

QUESTION: *“I know the U.S. has done bad things around the world, but don’t we need to help the Ukrainian people?”*

ANSWER: **The Only Help You Are Giving Is to America’s Attempt to Further Dominate and Plunder the World**

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Over one year ago, Russia invaded Ukraine—an unjust and criminal invasion. They’ve been waging a war to occupy Ukraine, leading to the deaths of tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of people, millions displaced, and cities and towns destroyed. This is a terrible situation—and anyone with a heart should be outraged at what is happening. But if you really care about the Ukrainian people, and if you really care about the people of the world, **do not allow your sympathies to be weaponized in support of the U.S. empire**, which is cynically using the Ukrainian people as cannon fodder to weaken its imperialist rival Russia. This contention could lead to direct military confrontation with the danger to spiral out to world war, and potentially nuclear war, which could mean the extinction of humanity.

Almost immediately after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. and NATO (a U.S.-European imperialist military alliance) jumped into the fray and began massively arming the Ukrainian military, pledging billions of dollars in financial support, training, evermore high-tech weaponry, providing military surveillance, and even guidance in the actual fighting. This has become a proxy war where the U.S. is basically leading the war—doing a decisive share of the planning, arming, training and funding—and the Ukrainian soldiers are doing the fighting and dying.

### **Stop Being Played by Their World-Class Hypocrisy**

One very basic way you know this isn’t about helping the Ukrainian people is to look at the sheer hypocrisy of the U.S. There are innumerable examples of people being brutalized by an invading power but why is the U.S. at times on the side of the invaders, other times opposing the invaders, or sometimes even being the invaders?

What’s driving this has nothing to do with the humanitarian needs of the people at any given time. Instead, this is about the compulsion of the capitalist-imperialist system and what’s required for the U.S. to maintain its position as #1 oppressor and dominator in the world.

For example, look at what’s happening right now in Yemen. Since 2015, the U.S. has been backing Saudi Arabia’s war on Yemen which has led to the deaths of close to 400,000 people—from direct combat or due to famine and disease caused by the war. Seventy percent of these deaths were reportedly children under the age of five! (While there is currently a cease-fire, the situation is in flux.)

Examine how your sentiments are being used and your sympathies being played. Why are you being shown the very real suffering of the Ukrainian people on your TV every night,

but why are you *not* being shown the suffering of the Yemeni people? Why do you see the Ukrainian towns destroyed, watch the interviews of Ukrainian families sheltering in place, hear about the war dead, and the Russian war crimes, but you never, ever hear a peep about the babies who’ve died of starvation in Yemen, of innocent civilians blown to bits, of the mass epidemic of cholera?

Because the suffering in Ukraine is caused by America’s enemy Russia, but the suffering in Yemen is caused by America’s ally Saudi Arabia—with the weapons and bombs coming directly from the U.S. And the media mouthpieces of this system are strumming your heart strings so that you line up behind the crimes of the U.S., instead of critically examining what they’re really doing around the world and why.

### **Legit Gangsters Vying for Global Control**

**This is world-class hypocrisy, but going deeper, it’s the logic of a system of capitalism-imperialism.** This system is based on expand-or-die cutthroat competition over the ability to exploit and control the countries, resources and people of the world. The system of capitalism-imperialism is a tightly interknit global system—with networks of production and distribution that travel the world. Immense profits are reaped from the bodies of workers on the farmlands of Mexico, the mines of the Congo, the cotton plantations of Egypt, the clothing sweatshops of Bangladesh, the large-scale high-tech electronic production in China, and the oil drilling of the U.S. and Saudi Arabia—and there is a global struggle over who will dominate all this. Meanwhile, the workings of this system are completely despoiling and destroying the environment. **That domination and plunder is enforced by violence: wars, invasions, occupations and coups—to subjugate and subordinate whole countries, economies and peoples, to the needs of empire.**

Through decades of violence and terror, the U.S. has stayed on top of this—leading to an incredibly distorted and lopsided global system. It’s not a coincidence that the U.S. spends more on its military power (\$800+ billion) as the **next nine countries combined** (\$777 billion)—maintaining over 750 military bases in over 80 countries around the world.

But they don’t have a lock-grip on this, and are facing major challenges in holding all this together—facing losses in their wars in the Middle East and the challenge of lesser imperialist powers, China and Russia, jockeying to come up—to expand *their* spheres of influence and **control**.



