

On Leaders and War: Ideological Transformation in the West After Ukraine



by Howard Rotberg

The presidency is not merely an administrative office...It is pre-eminently a place of moral leadership.

–[Franklin D. Roosevelt](#)

“For Russia, there is not and there may not be another political option but democracy. However, Russian democracy is... not at all the realization of standards imposed on us from outside.”

– Vladimir Putin

For many years now, war has been an alien concept in the West, especially for the Woke Left. When it came to Afghanistan,

President Biden knew his base would not object if he just pulled out the troops, leaving American allies to their fate, and gifting billions of dollars of military equipment to the Taliban. Perhaps war was seen as something America was unsuccessful in and should avoid at all costs.

For many years also the West does not judge leaders, their own or others, by the Biblical standards of morality. The last time we did so was after the 1991 to 1999 wars in the Balkans where [Slobodan Milošević](#) and [Radovan Karadžić](#) were tried for war crimes. One can be cynical and note that in conflict, the winners get power and wealth and the losers get war crime trials.

After Vietnam, Americans simply refused to see the wars around them, especially those in Africa or other parts of the "Third World". With a viewpoint that sees conflict in the context of "power" relationships, the West could ignore much of what should have been obvious. For example there is a very definite war by radical Islam (termed the "Islamists") against the rest of the world. Its focus has been in Africa and especially countries that bordered the Muslim world.

The West has opened its borders to those from a culture of rape, terrorism and hostility to women, gays, Christians, and (most of all) Jews. The West ignored the long history of genocidal practice and intent by Islamists and the radical Leftists against Israel. The West has refused to even do a proper vetting of those Muslims who wish to perfect the demographic war by Islamists in the West, which war is actively promoted by our universities and some media.

One egregious example is Angela Merkel who imported from Syria close to a million young single men and then had to live with the consequences of rapes and other sexual assaults by the immigrants who sought to carry into the West their culture of rape. The Germans, most in the world, should understand that culture and ideology were the foundations of the Third Reich

just as they are today for terrorism and genocide.

Who in the West in the last dozen years cares much about the war on the Yazidis, the Chinese war on the Uyghurs, the war against Israel by Hamas and Iranian proxy Hezbollah?. Who speaks out for the African Christians and others kidnapped, terrorized and murdered by Islamist thugs from Africa? Who cares about the Islamist war in the Philippines or Iran's explicit threats since at least 1996 to acquire nuclear weapons and use them against the more than six million Jews in Israel at the same time as they manipulate history to claim that there were not six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust?

To the secular West, war was viewed as the practice of religious zealots, not woke Western elites. And so, ignoring all context, and imputing racist motives to white males only, our elites have been fighting a "culture war" – where diversity and inclusion, and cultural relativism and moral equivalency have become the lenses through which our cultures view the world. Spending on defense was for reprobates like Trump even though military strength is our best defense *against* war.

Not understanding the real world, our ideologues turned the attention to implementing Critical Race Theory, miseducation of children especially in their moral education, now replaced by woke promotion of the LGBTQ agenda, transgenderism, BLM, and the bizarre hatred of Israel Apartheid (sic)Weeks.

American President Joseph Biden and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau won elections notwithstanding multiple known ethical breaches. Don't people care anymore?

The policies of the Biden Administration have been exactly wrong in every area and, looking at recent polls showing rapidly declining support for the Democrats, that has become apparent to the population now inflicted with inflation due to

runaway spending, an open border at the south, defunding police, no bail policies for even dangerous criminals, homelessness in wealthy cities, abuse of process against Trump and his supporters when no legal process was commenced against the BLM rioters and murderers, and giving priority to attempts to control the climate and adopt "green" policies promoted by a now-famous 17 year old girl and self-serving members of the plethora of NGOs to employ the otherwise unemployable over-production of unskilled university graduates.

Our young people would benefit from the study of moral leadership, and that study should include such leaders as Winston Churchill. It should also include studying the very worst of leaders in America.

It is my contention that the evil invasion of Ukraine by the Russians and their evil dictator and, especially, the moral turpitude of bombing civilian residences and laying waste to a beautiful country, may well become a turning point in the ideological confusion of the West. That confusion was based on secularism and a turning away by Christians and Jews from Biblical notions of good versus evil. When we become loath to judge the character of leaders on the basis of biblical standards, there are repercussions. Why did Americans vote for a corrupt politician like Biden who, together with his son Hunter, were obviously corrupt? Why are we so little interested in how our politicians leave office with ten times the amount of their entire accumulated salary?

