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By Chris Hedges
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They lied about Afghanistan and Iraq and now they lie about Ukraine.



Sources: ScheerPost - Image: "Preying for Peace", Mr. Fish.

The American public has been tricked, once again, into pouring billions into another endless war.

The strategic playbook that war pimps use to drag us into one military fiasco after another, including Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and now Ukraine, remains unchanged: Freedom and democracy are threatened. Evil must be defeated. Human rights must be protected. At stake is the fate of Europe and NATO, as well as the 'rules-based international order'. Victory is assured...

The results are also the same. Justifications and narratives are exposed as lies. The optimistic prognosis is false. Those in whose name we are supposed to fight are as venal as those against whom we fight.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine was a war crime, albeit sparked by NATO expansion and U.S. support for the 2014 Maidan coup that overthrew the democratically elected Ukrainian president, **Viktor Yanukovich**. Yanukovich **wanted** economic integration with the European Union, but not at the expense of economic and political ties with Russia. The war will only be resolved through negotiations that give Ukraine's ethnic Russians autonomy and protection from Moscow, as well as Ukrainian **neutrality**, meaning the country cannot join NATO.

The longer these negotiations take on, the more Ukrainians will suffer and die. Their cities and infrastructure will continue to be reduced to rubble.

But this proxy war in Ukraine is designed to serve U.S. interests. It enriches arms manufacturers, weakens the Russian military, and isolates Russia from Europe. What happens to Ukraine is irrelevant.

«**First of all**, equipping our friends on the front lines to defend themselves is a much cheaper way — in dollars and in American lives — to degrade Russia's ability to threaten the United States," Senate Republican leader **Mitch McConnell** admitted.

«**Second**, Ukraine's effective defense of its territory teaches us how to improve the defenses of partners threatened by China. Not surprisingly, senior Taiwanese officials could help Ukraine defeat Russia."

« **Third**, most of the money intended to help Ukraine's security does not actually go to Ukraine. Elle invests in the manufacture of U.S. defense equipment. IS funding new weapons and ammunition for the U.S. military to replace older equipment we have supplied to Ukraine.

« **Let's be clear** : This aid means more jobs for American workers and new weapons for the U.S. military."

Once the truth about these endless wars **has infiltrated** the public consciousness, the media, slavishly promoting these conflicts, materializes the coverage. Military debacles, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, remain largely ignored. By the time the United States admits defeat, most people barely remember that these wars are ongoing.

The war pimps who orchestrate these military fiascos move from one administration to another. Between one position and another, they are based in *think tanks* – Project for the New American Century, American Enterprise Institute, Foreign Policy Initiative, Institute

for the Study of War, The Atlantic Council and The Brookings Institution – funded by corporations and the war industry.

Once the war in Ukraine reaches its inevitable conclusion, these Dr. Strangeloves will try to **promote** a **war** against China. The U.S. Navy and Army **are already threatening and encircling** China. May God help us if we don't stop them.

Old textbook rhetoric

These **war pimps** lure Americans into conflict after conflict with flattering narratives that portray America as the savior of the world.

They don't even have to be innovative. The rhetoric is taken from the old strategic playbook. Americans naively swallow the bait and embrace the flag – this time blue and yellow – to become unwitting agents of our self-immolation.

It no longer matters – at least to war pimps – whether these wars are rational or prudent. The war industry has metastasized into the bowels of the American empire to empty it from within. America is vilified abroad, drowning in debt, has an impoverished working class, and is burdened by dilapidated infrastructure and shoddy social services.

Wasn't **the Russian army supposed to collapse months ago?**

Wasn't Russian President Vladimir Putin supposed to be **ousted** from power?

Weren't sanctions supposed to plunge the ruble into a death spiral?

Wasn't the separation of the Russian banking system from **SWIFT**, the international money transfer system, supposed to cripple the Russian economy?

How is it possible that inflation rates in **Europe** and the **United States** are higher than in **Russia** despite these attacks on the Russian economy?

Weren't the nearly \$150 billion in advanced military equipment and financial and humanitarian aid **pledged** by the US, EU and 000 other countries supposed to have changed the course of the war?

Why perhaps a third of the tanks supplied by Germany and the United States were quickly turned into pieces of metal charred by Russian mines, artillery, anti-tank weapons, air strikes and missiles at the start of the **much-vaunted** counteroffensive?

Wasn't this latest Ukrainian counteroffensive, originally known as the "Spring Offensive," supposed to break through the heavily fortified Russian front lines and regain huge swaths of territory?

How to explain the tens of thousands of Ukrainian military casualties and the **forced** conscription of the Ukrainian army? Not even our retired generals and former *CIA, FBI, NSA* and *Homeland Security* officials, who serve as analysts on networks like CNN and MSNBC, can say the offensive was **successful**.

