

---

Subject: Re: Empire

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 24 Apr 2025 17:33:28 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

You misunderstand me when you say, "You're obsessed with Putin and Russiaphobia."

I am not against Russia or Russians. I am not against the majority of their population. I have met and become friends with many Russians, as well as many Ukrainians, Moldovans and people from other former Soviet states.

One of my good friends was a Russian tank driver in Afghanistan. As a gift, he gave me his tank helmet. I think of him often, especially now. Actually, this man is Moldovan, and like most Ukrainians, he is happy to be independent of Russia. But he - again like many other "Russians" from independent states of the former Soviet Union - still considers himself to be Russian, culturally.

This is not true of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. Might not be true in other places either. And now - after Putin's aggressions - it is probably much less true everywhere. But at least in the 1990s and 2000s, there were lots of people in newly-independent, former Soviet states, that were proud to be both Russian and Azerbaijani or Moldovan or Ukrainian or whatever.

I find many people with that kind of background are very easy to like.

My point is that I am not anti-Russian. I will admit that I am anti-Putin, but I think that is clear.

You made another point to which I'd like to respond. You said, "You don't seem to make the connections of how our economic aggression and trade imbalances have contributed to world geopolitical disturbances. And our country's long standing idealism of arbiter of world dominance through economic warfare and diplomacy through strength as it's called. Which is our recipe for military conflict."

I realize this thread is about whole-world empire-building and perhaps meddling. At least I think that was your point in starting this thread.

But right now, I'm not talking about any other events except Russia's invasion of Ukraine and America's involvement in that arena.

And my point is essentially that I don't think we did enough there, and I think what we did do was a little too late and fairly ineffective. I think we wasted money that could have been spent better.

But at the same time, I think we could have partnered with Ukrainian businesses to help us both, and I think we needed to stare Putin down much more effectively.

I think we have been very weak where Putin is concerned, and that surprises me. The Russian military has not proven themselves as one might have expected, and their infrastructure is a joke. The last thing they need to be doing is tit-for-tat strikes destroying energy services and other infrastructure. They have nothing to sell except oil, and so their economy sucks.

I further think we should have engaged in this Russia/Ukraine situation more effectively, and much earlier. At least ten years earlier; Better if done twenty or thirty earlier. This was a big miss, in my opinion. We were so focused on other areas of the world that we missed this one.

I keep hearing in my mind, President Reagan saying, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" And then he does, it crashes down with a resounding rumble. And then I hear... Nothing. Crickets. Silence.

I think we missed a huge opportunity there. An opportunity that could have helped everyone - Get them back up on their feet and maybe share some resources with us too. But we just did nothing.

You said about Russia, "They will keep the traditional Russian sympathetic regions and Crimea, they will "disarm" Ukraine without NATO influence, and they want the "root" causes for the US and NATO eastern expansion addressed."

I'm not sure if that's what you are hoping for or if that's what you predict will happen. But I must insist that you drop the phrase "Russia sympathetic regions" because there is no such thing. I think you are talking about the eastern areas of Ukraine, and I can tell you with absolute certainty - from knowing people there - that the Ukrainian citizens in the east are not "Russian sympathetic." The people that live in Lugansk, Donetsk, Mariupol and Kherson hate the Russians. They are not "Russian sympathetic." I know people that live in those cities. I know people that have fought and died there, during this invasion.

There was a time when people in those cities were happy to be free Russian/Ukrainians. They saw themselves as both Russian and Ukrainian. They were sort of both. They were proud to be both Russian and Ukrainian. They were happy to be independent, to be Ukrainian citizens.

But now they feel completely betrayed. Their homes and shops are destroyed, and their friends and family have been killed.

So don't even think there is such a thing as a person in an east Ukrainian city that is "Russian sympathetic."

As for the rest of that, I kind of don't care what Putin wants. He shouldn't get what he wants.

About Trump, you said, "Trump just wants to look like the peacemaker like when he said as a candidate he could end the war in 24hrs. But now our diplomacy is to just walk away and let Europe and Ukraine deal with it. Because neither Ukraine or Russia won't play Trump's dealmaker game."

I have to say, I agree with that.

I have hopeful optimism about a lot of the things that Trump is doing, even if some of them are a scary shake-up. I think the tariffs are a tricky situation, but I agree with them in principle. And similarly, a lot of the other changes are kind of scary too, but I think they may be good. I hope they're good.

But in this case - the Russia/Ukraine situation - I do not agree with appeasement of Putin and I do not like seeing Zelensky made out to be the heavy. Our position looks weak to me, and it is also ineffective. I can see with my eyes that it is ineffective.

I do not need anyone else's assessment - I can see the violence is still there. Kiev was bombed again last night. Not a city in the east, mind you. That's the capital of Ukraine. When Putin first invaded Ukraine, that was his target. Kiev and nuclear plants.

This isn't the actions of a liberating army. Putin can say all he wants he is hoping to free "Russian sympathizers." But never mind the fact that they don't exist, and that phrase is pure spin. The fact is he attacked the capital first and tried to cutoff power to paralyze the nation. His plan was a total takeover, and it wasn't for the good of the people. It was for his own empire-building ambitions.

So I'm very surprised that we seem to be letting him do it.