and NATO – Ukraine excepted – in order to seek safe refuge from Russian re-occupation. But, surprisingly, their voices are rarely listened to outside their own post-soviet communities as western nations, never subjected to Russian domination, resist hearing criticism of a Russia they instead imagine to exist. Even Pope Francis in a speech he gave to young Russians in Saint Petersburg on August 25, 2023, [gushed in praise of “the great, Russian empire”](#) telling them that they are the heirs of “the great Russia ... of saints, of kings, that great, enlightened Russian empire, of great culture and great humanity.” If the head of the Catholic Church, making decisions on issues of morality for its 1.3 billion [Catholic faithfuls](#), praises Russia’s history, calling it “a great empire” with a “great humanity” little wonder the world doesn’t want to hear the voices of “great Russia’s” millions of victims or hear about its unbroken, centuries-long record of brutal conquest and genocidal massacres. Of course, the Church also has its [long history of imperial power](#) and the Pope remains the surviving voice of absolute authority, so it may well be a sense of common cause with power or nostalgia for its own “glorious” past that some people admire Putin. Not everyone believes in the rights of the individual to freedom and personal liberty.

- **Who Speaks for the Republics Trapped within the Federation?** Of the core states of Russia’s Czarist empire, the republics and other polities of the Federation, the bleak answer is that they have never been liberated and have never been allowed a voice by their Russian overlords. Russia’s internal colonies suffered fates far worse than any of the European colonial states. Those European colonies survived and today are independent and free to explore post-colonial narratives. Democracies invite opposition parties and criticism in order to challenge rigid thinking and to progress. Not so Russia. There are no such critiques of Russian imperialism because Russian reformers and critics like presidential candidate [Boris Nemtsov were all silenced](#). Murdered. [The list of Kremlin critics killed or imprisoned is a long one](#). Even present day Circassian activists, like Martin Kochesoko, pressing the Russian state to recognize Circassian rights was originally sentenced to life imprisonment in June, 2019, (later commuted and placed under house arrest) by the Russian government for challenging Russia’s imperial history and ongoing repression.
- **Critics of the Russian War Against Ukraine Are Harshly Punished, Many Murdered:** Criticizing the war against Ukraine leads to lengthy prison sentences. Just for speaking out. Russian journalist [Roman Ivanov was sentenced to seven years](#) for criticizing Russia’s war against Ukraine. Russian artist [Sasha Skochilenko to 8-and-a-half years](#). For Ukrainians living under Russian occupation the situation is even more dire. Thousands have been tortured and murdered for expressing any degree of criticism of Russia’s war against Ukraine. The torture and [murder of Ukrainian schoolboy Stephan Chubenko merely for wearing ribbons](#) in the colour of the Ukrainian flag on his school rucksack, graphically illustrates the horrors of living under Russian occupation. Ukrainian clergy in occupied territories have also been routinely tortured and murdered. [Some 630 Ukrainian Churches have been destroyed by the Russians and close to 70 clergy murdered](#) by Russian state agents since February, 2022.
- **No Internal Russian Colony Has Ever Regained Its Freedom:** With the exception of speakers from post-Soviet states, whose voices are frequently ignored, who is left from Russia’s internal colonial system to criticize Russia’s colonial history when the oppression of the Russian state

and killing of its critics has never stopped? Of the original colonies, as noted elsewhere in this essay, no Russian colony has ever been allowed to attain its liberation. Instead, they remain to this day under Moscow's central control while their people and cultures have been forcefully subsumed into the Russian World and Russian identity.

- **Russian Dissident Voices Outside the Russian Federation:** There is a final feature of Russian culture that speaks volumes by its cold silence for Russian popular support for its imperial policies. Unlike every other authoritarian system around the world whose people living abroad regularly protest their governments' oppressive policies, only the Russians do not. Despite an extensive diaspora [numbering some 20 to 30 million](#) ethnic Russians, including its wealthy elites and educated professionals, there are very few critical voices. Even where those voices, with European or North America citizenship, are free to speak out – if they objected to the policies of the Russian state – they don't. While dissidents of every other authoritarian state organize protests and rally against their governments, Russians do not. Notable exceptions are [Russian dissident Garry Kasparov](#), an internationally recognized world chess champion, founder of *Renew Democracy Initiative* presently living in Croatia, and [former oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky](#), who spent a decade in Russian prisons on false charges and now lives in London operating *Open Russia*, an opposition group with its own news outlet. There are others, but their rarity speaks volumes to the immense support the Russian imperial project to seize power over Europe through force, has among Russians everywhere. Unlike former [Russian imperialist Alexei Navalny](#), whose anti-corruption campaign in Russia attracted global attention as a critic and reformer, but whose goal was not the decolonization of the Russian empire but the strengthening of the Russian Federation, both Kasparov and Khodorkovsky are true democrats and speak frequently about the need to break up the Russian Federation to free the world from the threat of Russian imperialism and to free Russians themselves from the mental prison the imperial mindset. They know Russia well.