Protecting "democracy"

And what about the Ukrainian democracy we fight to protect?

Why did the Ukrainian parliament **revoke** the official use of minority languages, including Russian, three days after the 2014 coup?

How do you rationalize the eight-year war against ethnic Russians in the Donbass region before the Russian invasion of February 2022?

What explains the **massacre** of more than 14,200 people and the one and a half million displaced **people before** last year's Russian invasion?

How to defend President Volodymyr Zelensky's **decision to ban** eleven opposition parties, including the Platform of Opposition *for Life*, which had 10% of the seats in the Supreme Council, the unicameral parliament of Ukraine, as well as the *Shariy Party, Nashi, Opposition Bloc, Left Opposition, Union of Left Forces?, State, Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine, Socialist Party of Ukraine* and *Volodymyr Bloc Balance* ?

How can we accept the banning of these opposition parties – many of which are left-wing – while Zelensky allows the **fascists** of the **Svoboda** and **Right Sector** parties, as well as the **Azov Banderist** battalion and **other extremist militias**, to flourish?

How to deal with the anti-Russian purges and the arrests of the so-called "fifth columns" that are sweeping Ukraine, given that **30%** of its inhabitants are Russian-speakers? - How to respond to the neo-Nazi groups supported by the Zelensky government that harass and attack the LGBT community, the Roma population, anti-fascist

demonstrations and threaten councillors, media, artists and foreign students ?

How to accept the **decision** of the United States and its likely allies to **block** negotiations with Russia to end the war, when Kiev and Moscow are **apparently** on the verge of negotiating a peace treaty?

I did a report on Central and Eastern Europe in 1989, at the time of the breakup of the Soviet Union. NATO, we assumed, had become obsolete.

President Mikhail Gorbachev proposed economic and security agreements with Washington and Europe. Secretary of State James Baker of Ronald Reagan's administration, as well as West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, **assured** Gorbachev that NATO would not extend beyond the borders of a unified Germany.

We naively thought that the end of the Cold War meant that Russia, Europe and the United States would no longer have to divert huge resources to their armies.

However, the so-called peace dividends were a chimera.

If Russia did not want to be the enemy, it would be forced to become the enemy. The warmongers recruited the former Soviet republics to NATO presenting Russia as a threat. The countries that joined NATO, which now include Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania, Croatia, Montenegro and North Macedonia, reconfigured their armies, often by the tens of millions in the West, to be compatible with NATO military hardware. This has brought billions of profits to arms manufacturers.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was universally understood in Central and Eastern Europe that NATO enlargement was unnecessary and a dangerous provocation. It didn't make geopolitical sense. But it did make business sense. War is a business.

In a classified diplomatic cable - obtained and **published** by *WikiLeaks* - dated 1 February 2008, written from Moscow and sent to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the NATO-EU Cooperative, the National Security Council, the Moscow-Russia Political Collective, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State, there was an unequivocal understanding that NATO enlargement carried the risk of conflict with Russia, especially in relation to Ukraine.

"Russia not only perceived the encirclement [by NATO] and efforts to undermine Russia's influence in the region, but also feared unpredictable and uncontrolled consequences that

would severely affect Russian security interests," the cable states. Experts tell us that Russia is particularly concerned that the strong divisions in Ukraine over NATO membership, with a large part of the ethnic Russian community against membership, could lead to a major division, with violence or, in the worst case, a civil war. In this eradication, Russia would have to decide whether to intervene or not, a decision that Russia does not want to have to face... ».

Dmitri Trenin, deputy director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, said he was concerned that Ukraine was, in the long run, potentially the most destabilizing factor in Russian-American relations, given the level of excitement and neuralgia that enables its pursuit of NATO membership... " the cable said.

"Since accession has remained a source of division in Ukrainian domestic politics, it has created an opening for Russian intervention." Trenin expressed concern that elements of the Russian establishment were encouraged to interfere, openly encouraging the promotion of opposing political forces by the US and defending the US and Russia in a classic confrontational posture.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine would not have taken place if the Western alliance had kept its promises not to extend NATO beyond Germany's borders and if Ukraine had remained neutral.

The warmongers knew the possible consequences of NATO enlargement. However, war is their only calling, even if it leads to a nuclear holocaust with Russia or China.

The war industry, not Putin, is our most dangerous enemy.

Chris Hedges is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, *New York Times* bestselling author, former professor at Princeton University. He spent nearly two decades as a foreign correspondent in Central America, the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans. He previously worked overseas for *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and NPR. He is the host of *The Chris Hedges Rep*

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