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## **Russia's Imperial Farce**

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# Russia's Imperial Farce

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Russia has moved from Soviet-style warfare to self-pitying introspection, but remains dangerous and must be defeated.



Photo: President Volodymyr Zelenskyy took part in events on the occasion of the Day of Defenders of Ukraine. Credit: President of Ukraine via Flickr. <https://flic.kr/p/2nTHXH3>

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Russia is going to war with Ukraine to defend the Motherland from gay parades. Russia is defending against an onslaught of transgender NATO satanist mercenaries of mixed ethnicity. Russian state television discusses whether it's best to bomb Berlin first, or more sensible to start with London and then move on to eradicate the rest of Western Europe, thus removing the sources of support for the queer-Nazi government in Kyiv.

I must be honest and say it is hard to write about the Russian geopolitical situation when the Russian *weltanschauung* (worldview) is, to put it mildly,

clinically interesting. For those of us who were active during the Cold War and spent time studying the—then Soviets, the war in Ukraine has gone from the predictable — e.g., the old—school Soviet doctrine of an initial air assault on the Antonov airfield in a bid to decapitate the Ukrainian government — to a humiliating exposure of Russian military shortcomings and failures, and thereafter a profoundly odd misalignment to reality. I don't say Russia's ability to kill and harm other people should be underestimated, but that now appears the only skill left in the toolbox, while the narrative supporting the war has disintegrated.

A recent interview with the [Russian lawmaker and actress Yelena Grigorevna Drapeko](#), a long—serving member of the Russian legislature, epitomizes the supremacist and ethnocentric view dominating the official discussion. According to Drapeko, Ukraine doesn't exist; it is Russia. Borders are not to be recognized; these lines on maps are phony, and the population in the territory of Ukraine would only benefit from a Russian takeover.

The interview is not unique; it is an echo of Vladimir Putin's notorious July 2021 faux—history essay [On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians](#) and mirrors widespread sentiments that have not surfaced overnight. The Russian *von oben* perception of inherited supremacy considers Russian culture superior throughout all of Eastern Europe and Euro—Asia, which in turn gives Russians the right to establish hegemony across "its" sphere. This is not the creation of a disinformation campaign or a troll farm; it is a century—old (or more) supremacist belief that has gone from tsarist to communist to fascist.

The German school atlases from the 1930s showed the Deutsche Reich, that is Germany within its borders; but they also showed German *Sprachboden*, the Germanic language area, which was significantly larger, and then the German *Volksboden*, which was half of Europe; and then finally the most extensive map depicted the German cultural area, or *Kulturboden*, which stretched from Russia to Normandy. Modern (there really is no other word) fascist Russian rhetoric posits something similar within the concept of *Russkiy mir*; the Russian world is a statement of Russian *kulturboden* and the Russian regime's right to conquer and invade and recapture "what is theirs."

In reality, the Russian invasion has failed. The professional army has been humiliatingly denied victory by an adversary it considered inferior in every way. Russia now has to beg, and [amend](#) its foreign policy, to suit rogue states like Iran in its pursuit of the missiles and drones its industry is unable to produce. Likewise [North Korea](#). The combat—averse air force only flies where there are no Ukrainians, it's Black Sea flagship; *Moskva*, is a reef on the sea floor; and the hardware offered to newly mobilized units was old even in the 1980s. The shattered and rusted remains of Russia's spearpoint shock units — [more than 8,000 tanks](#) and other vehicles — now litter the fields of Ukraine, or are in Ukrainian service.

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Future reunions of Russian Spetsnaz, paratroop, and naval infantry units will be small gatherings, as their losses in Ukraine are staggering. The attack on the Nord Stream natural gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea to put a stranglehold on Western Europe didn't work. Instead of a professional army driven by discipline, effective leadership and ethics, the Russian army gives no signs of being anything other than a fear-driven horde that kidnaps, tortures, and murders human beings. It is meanwhile so focused on loot that it is reduced to stealing llamas and a raccoon from a zoo, while despoiling Ukrainian museums and carting off electrical goods from vandalized homes.

Meanwhile, Russian public storytelling continues to assert a moral superiority in a world perversely misunderstanding its motives. This, it tells anyone willing to listen, is another Great Patriotic War. No, it isn't; it is a failing supremacist dream. The war in Ukraine is better described as a Great Pathetic War which attempts to reshape the world, its history, and its realities. This is far beyond the powers of an energy-rich but kleptocratic state whose ability to inspire is illustrated by the hundreds of thousands of draft dodgers who have left the country rather than fight for Putin's imagined "Russian World."

The idea that the world's democracies should bend their knee to this absurd ideology is preposterous. An early, face-saving peace enabling Putin to claim victory will merely guarantee another European war within the decade. Just as the participants at the Casablanca conference in 1943 did not waste time figuring out how to spare the blushes of Nazi Germany or Imperial Japan, the democratic world must stay strong in defense of Ukraine. Russia's supremacist ideology must come to an end.

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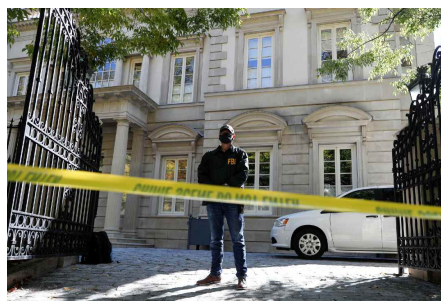


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