RUSSIANS REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ANY COLLECTIVE GUILT: Nationalist imperialism has many voices defending it but none that accepts any role for assuming responsibility for Russia's countless acts of cruel inhumanity and mass murders. As the examples of Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany prove, it is only a final defeat that forces a culture possessed of imperial dreams to wake up to the horror their ambitions inflicted on countless others. The failure of Russia to advance much beyond its feudal past lies in its refusal to see itself as the very enemy it projects onto those others whose freedoms it seeks to abolish and lands it seeks to possess. As though all those nations throughout its history had no right to self-existence but were somehow *obstructing* Russia's destined march to some imagined imperial greatness made them enemies deserving of annihilation. Their impertinent obstruction of that destiny – their very resistance to Russian colonization and occupation – branded them, like Circassians of yesterday and Ukrainians today, as unworthy of life. Feeling nothing to be guilty for, but understanding that the world sees things differently and that a good part of their future success lies in pretending to fit into that global ethic and in projecting themselves to be not enemies of it but champions, they have long ago mastered the arts of deception, disinformation and manipulation. Russia's most powerful ministries have always been its internal security services, the NKVD, the KGB, and now the FSB and their task has always been to protect and advance the Imperial ambitions of

Russia. Vladimir Putin, a long-time member of the KGB, joining it immediately after university graduation, and rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel under its successor organization, the FSB, shares that same vision of Russia the KGB had.

- **Russia Ignores its Status as a Co-belligerent in Instigating WWII:** Russia’s apologists have always cast blame on others and have never accepted their role in what are in fact some of the greatest crimes against humanity committed in history. The Russian instigation of WWII for example, as a co-equal belligerent with Nazi Germany, for the first two years of the war until Germany turned on their erstwhile partner to take it all, has *never* been acknowledged by Russia. For Russians the “Great Patriot War” starts not on August 24, 1939, when they signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the secret protocols with Hitler’s Germany to seize and divide Europe between them. Nor six days later, on September 1, 1939, when Hitler invaded Poland. Nor sixteen days after that, when they themselves invaded Poland from the east while Nazi Germany was invading from the west, crushing Poland between them in a pincer action.

No. As they saw it, their actions were justified. Even righteous. No different than the Nazis, the killing of thousands – even of millions – was a mere detail to accomplish the great goal of imperial destiny.
- **Russians Continue to Justify Their Invasion of Poland in 1939:** For the Russians, the war doesn’t begin when they were the aggressors, collaborating on the mass killings and division of Poland – but only on June 22, 1941, when the Germans turned on them. Then, they screamed “betrayal” and have never stopped raging. It’s not, of course, that Russian historians are *unaware* of their role in the invasion, mass killing and occupation of Poland – or any of Russia’s other acts of unprovoked war. They were there. Rather, it was part of the grand plan with Nazi Germany. And, most critically, as an act furthering Russia’s imperial vision, it was justified. All its wars are justified to the Russians in the name of Russian imperialism. Hence, no crimes are ever committed for which Russians need apologize or feel guilty.
- **Advancing Russian Imperialism Justifies Any Crime:** Like the invasion of Ukraine, Russian imperialism justifies any action, however cruel and barbaric, to achieve its goals. They understand, of course, that the rest of the world does not share the vision of their own Russian “greatness,” nor does it share in their goal of achieving domination over inferior others, like the “sub-human filth” and “scum” who were the Circassians in whom they invested over 100 years of national effort to exterminate. And, so, they lie, knowing that we see the world differently.
- As a result of that enduring ethos of imperial nationalism, Russia is dangerous.
- **Russia Continues to Harbour the Ideology of its Nazi Partnership:** It is their failure to be self-reflective, to see that their national ethos makes them *worse* than the Nazis they love to demonize, that makes Russians a threat to the world. Russian imperialism is not different than the Nazi ideology which, if successful and not defeated, would have seen the nations of the world forced into slavery to the master race – as millions were in both Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. Russians, too, share that very same sense of divine purpose. Nazi Germany was defeated, however, and Germans have come to terms with their horrific past. They have totally surrendered the imperial mission of the Nazis. But Russia and Russians have not.

