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Subject: Re: Empire

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 26 Jun 2025 22:26:57 GMT

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I absolutely agree that "time will tell." That's always the best source of truth. It always shows itself in time.

One thing I wanted to say here - mostly because I'm so passionate about this - is to make sure that you know I consider you to be a friend. With the talk getting so strong, I wanted to make sure you know that. We've known each other so long, and we're practically neighbors too.

So please don't take this discussion to mean otherwise.

Furthering that, I must say that I've never paid much attention to international politics or to economic sciences. Not that I don't find them to be potentially interesting, it's just that I have plenty of things on my plate, and with them, plenty of things to ponder.

I wanted to qualify myself by saying that. I'm really only strongly opinionated about the Russia/Ukraine aspects of our recent "dungeon" conversations.

On the subject of the Middle East, I just wish that the countries that reside in Mesopotamia and surrounding areas would get along. It's totally naive on my part, since they never have been cool with one another. Even before the modern religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and similarly, even before the Persians and Zoroastrianism, the people of that area have always fought among themselves. All the way back to Sumerian times, they were fighting one another. So my wish for peace there is super naive, and I know it. I try to keep that in mind any time I get riled up about anything going on in that region.

Honestly, I don't really think America even involves itself in the Middle East solely to assist Israel or any other nation, for that matter. I think our biggest motivation there is oil. But I don't find myself wrapped around the axle about that. Maybe it should bother me more, but I admit that it doesn't. I do think we should be more energy independent - turn up the nuclear reactors, optimize solar technologies and "drill baby drill" - do it all. But that's a different discussion.

So when we talk about things going on in the Middle East, I tend to bow out pretty quickly. I feel like a hippie that just wants everyone to get along. Get out the 1960s chill records, the beads and the mood lamp.

Similarly, when we talk about monetary matters, I'll say what I think but I won't say it with much zeal. I've tended to lean generally towards Adam Smith laissez-faire thinking in general, sort of libertarian, I suppose. But I do recognize that John Maynard Keynes advocated giving things a little push, and his ideas made a lot of sense to me. And further, in the last twenty years or so, I've shifted towards being somewhat protectionist because I can see how a whole industry can be taken over by subsidizing production and taking a loss for a while to gain market share. We have anti-trust laws to protect our population from our own industries doing that, but we do not have the same legal tools to control other countries. Those are the basic things that enter my mind when macro-economics comes into view. My whole basis of opinions can be summed up

in one paragraph.

So again, when discussing things about macro-economics, I'll visit for a little while, but I do not get too worked up.

But now this deal about Russia and Ukraine, well that's just something I happen to know a lot about. In my school days, I wouldn't have ever guessed I would know something about that.

But as fate has it, I do. Turns out I know more than most of my countrymen. And that's why I'll exercise my voice on that subject.

I still just can't understand why such little effort has been exerted towards engaging Russia. I mean, I do understand how tough it is to do business with them. That's a *novi-russki* thing. It's the first thing I learned, way back when my career was young and I worked a lot with engineering firms that made stuff for oil exploration, well completions and production. When the Berlin Wall fell, many companies wanted to approach the Russians and do some business. But it was basically impossible because you had to be working with the mob. Early on it had quickly shifted that way.

But while companies may have had difficulty there, I would have expected our government to help Russia and the independent states that spun off. After all, we spent a lot of time, money and human lives to defend against communism. Seems like we would have spent, I don't know, a little bit to help make something good out of the ashes. Yet - with exception of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia - we really just didn't back then.

And much to my surprise, we never even started. All the way up to 2014 when Russia actually began its invasion of Ukraine, we were totally unplugged. And we still are. Our highest-level politicians knew absolutely nothing about what was going on. We apparently weren't hiring knowledgeable advisors, or we weren't listening to the ones we hired that were knowledgeable. And I can see that is still a problem today.

It's not a particular political party that has messed this up. Both sides are equally ignorant. It's like we just really don't care. I actually think it's not "like that" - it is that. We just don't care.

We cared about the Soviet Union when we saw them as a threat. But once the Berlin Wall fell, we stopped seeing them as a threat and they just became invisible to us.

I wish we had seen them as an opportunity, when the new threat - *novi-russki* - was still fairly small and weak. It would have been much easier to work through the corruption problems when they were just small-time thugs. We had an opportunity back then to have helped shaped their economy in a way that helped us do trade with them, and that simultaneously could have helped their people have nations that were less corrupt. But we didn't do that, and now they've grown empowered and entitled. They're like a vampire coven with Putin as its alpha leader, and with plenty of evil elders and initiates.

So in a way, you and I are in a sideways agreement here. When you talk about nefarious empire-building, I sort of agree with you but in reverse. It was horrible for us to have been so blind to what was happening in Russia, and to have done nothing about it. We didn't push Ukraine into NATO or even assist them into joining and we probably should have.

For that matter, I think it would have been useful to have assisted Russia to educate its people on free-markets. That way the general population could benefit from the stocks they were given rather than to hand them over to the novi-russki for the mere price of a loaf of bread. Back when Gorbachev and Yeltsin were in power, we might have been able to do that. Might have even been able to do it during the first few years of Putin's reign.

But we didn't. We did nothing. That's why I think it's crazy-tree-hugging talk to say America pushed Ukraine into anything. We did almost nothing there, at least not until February 2022, when Russia started bombing Ukraine's civilian population. A little late by then - about 30 years too late. That's nefarious, in my opinion. We have spent our time focusing on things that are much less beneficial to world trade and to American security. We've allowed Putin to become what he has, and we've done almost nothing about it.

So having said all that, I will reiterate my statement that the folks saying pro-Putin stuff are absolute nut-cases. They are flat-earthers and shills selling propaganda. That's most certainly the case for the eastern pro-Putin bloggers. They are just political hacks, people that Putin has control over, either financially or through intimidation. Others - particularly in the west - probably do it for a weird ego-boost, wanting to have something to talk about, to pretend to be experts. Our journalists and bloggers here that are pro-Putin are most likely of that type. Those are the real flat-earthers. They just make stuff up, mixing together Putin propaganda with re-written history or complete fabrication.

It's all just too easy to see. Nothing difficult about it. No need to read between the lines. Putin invaded Ukraine because he wanted to steal the nation and call it his own. No motive other than that. None needed. Putin's motive is pure and simple. He wants Ukraine. Nobody "pushed" him into it. He is the one that has always been the pusher.