For our populations, from young to old, never experienced the Second World War with its bombing, massive land battles, its Holocaust, of little interest to most of the world as it happened, and the Allies' eventual victory, which in Japan was the product of nuclear bombs. When I was a child in the 1950s, the placement of Russian weapons in Cuba and President Kennedy's ultimatum were enough to make us all fearful of nuclear world war between the only two countries then possessing such weapons. Yet today when North Korea and

China are armed to the hilt and yawns are the reaction to a treaty with Iran allowing it to get nuclear weapons in less than a decade even though it has not respected the previous treaty – and has in fact promised to use its eventual nuclear weapons against Israel and then the United States – these threats are of little interest. The War on Ukraine, however, may be the catalyst for change – where the world will pay more attention to evil dictators. We should abandon what I call “tolerism” the virtue signalling excessive tolerance of evil.

Evil regimes now understand that controlling the flow of information, from television cameras to social media, is an essential part of the propaganda war attached to every conflict. Evil countries, like evil people, know that the manipulation of images is the first step in public relations victories. Think of the fake images used against Israel – where the photo of an alleged injured Palestinian youth held down by an Israeli soldier was in fact the photo of an injured Yeshiva student from Chicago; or where the supposed convoy of dead Palestinians covered with sheets was exposed when the men carrying one “body” tripped and the fellow under the sheet ran off.

But such lies and immoral practices are harder to produce when reporters are embedded in wars in the West – Ukraine being the center of attention. But now every person with a cell phone is a reporter, so every massacre can be witnessed by dozens of people, from every angle, although technological manipulation in the aid of fake news is possible.

With respect to professional journalists, Russia is disallowing free reporting. For example, journalists are not supposed to call the war by the accurate word, “war” but are to term it a “special military operation” to “demilitarize and de-Nazify” Ukraine.

Americans and Europeans alike are aghast at Putin’s invasion – but even more so at the war crimes of attacking residential

buildings, hospitals and the like. Even old nuclear contaminated sites like Chernobyl have been disturbed and newer nuclear sites are not off-limits to the Russians, who may now control the largest nuclear power plant in the country.. Even though Ukraine has a good army, it is much dwarfed by the size and weapons of Russia. The fact that most Ukrainian men between 18 and 60 are mandated to stay in the country and fight, and that everyday Ukrainians are using rifles against tanks and students are manufacturing molotov cocktails useful only in a lengthy occupation and insurgency, has captured the opinion of those in the West who have never before seen Europeans, that is, the West, in full view of the cameras, fight a very bloody war. The fact that President Zelenskyy vowed to stay in the country and lead the David versus Goliath fight has resulted in an emotional groundswell of support for the Ukrainians.

Ukraine itself is not without blemishes. Antisemitism in the late 19th century and early 20th century drove hundreds of thousands of Jews to emigrate to America and Canada. Zelenskyy is himself Jewish and had family members, including a grandfather, killed by the Nazis, Those knowledgeable about modern day Ukraine know of the corruption there, and the highest number of neo-Nazis in all of Europe. That is why Putin said one of the reasons for the invasion was to “de-Nazify” Ukraine. But this is not relevant to the supporters of Ukraine, who see this like a rationale for controlling Covid by the murder of its carriers.

The majority of the secular west, have not often seen people who are so willing to take up small arms and fight to the end. That way of understanding nationhood is unknown in our increasingly globalist world. And to the students whose passion and justice-seeking has been corrupted by the professors and media elites by turning their attention to Israel, are perhaps being re-educated to understand the evil are in fact those who invade and kill, not those who seek to

protect by walls or military against those invaders. When Putin says Russia and Ukraine are one country, whether the Ukrainians like it or not, that is the equivalent of Arabs saying all of Israel is their country and they are, like Putin, willing to do whatever it takes to enforce that.

It is now known that Russia conspired with its new best friend, China, to delay the start of the invasion until after the winter Olympics. While the West was asleep and while Western businessmen and politicians cemented close relationships with China, China has amassed huge assets and influence around the world. Now it seems to many that China will use the present geopolitical situation to finally attack and subdue Taiwan. It is hard to argue with those who warn that economic sanctions against the invaders must not transition to military conflict between nuclear powers. But the lines are not clear. Russia is said to be using cluster bombs and thermobaric weapons, which, if true, is a type of mini-nuclear war.

The largest transformation resulting from the Ukraine war, may be the realization that energy and national security are two sides of the same coin. Biden has been unduly influenced by the radical leftist part of the Democratic Party, which is itself highly influenced by the climate-justice warriors. And as a result of this war, the West is learning just how wrong-headed it has been to give priorities in energy policy to these naifs. America, thanks to Trump's policies, had become energy self-sufficient by the end of his administration. On day one of Biden's tenure he canceled the Keystone pipeline to Canada and began an attack on oil and gas drilling, fracking and exploration. So a country with lots of energy began to buy 10% of its needs from Russia, and the revenue to Russia was in essence a way to fund the war against Ukraine. Those who promoted this insane policy of giving power to Russia have the blood of Ukrainians on their hands. With an inability to end conventional energy supplies for notions that

wind and solar and batteries for electric powered cars could empower the world's largest economy, there is proof that relatively clean oil from the U.S. is less dangerous to climate than dirtier oil from Russia and coal-burning energy plants in China.