- **Russian Fixation on Nazi Germany's Betrayal:** As one observes, Russian fixation on Nazi betrayal of their pact remains for them an experience of near-evil. Hence in their antisemitic ravings they call the Jews Nazi. They call the Ukrainians Nazi. They demanded the genocide of the Circassians. They crushed the future of the Kazakhs and the Chechens, the Georgians and the Moldovans. Nazis all of them? But they refuse to look in the mirror. The imperial vision is a deeply narcissistic one. They do not see their acts of war and genocides as criminal. All of it, instead, is justified "self-defence" on the road to hegemony. If anything, in classic narcissistic rage, they want to kill and destroy anyone that stands in their way. Of course, they all know, as their propagandists and apologists know, they are lying but they are all in on the lie. Behind the lies are Great Russia. Crimes not to them, but only to their enemies. And their enemies, as one hears every day on Russian state television, are virtually everyone outside the Russian World.
- **Russian Complicity in War Crimes Against Ukrainians Amounts to Over a Million Persons:** In response to the defence of the culture of the Russian World promulgated by Russian apologists like [Vladimir Kara-Murza](#) and [Yulia Navalnaya](#) who insist that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is *Putin's* war and not Russia's, seeking as always to deflect criticism of Russian imperial policy and to exempt Russians from any collective guilt for the devastating war that their country has waged against Ukrainians, there is yet another argument beyond the unbroken historical continuity Russia's imperial, Soviet, and post-Soviet history clearly reveals; namely, the extent of Russian citizen *involvement* in the war. Given the unprecedented number of *documented* war crimes committed by "ordinary" Russians against Ukrainians, numbering in early 2025, some 137,000, in addition to *many thousands more* committed inside still-occupied territories and out of sight of independent observers, the total number of additional Russians who are guilty in law as "parties" to the primary criminals by "encouraging" or "aiding-and-abetting" their atrocities, together with the entire command structures that supervise and authorize their actions, puts the total number of Russians who bear legal responsibility for war crimes well *in excess of a million*. Note that this number does not include the hundreds of thousands of regular Russian soldiers or officers who have fought or are still fighting *inside* Ukraine who, while not having committed war crimes *per se* are arguably criminally liable as well, if they are *volunteers* who have joined the war for financial gain. Those occupying a *paid mercenary role* to invade another country and to kill its inhabitants are not protected under international law and simply occupy a legal position as hired killers.
- **Russian Apologists:** The massive Russian citizen involvement in war crimes belies the classic denial of Russian apologists like Kara-Murza and Navalnaya that Russians are *never responsible* for the crimes against humanity that their people have been committing for centuries in the cause of Russian imperialism. To understand the degree to which Russian "culture" is behind Russia's state crimes, as noted previously, one might also examine the enormous public support the Russian population as a whole has expressed over the past three years for its armies' seizure of Ukrainian territories and killing of Ukrainians: a huge outpouring of support for Russia's new conquests and encouragement to carry on to a final "victory."
- **Russia Publicly Honoured Its War Criminals as National Heroes:** Nor are Russians ashamed of the crimes committed on their behalf that the rest of the world reacts to in horror. As noted, Russians do not consider the invasion of Ukraine as an unjustified war of aggression nor any action of its people in furtherance of the state objective of crushing the Ukrainian resistance,

however horrific, as a crime. After initially denying [Russian war crimes committed in the Ukrainian city of Bucha](#) early on in the invasion, for example, Putin publicly changed course, admitted the crimes [but honoured the torturers, murderers and rapists in a state ceremony](#). In a grotesque inversion of modern civilized standards, Russia's state policy remains locked in a medieval embrace of historic barbarism with its people embracing the killing of innocents, so long as it's their citizens doing the killing and "winning." Russians experience a deep sense of imperial pride in their state's power. In any case the participation of a million persons *in the commission of war crimes like torture, rape, and murder*, in which each of those persons is criminally liable, speaks volumes to the collective guilt of the Russian peoples and Russian culture itself.

THE "PEACE DIVIDEND" FOLLOWING THE COLLAPSE OF USSR WAS MORE RUSE THAN EVEN PAUSE:

The western belief that the collapse of the Soviet Union, seen as a final victory over the West's principal enemy, led to what political leaders called [the "peace dividend"](#) which resulted in a general de-militarization across western alliance nations. The belief in the cessation of hostilities meant that huge resources spent on defence could then be utilized for economic and social development. Now, the new generation of leaders question the wisdom of that assumption and their naivety in failing to see that Russia was the core of the Soviet Union and not simply one of the states that would emerge, like the others, to integrate into the western world. Whatever mistakes those promoting the "peace dividend" made, and whatever the reality behind the de-militarization that followed, the consensus now is that [the peace dividend is dead](#). Instead of peace, Britain's Defence Minister, Grant Shapps, on January 16, 2025, stated the view of the British government: "We are now in a pre-war period!" Germany too, a military powerhouse before [the "peace dividend" that saw cuts in defence spending](#) as part of its GDP fall from 3.9% in 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed, to 1.5% in 2022 is trying to reverse course and rebuild its defence industry. All other NATO allies are making the same commitment.

