

Five Ukrainian Fables

By Victor Davis Hanson

Fable One: Donald Trump Is Appeasing Russia?

Who wiped out the Wagner group in Syria? Who sold offensive weapons to Ukraine first? Who warned Germany not to become dependent on the Russian Nord Stream II deal?



Who withdrew from an unfair missile deal with the Russians? Who cajoled and berated NATO members to meet their military investment promises made following the 2014 invasion of Ukraine?

In contrast, who originally conceived a Russian “reset” in 2009? Who publicly virtue-signaled pushing the red “reset” button in Geneva with the current Russian Minister Sergey Lavrov?

Which ex-European leader got a million euros a year working for Russian energy companies?

Of the last four presidents, under whose watch did Putin not invade another country?

Which American president, in hot-mic style, offered to (and did) dismantle US-Eastern Europe missile defense plans in

exchange for temporary Putin quietude (“space”) to aid his 2012 reelection?

Fable Two: A Trade War?

Donald Trump is not wildly slapping tariffs on Europeans.

He is simply saying that 1945 is now 80 years past and that the asymmetrical tariffs that Europe imposes on U.S. imports should be corrected. The massive trade surpluses Europe accumulates each year should give way to fairer, more balanced trade.

If Europe does not want tariffs, then simply calibrate its own tariffs on what America places on European imported goods, and work down jointly to zero tariffs on both sides.

Fable Three: America Is Bullying Europe?

The U.S. does not actively interfere in European elections and politics.

In 2024, Europeans, especially the British Laborites, bragged about sending over campaign “volunteers” to work against Trump and, earlier, his conservative predecessors.

British subject Christopher Steele sought to sabotage an entire American 2016 election with a falsified “dossier.”

The Ukrainian ambassador in 2016 wrote an op-ed all but endorsing Hillary Clinton and trashing her opponent.

In September 2024, Mr. Zelenskyy was flown in on a Biden-provided US military jet to Scranton, Pennsylvania—at a pivotal time in the most pivotal swing state—to surround himself with Democrat politicians.

His media-frenzied presence signaled a partisan campaign theme that a Harris win and the continuance of massive Democrat aid

to Ukraine would ensure manufacturing jobs, such as the artillery shell factory he selected to visit.

As to NATO, Trump's pressure from 2017 to 2021 finally pushed more NATO nations to rearm. But even eleven years after promising to invest a mere 2 percent of GDP in defense, nine of the 32 members still have not complied.

Fable Four: Negotiating With Putin Is Selling Out?

In the long history of Western diplomacy with mass-murdering tyrants, Putin doesn't even rank among the worst. Just ask his former reset partners Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

FDR fueled mass-murdering "Uncle Joe" Stalin's Red Army as a way to defeat Nazi Germany.

Richard Nixon flattered and cajoled the greatest mass murderer in history, Mao Zedong, to triangulate China against the Soviet Union.

Ronald Reagan offered to share missile defense expertise with Soviet Russia.

Europeans have hosted almost every Palestinian murderous terrorist leader, as a way either of deflecting terrorism from their own shores or emphasizing their general loathing of Israel.

Fable Five: Europe Is Going To Save Ukraine?

Europe rushed to congratulate and celebrate with Zelensky after his preplanned White House blow-up. They are loudly announcing that a supposedly isolationist and appeasing U.S.—which has sent more aid to Ukraine than all nearby European nations combined—will now be supplanted by a "new" muscular and rearmed Europe.

We sincerely hope so.

But on every recent international moral question—ganging up on a lone Israel to appease terrorist forces in the Middle East, standing up to China’s mercantilism, neo-imperialism, and domestic oppression of minorities, or Russia’s prior 2008 and 2014 invasions—European outrage has been muted, real consequences nonexistent.

We are now witnessing European heads of state sending the same old, same old virtue signaling support for the brave Zelenskyy, who supposedly spoke truth to power to the mean U.S. Orange Man.

But where does such performance art lead after the cult hero Zelenskyy had gnawed the hand that gorged him?

To multitudes of European tanks, skies full of European jets, and division after division of crack European infantry now heading east to “back up” Ukraine—led on horseback by its new Joan of Arc, Ursula von der Leyen?

Aside from all the present posturing and mock-heroics, the only way to save Ukraine is for the U.S. president, Donald Trump, to reflect joint Ukrainian, American, and European interests in stopping the war, forcing Putin as far back eastward as possible where he started in 2022, and creating a credible deterrent along with a DMZ/industrial corridor tripwire to stop another 2008, 2014, and 2022 invasion.

Anything else is empty carnival barking.

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