There is a lot of geopolitical nonsense which is starting to be noticed, none sillier than attacking the western world for unproven effects on climate while the reductions in energy supply will be taken up by countries that care not about pollution.

But, more than energy, ideology and culture are the main issues. This is the most important result of the war. Without a war in Europe (except for the war in the former Yugoslavia) the people of the west have been misled by notions of cultural relativism and moral equivalency to believe that all leaders of all peoples are more or less moral. In my own country of Canada, Prime Minister Trudeau on the death of Cuba's murderous dictator, said Castro was a "remarkable leader". And when asked which countries he admired, he mentioned China due to its ability to turn on a dime to implement economic policies.

In a recent Canada Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), interview, Oleksander Danylyuk, of the Ukrainian Institute of Defence Reforms, made the point (that has been heard elsewhere) the Ukrainians see themselves as fighting not just on behalf of their country, but on behalf of all western civilization. We might learn something from them.

Americans, to me, look like fools for voting in Biden to replace Trump, when you look at Biden's unwise policies at home and abroad. I was appalled at the number of times Trump was called a "white nationalist" or a white "supremacist" or even a Nazi. Too many educated people in the West do not know the difference between Adolf Hitler and Donald Trump. But perhaps viewing Putin's immoral and genocidal actions is now

waking up Americans and Europeans to the fact that the ex-KGB operative is not just a more authoritarian version of Trump, but is the opposite and all those Americans who couldn't tell the difference should apologize to what is left of the Ukrainian people.

However, there is an important matter which has been kept secret by most of the American media (except for Miranda Devine of *New York Post* and a few courageous colleagues) and most of Democratic Party elites who know the truth. This matter is the serious corruption and kickbacks and other substantial financial benefits given to the Biden family by Ukraine, and to a lesser extent by Russia, and by China.

Biden is "owned" by China. And Putin and the Chinese have enough criminal evidence against the Biden family, that at a time of their choosing these enemies of American freedom and ideology may well decide to use the evidence in a way that could seriously damage American interests; we don't know for sure what will happen when irrefutable proof of the Biden family corruption is given to the American people – but a return to expecting the powerful to be moral might yet be a better "reset" than other matters that Biden and the socialists and globalists have in mind.

It seems probable that Putin will be successful at seizing certain Ukrainian territory but holding on to it may be more difficult. In a world of high tech communications, and social media, Putin will not be able to hide from Russians the world-wide sympathy for the Ukrainian people as they bravely fight against all odds. Nor will he be able to hide the economic effects of sanctions and other boycotts that will affect not just the value of the currency but small and large businesses and employment figures.

It is already apparent that Russia will have big problems administering cities that they conquer when the local people are willing to fight until death. Short of bombing and

demolishing every structure, we are likely to see people adopt the model of the first “conquered” city of Kherson where a day after the conquest, thousands of residents took to the streets for a large protest, unafraid of their Russian masters. Videos show, for example, one protester jumping on top of a Russian military vehicle while waving a Ukrainian flag. In another city, a resident lay down on the road in front of a tank – thus showing contempt for Russian power.

What a clear lesson we are seeing in the power of the people, even Russians, to thwart all the power of Putin. And what a lesson for the future is the refusal of President Zelensky to flee the country but to stay and fight with the people, even with the knowledge that there are special Russian forces looking to assassinate him. We must understand that in the future Americans will not elect again weak and corrupt leaders like Biden but will emulate the brave Ukrainians in their ideology of nationalism tempered by liberal democracy and will likely reject the globalists’ attempts to weaken nationalist movements with pride in their cultures.

Germany broke its long-standing policy to give military equipment to Ukraine. Many countries in the West are now sanctioning and isolating Russia. This is how it should be. There is a growing understanding that if you don’t like war, you must judge all policies such as energy and cultural and ideological matters (such as support for Israel and the leftist-Islamist intersectionality) by how much they support peace not war.

Putin has done us a favor by showing the West that we must be on guard against evil. We must understand that being “pro-peace” requires *actions* to undercut those who are evil and who use war as their ideal means for getting and keeping power. But supporting BDS (Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions) against Israel alone is an indication of antisemitism, not peace-making.

Being on guard against evil leadership might just be the catalyst for a new ideology of freedom and a positive nationalistic culture rather than globalism, Marxism, woke restrictions on freedom, cancel culture, relativism, moral equivalency and miseducation of our young. We are at a turning point and we have the opportunity to make the post-Ukraine world a better one with better values and ideologies and a leadership by better people. One way to get better leaders is to watch the incompetence of American Vice-President Kamala Harris, and learn the lesson that competence and morality make for a better choice than one based on gender and skin color.

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