The belief, however, that the past 30 years was "peaceful" and that Russia only emerged as a threat upon its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, depended on a blinkered refusal to acknowledge Russia's continuing use of force against its more immediate neighbours, and its likely corrupt – funded by oil revenues – assessment of Russia's potential to integrate with the west. An incomplete list follows:

- **1989:** April 9, 1989, [the Massacre of Tbilisi](#). Soviet Russian forces (under the "liberal" Gorbachev) sent its troops into Georgia, to crush a pro-independence demonstration in Tbilisi.
- **1990:** Gorbachev ordered a [full-scale Soviet-Russian invasion of Azerbaijan](#) on January 20, 1990, with 26,000 soldiers and tanks fighting against pro-independence protesters in Baku, killing scores of civilians, in an unsuccessful attempt to crush the national independence movement.
- **1990 - 1992: the Moldo-Russian war also known as The Transnistria War** was an armed conflict that broke out on 2 November 1990 until a ceasefire was declared on 21 July 1992. Russia troops continue to occupy the Moldovan breakaway region of Transnistria.
- **1991:** Gorbachev ordered Soviet-Russian troops and tanks into Vilnius, Lithuania on January 11, 1991, after [Lithuania declared independence, firing live ammunition, killing civilians](#) and seizing government buildings. Lithuanians did not back down and broke free.

- **1991:** Gorbachev ordered Soviet-Russian troops into [Riga, Latvia, on January 20, 1991, killing civilians, fighting with Latvian police](#), and seizing government buildings in an unsuccessful attempt to stop the Latvian independence movement with violence and fear.
- **1994 - 2009:** Russia's invasions of Chechnya and its 12 years of all-out warfare commencing in 1994 with the First Chechen War (lasting two years) and ending in 2009 at the end of the Second Chechen War (lasting 10 years from its start in 1999) were classic acts of imperial aggression, causing immense suffering and intended only to assert Russian control over a non-Russian people and culture which sought to be free.
- **2008 - 2025:** In 2008, [Russia invaded Georgia](#). Justifying its full-scale invasion of the tiny republic of Georgia by falsely accusing Georgians of mistreating its Russian speaking population, Russia launched its invasion by air, land and sea. Calling it a "[peace enforcement](#)" operation it was clearly an act of imperial aggression with the same objective as its war against the Chechen people; forcing them to submit to Russian authority.

Notwithstanding the conclusion of armed hostilities, Russian forces continue to occupy and have expressed the intention of annexing Abkhazia, a Georgian territory that constitutes 20 percent of Georgia and borders the Black Sea. Most significantly, [Russia is occupying the Georgian port of Ochamchire](#), located in Abkhazia and it is constructing a permanent naval base there, negatively impacting Georgia's economy while ensuring the rapid deployment of Russian military forces by sea should Georgia attempt to expel Russians from its territory. Moving its warships to the Georgian port also invites Ukrainian attacks on the Russian ships, potentially bringing Georgia into the war, while destabilizing Georgia's attempts to join the European Union – which [Russia and Russia's puppet government in Georgia, "Georgian Dream", are opposed to](#).

- **2011:** In November, 2011, the [European Parliament passed a resolution](#) acknowledging Abkhazia and South Ossetia as occupied Georgian territories.
- **2014 - 2025:** In 2014, in its most recent act of imperial aggression, Russia invaded Ukraine and seized the Crimean Peninsula in [clear violation of international law](#) and of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity – and in [clear violation of the Budapest Memorandum](#), Russia's International agreement signed between Ukraine, Russia, Great Britain and the United States guaranteeing Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In addition to Crimea, Russian forces in the guise of "separatists" invaded Ukraine's eastern Donbas region and have waged a genocidal war of aggression against Ukraine ever since.
- **2022 – 2025:** Not content with its 2014 seizure of Crimea and parts of the Donbas region, Russia then launched a [full-scale invasion](#) of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, with the objective of seizing control over the entire country and eliminating all opposition to Russian rule – a scenario that has already resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians and would be expected to involve the murder of millions more should Russian control over the country be achieved. Similar to Russia's invasions of Chechnya and Georgia, Russia fabricated false justifications for its aggression – primarily, that it was protecting its own expatriate populations

– to cover its imperial ambitions to rebuild its former Soviet power to achieve what it understands as “[great nation status](#)” and to force itself ultimately on Europe as a [hegemon](#).

IT IS THE IMPERIAL CULTURE OF “GREAT RUSSIA” THAT MUST BE DEFEATED: Relying on historical precedent, Russia will not give up its imperial goal of annihilating Ukraine. Nor does the cost in Russian lives have any impact on Russia’s leadership to change course. Human life and suffering have always been irrelevant to the imperial ambitions of Great Russia. Nor will a Russian battlefield defeat result in a change in Russia’s course, any more than Russia’s defeat in the First Chechen war did anything more than pause the war for two years until Russia could re-arm and resume that attack. Its peace treaty meant nothing more than to lull the Chechens into a belief the war was over and to let down their defences. Nor, critically, did a hundred years of armed resistance by the Circassians fail to deter the Russians from continuing their war against Circassia, despite Russian leadership and generational changes.

- **Vladimir Stalin Warned About the Persistent Evils of “Great Russian Chauvinism” and the Russian Ideological Belief that Russia was a Superior Nation:** Two centuries separate the Russo-Circassian War and the Russo-Ukrainian War but it is the same “[Great Russian Chauvinism](#),” and the same imperial “[Superior Nation](#)” ideology that Lenin, himself, warned against that instigated both genocidal conflicts. The inescapable conclusion is that only a defeat of the Russian imperial mind-set will change Russia’s course, and the core root that anchors that imperial consciousness, as true for Russians today as it was for other Imperial powers of the past, is Russia’s existing empire. The break-up of Russia’s existing empire – the so-called “Federation” – would change everything, as it has for the nations of Europe that once operated their own empires.
- **The Moral Imperative to Resist Imperialism:** Empires are inherently dehumanizing and destructive of their subject nations, as well as a constant threat to international peace and stability. Despite arguments, like those of John Mearsheimer that [so-called “Great Powers” will always emerge](#) and always vie with each other for dominance over smaller polities and each other, we ought to resist a return to the rule of raw-power imperialism which we see surging in Russia today. We have *the collective power*, if we have the vision to use it, to prevent states from amassing power through territorial conquests and enslaving or exterminating conquered peoples. We don’t want to return to that past.
- **Reagan’s Evil Empire Speech:** As Ronald Reagan elegantly stated in [his famous, 1983, Evil Empire speech](#), defending American freedoms and democracy against the threat of Soviet tyranny, and speaking of the necessity to maintain a strong military to defend against the adversaries of freedom:

“We will never compromise our principles and standards. We will never give away our freedom. We will never abandon our belief in God. And we will never stop searching for a genuine peace, but we can assure none of these things America stands for through the so-called nuclear freeze solutions proposed by some.”

“It was C.S. Lewis who, in his unforgettable “Screwtape Letters,” wrote: “The greatest evil is not done now...in those sordid ‘dens of crime’ that Dickens loved to paint. It is...not even done in concentration camps and labor camps. In those we see its final result, but it is conceived and ordered; moved, seconded, carried and minuted in clear, carpeted, warmed, and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voice.”

“Well, because these “quiet men” do not “raise their voices,” because they sometimes speak in soothing tones of brotherhood and peace, because, like other dictators before them, they’re always making “their final territorial demand,” some would have us accept them at their word and accommodate ourselves to their aggressive impulses. But if history teaches anything, it teaches that simpleminded appeasement or wishful thinking about our adversaries is folly. It means the betrayal of our past, the squandering of our freedom.”

- **Appeasement of Aggression is Surrender:** As history proved, Reagan was right, it is only through real strength that freedom can be preserved. Appeasement of dictators, taking them at their word, is suicidal. As true today as then, and then as in 1939, [the voices of appeasement](#) are again arguing for the surrender of Ukrainian territories to “accommodate” Putin’s “aggressive impulses.” Russia was then in 1988 the heart of that “Evil Empire.” It was true then and remains true today. We must stand up to its aggressive impulses rather than submit to them. As Reagan said, appeasement is mere wishful thinking for a peace that will never be achieved and that only betrays our past and squanders our freedom.

FEAR OF NUCLEAR CONFLICT: Putin has asserted that the Russian victory over Ukraine is a matter of existential necessity for Russia, failing which it will resort to the use of nuclear weapons. That former President Joe Biden may actually have been motivated by fear of nuclear war, and honestly believed that Putin would resort to the use of nuclear weapons if he failed to get what he wanted, appears to be confirmed by the evidence of the administration’s strategy in how it supported or refused to support Ukraine in Ukraine’s existential struggle for survival. Let’s look at that.

- **The Narratives of *Winning* and *Losing* Betray the Realities of Russia’s Brutal Attack and Ukraine’s Critical Defence:** Much of the narrative one hears about the war speaks in terms of either Russia or Ukraine *winning*. This is a false narrative that only serves Russian interests. Ukraine has been invaded and its citizens, whether in uniform or not, are being brutally attacked every day. The war is not a contest between two equal and willing adversaries who are fighting to determine who is the strongest, like a wrestling match. A truer narrative of the Russian invasion must start and stop with the absolute fact that Ukraine did not threaten or provoke Russia in any way and that it was due solely to Russia’s imperial ambition to seize Ukraine’s territory and resources to restore it to its former Soviet “glory.” It was always about a theft of wealth with the attendant increase in power that would accrue to Russia that was the primary motivation for Russia’s invasion and ongoing war. Russia can leave at any time and stop the war. It can simply walk away. Ukraine has no such option. A better comparative narrative to define the Russian war against Ukraine is a home-invasion by a gang of brutal thugs who break into a private residence, rape the children, torture the father to force him to open his safe

before killing him and then flee with the mother/wife as a hostage. To say the victim fighting for her life is *winning* should she escape or turn the tables on her captors, is an absurdity. She is merely trying to survive. Resistance, self-defence, is a fundamental right of anyone unlawfully attacked, person or nation.

- **Russia Is Under No Threat: It Cannot “Lose”:** Similarly, using the rhetoric of “Russia *losing*”, again conflates the nature of this war with a contest. Just as Ukraine cannot “win” because it has not started the war with a view to defeating Russia and seizing Russia’s assets, Russia cannot “lose” because it is not itself threatened or under attack. If the allies, instead of providing Ukraine with the weapons necessary to force Russia simply to abandon its goal of occupying Ukraine, joined Ukraine in invading Russia with the goal of destroying Russia, then one could speak in terms of Russia winning or losing that battle. But Russia really has no “skin in the game”. It cannot lose. All that can happen to Russia is that it goes home empty handed.
- **Deterrence Must be Robust:** Of course, convention speaks in terms of winning and losing but the fundamental truth is that Russia can no more lose than the thief who desires to rob a jewellery store is thwarted by the presence of a police officer and abandons his plan. He does not then go on rampage because he could not commit the robbery. Putin is a gangster but he is not an idiot. Nor are the members of Russia’s [siloviki](#) who work with him idiots. Frustration is not “losing” nor is it any basis for the use of accelerating the conflict to a nuclear war. To bomb whom? America? Again, that conclusion is absurd. Ukraine?
- **Arm Ukraine to Drive Russia Out:** The supply of offensive weapons to Ukraine is clearly lawful, contemplated by the UN Charter, and morally warranted. Russia will not be surprised. Russians are many things but they know the international rules and typically play them to their own advantage. Like the gang robbing the bank, they know that their actions are illegal. They know they are breaking all the rules. And they know the police are coming. They may well have hoped to finish the robbery before the police arrived but they didn’t, and they will not be surprised if and when America and its NATO allies provide the actual weapons Ukraine needs to defeat the Russian army attacking Ukraine. The Russians are gambling that they can bluff the west by threats of resorting to nuclear war if they don’t get their way, into remaining as spectators. Russian apologists are hard at work on those narratives: this is not our war. Russia is no threat to the West. Russia is simply protecting its own interests. Ukraine belongs to Russia anyway. Ukrainians are Russians. Stopping Ukraine’s resistance will end the killing. The cost of assisting Ukraine is too high. The list is a long one and growing. Whatever works to limit support for Ukraine assists Russia’s goals. It’s all Russian nonsense.
- **Rewarding Putin for his Criminal Effort in Killing Thousands of Innocents is Madness:** If, as a consequence of Russia’s failed attempt to seize Ukraine as a prize of war, the death of hundreds of thousands of Russians engaged in that endeavor is then viewed as an unjustified waste of human and financial resources by Vladimir Putin, resulting in his overthrow or assassination by some other ambitious Russian leader or member of the security services, what of it? Putin cannot be rewarded by forcing Ukraine to make concessions to justify the effort Russia has put into its geopolitical gamble. We don’t need to soften the consequences for Putin, his regime, or the Russian people. Like any other criminal enterprise, the Russians must face the

consequences of their criminal actions, not protected from them. Its gamble failed, plain and simple. It is long past time for Russia to be held to account for its crimes.

- **Putin Can Spin His Own Story to Russian's:** How Russia and Russian authorities wish to spin their narratives about the war and their eviction from Ukraine is entirely a matter for them. That will not be difficult for Russia. They have a long history of spinning narratives. It's what they truly excel at.

HAS THE PROJECTION OF AMERICAN FEAR EMBOLDENED THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS: There is a problem here, in that former President Joe Biden may well have unintentionally encouraged the use of nuclear weapons by Russia against Ukraine by constantly broadcasting his fear of provoking Putin. If the US was too afraid of assisting Ukraine with the provision of arms – a support that United Nations rules clearly authorized – the underlying message is that Russia is free to use such weapons against Ukraine and the US, will simply stand by. The US as head of NATO, would do nothing. If anything, rather than prevent the use of a nuclear weapon by Russia, America's retreat into a corner for fear of such an outcome invites it.

- **NATO May Be Toothless:** Equally concerning is the fact that if fear of the use of nuclear weapons by Russia causes America to restrict its support for Ukraine fighting an existential war, what assurance is there for Finland or Poland or Lithuania or any other state that Putin wishes to attack with conventional weapons through say an arial bombardment, that the US or NATO will support them? If it's fear of nuclear weapons that prevents it from a robust defence of Ukraine, no NATO agreement is going to displace that same fear.
- **New Nuclear Arms Race:** Rather than projecting strength in unity and a resolve to stand up to bully tactics, the weaknesses that the Biden administration projected are certain to erode faith in NATO and will lead to a new nuclear arms race. There is no question but that Ukraine would not have been attacked and would not be in this terrible conflict had it not given up its nuclear weapons and trusted America and Britain to protect its territorial integrity and its sovereignty as they promised.
- **Security Agreements:** The complete failure of the [*Budapest Memorandum*](#) to protect Ukraine from being attacked has demonstrated beyond any doubt that no international security agreement – even with two of the world's most trustworthy partners – can be relied on. In the end one must provide one's own security as North Korea and Israel have demonstrated. The importance of self-reliance and the necessity to be nuclear armed has not been lost on any nation watching the war. The message of deterrence through strength is surely not lost on South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and many other states who will no doubt proceed with haste to develop the weapons they need to guarantee their own safety.
- **Searching for an "Off-ramp" for Putin was Appeasement:** From the beginning of the war certain western nations have bent over backwards to accommodate Putin. It was appealing his apparent need for "success" in the war that they focused their attention on, what they kept calling the need for an "off-ramp." What fragility in his power and control over the Russian state did they see that caused them to prioritize his "success" in his ill-advised miliary adventure over the real necessity that Ukraine experienced every day to expel the Russians from their country? No evidence was ever presented. To the contrary the evidence is very clear as presented here that Putin enjoys huge support among the Russia population. There is no evidence whatever that the population

will rise up against him. The “fear” that his “losing” will somehow have unnamed negative consequences for the west may well have been grounded in Russian propaganda and promoted by pro-Russian agents in the west tasked with the object of assisting Russia’s imperial aims by instilling fear and doubts in western leaders.

FEAR OF THE DISSOLUTION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IS SELF-DEFEATING: The British Empire broke up and its constituent parts moved on, learned self-government and have prospered to the benefit of the global community. So, too, the Ottoman Empire which, like Russia’s was an “internal empire.” So too all the lesser empires of recent history. Russia alone remains attached to the 19th century world of great powers, territorial expansion and domination. Russia embodies the antithesis of everything that free, democratic states value.

- **No Crisis on Break-up of the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union Nations:** No different than the collapse of the European Eastern Bloc – Russia’s third tier – and the collapse of the Soviet Union – Russia’s second tier and – the effect of the loss of its outer empires only served to diminish Russia’s power and its ability to threaten the world. The collapse of these political systems was only positive. Their captive nations were freed and their peoples joined the global world as newly prosperous and independent agents. Russia’s loss of its first tier of captive states will have the same positive benefits. There is no evidence that the break-up of the Russian “Federation” will have any deleterious effect.
- **Russia Will Resist but Has No Enemies to Attack:** Of course, Russia as the central power of the Empire/Federation will do all in its power to maintain control over these nations of the Federation, but those conflicts, if they occur, are internal matters for the Federation and need not engage any western action beyond support for the principles of freedoms and the universal right of all nations to self-determination. Russia may well assert that loss of its empire is an existential threat and that it will resort to nuclear force to “defend itself” but as with the loss of its control over its Eastern Bloc and Soviet states, there is nothing Russia can do. Will it use nuclear weapons to destroy the Republic of Tuva for example, or the Republic of Bashkortostan because they want to govern themselves and control their own resources and future? Putin may threaten it but the idea is absurd. As neighboring states their long-term viability and prosperity provides potential benefits for a future Russia without its empire: free trade and other mutually beneficial inter-state agreements.

THE KEY TO ENDING RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM IS THE DE-COLONIZING OF ITS EMPIRE: No less so than the support the west gave for the right of Russia’s Soviet colonies to their freedom, we need to stand in solidarity with the aspirations of Russia’s oppressed nations. We need to reaffirm the principles of the United Nations Charter that all people everywhere have the right to self-determination. That their states and borders are inviolable and that attempts by stronger states to seize the territory and dominate the people of another smaller state by force will not be tolerated. We need to reaffirm the principles of de-colonization and firmly reject any and all movements towards resurgent Imperialism. None of this is new or challenging, it is simply the application of existing rules of international codes of conduct. We simply need to stand by them.

ENDING THE WAR IN UKRAINE: Ukraine must prevail. Russia cannot in any way be allowed to profit from its obscene war of aggression. Russia's imperial ambitions must be countered. Its' aggression must not be allowed to bear fruit. The message that brute force and mass destruction will not achieve positive results for the aggressor must be the goal. The Russian army inside Ukraine, the invasion force, must be pushed out. Ukraine must be restored to the borders recognized by Russia in the Budapest Memorandum and the damages done to it, repaired. Like any criminal action, the perpetrator must be held accountable. Russia must pay reparations for the damages it has caused Ukraine. All Ukrainian prisoners and hostages and kidnapped children must be returned. Russian war crimes – many thousands – must be publicly aired and their perpetrators tried.

- **All That's Needed is the Will to Defend Our Principles:** None of these objectives are unreasonable and all of that is possible. Supporting Ukraine with the weapons it needs to destroy Russian logistic lines like the Kerch Bridge, unlawfully constructed by Russia on Ukrainian territory, is entirely appropriate and within the means of our Western allies. Given the new realities of drone warfare if Ukraine is also provided with the long-range weapons to make Russia's continued occupation of Crimea untenable, they will leave. If the Russian supply routes are destroyed, the ports are unusable, the airfields bombed, the occupying forces under constant drone attack, there is profit in Russia remaining and no future for Russia in Ukraine.
- **Russia is Collapsing:** Russia is losing its ability to control the field and to maintain its armies. Its economy is in ruin, its finances nearly bankrupt. It cannot afford to pay for the cost of the war much longer. Ukraine must not be forced to give up the fight. As we treat other gangsters, we need to prove to Russia that its aggression won't be accepted. Peace ensues when we ensure that war is simply not worth it. The unified message must be that the free world will stand behind Ukraine until the last Russian soldier and tourist gets out and goes home. The message is simple: LEAVE.
- **Russia is weak.** It hides its weakness with a constant stream of aggressive threats and bluster but it knows its days are numbered. Without the republics – their people and the wealth of their resources flowing into Moscow – Russia as an empire and great power disappears into history. Putin understands that very well. The republics are waiting for their chance to break free of Moscow and its predatory practices that keep them in penury. They just need encouragement. Russia's all-out war against Ukraine is Putin's attempt to claw back some of the power it once had, which would also help keep the republics in line, but it is a losing effort. So long as the west continues its financial and military support for Ukraine and Ukraine does not lose heart Russia cannot succeed.
- **The West Must Do More:** This is not a war we can afford to lose. The stakes are too high. There is no reason in law or principle why the west cannot do more. Sending troops to assist in air defence, border defence and logistics would not be unreasonable. For three years Ukraine has carried the burden of war and the battle to protect freedom for all of us by itself.

THE END OF RUSSIAN TYRANNY: The Russian Federation is being held together through the threat of force. If the weaknesses of the present Moscow regime are exposed – as they are, for example, by

Ukraine's occupation of the Russian border regions of Kursk and Russia's demonstrated inability to drive out the Ukrainians – independence-minded states within the Federation, even those with majority ethnic Russian populations, will be encouraged to break away from Moscow for their own betterment.

- **Recognize the Sovereignty of the Republics:** Active support for the dissolution of the Russian empire by the provision of arms is of course out of the question, but moral, educational and organizational support can be offered and at little cost.
- **Strengthen the Voices of Russia's Indigenous Cultures:** The organization and recognition of shadow governments for the republics and regular forums to give voice to their dissident leaders in exile, educating the public on Russia's brutal colonial history and assisting the connection of indigenous voices from across the Federation with each other and with other decolonization movements would at least start the necessary dialogues on the decolonization of this last and vast colonial empire.
- **Counter Russian Disinformation with the Truth:** Ultimately, the future of Russia's colonial system rests with the various nations of the Federation themselves. But given Moscow's control over the information sphere and its expert use of disinformation and propaganda, we can start by countering the carefully constructed lies that Russia stands in solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the world.

The *truth* of the Russian World is the greatest weapon we have to counter Russian propaganda: Russia is anything but anti-colonial and anti-imperial.

Rather than plot to keep the Empire intact by dragging out the war and preventing Ukraine from succeeding or Russia from failing, we ought to see its potential demise as an opportunity for the millions trapped within that empire to finally break free. The end of the Russian terror state would be a huge win for freedom and a blow to autocracies everywhere. The defeat of a resurgent imperial model must be considered one of the most critical goals now by democracies everywhere. We all have a stake in that.