Resource page  
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## “Gangsters with Nuclear Weapons”

To understand this dynamic, the revolutionary leader Bob Avakian has used the analogy of “‘*Legit Gangsters*’ — *Gangsters With Nuclear Weapons*.” He walks this through as applied to the situation in Ukraine:

Beginning in the 1990s, recognizing that what was left in place of the Soviet Union was a weakened Russia, the U.S. imperialists, as the gangsters they truly are, seized the opportunity to further expand their empire—going back on their “word” that they would not extend their aggressive military alliance (NATO) into countries of the previous Warsaw Pact. Ignoring this promise, the U.S. imperialists moved to include countries in NATO that are close to, and in some cases actually border on, Russia. As part of all this, the U.S. has repeatedly interfered in Ukraine in recent decades, conspiring to overturn governments there that were more friendly to Russia and replace them with governments leaning toward “western” imperialism, as happened as recently as 2014.

A key element in all this, which played a significant part in the decision by Russia to invade Ukraine, was the declaration by the pro-U.S. government in Ukraine that it wanted to join NATO. Ukraine is a large country right on the border of Russia. As articles at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us) have pointed out: Think what it would mean, and what the rulers of the U.S. would do, if the government of Mexico declared its intention to join a military alliance headed by Russia!

All this, on the part of the U.S. ruling class, has been driven by its grandiose ambition to become, and remain, an “unchallengeable” imperialist superpower.

With Russian, and Chinese, challenges of various kinds to U.S. dominance in the world, the argument of the U.S. ruling class, and those who parrot its American chauvinist rationalizations, amounts to essentially nothing more than this: “We have established, through massive force and violence, an ‘order’ in the world that is favorable to our ‘national’ (that is, imperialist) interests, and no one has the right to use force to change this in a way that threatens those interests.”

It is the fundamental interests of their system which determine what they do and don’t do, who they support and back or who they attack and dominate. Their system cannot be convinced, pressured, or pleaded with into acting in fundamental opposition to its very nature—and if somehow it did, another imperial power would claw its way to the top. *This* is why the U.S. is not—and *cannot be*—a force for good in the world! Its very nature is that of a vicious beast feeding off the world, and obliterating anything—and anyone—that stands in its way. And *this* is why the U.S. has invaded, destroyed and dominated more countries than any other empire in history. *This* is why the lives of people—here and around the world—are not, and will never be, part of the U.S. imperialists’ calculus except to feed their system’s drive for profit, domination and control.

## Stop Choosing Between Oppressors, Be Part of the Revolution to *End Oppression*

Despite the mythology generated by the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, the U.S. media, and the wishes and projections of all too many people, Zelensky is not some “common man” hero of the people. He represents sections of the Ukrainian ruling class who saw their interests as being better served by being part of the U.S. imperialist bloc and not the one headed by Russia. The majority of the masses of Ukraine may (or may not) be following Zelensky, but that doesn’t mean he embodies or represents *their* interests. Zelensky is insistent that Ukraine should be armed with fighter jets, no-fly zones and Ukraine’s entry into NATO—all of which would qualitatively heighten the danger of a direct confrontation between U.S./NATO and Russia which could spiral out into world war, and the very real danger of nuclear war and the extinction of humanity. No one should be lining up behind that! People like Zelensky—or Biden, or Putin, for that matter—serve *systems* of exploitation and oppression. They rise to the top based on their ability to represent those interests while concealing this—in societies where people have been conditioned almost since birth to believe that their only options are to choose between one or another such leader.

But the stakes are too high to go along with that conditioning. **Look beneath the surface.** What’s needed is *not* siding with one oppressor or the other, or choosing between them. What’s needed is a radically different society based in a radically different economic and political system. One that removes the networks of socialized production from the vise-grip of private appropriation—where instead of the wland, technology, factories and resources of the world being privately owned and controlled for the profit of a small handful (constantly driven to compete with each other), all that is put to meeting the collective needs of humanity—uprooting exploitation and oppression and becoming fit caretakers of the earth. Bringing that system into being requires an actual revolution—the overthrow of the violent enforcers of this system, replacing this oppressive state with a new state basing itself on the *Constitution for the New Socialist Republic in North America*, and acting as a base area for world revolution.

Right now, the best way to help the people of Ukraine, in a way that will also be in the interests of the people of the world as a whole, is to actively oppose what “our own” (that is, the U.S.) imperialists are doing in this war, while also opposing Russian (and all) imperialism. Everyone with a heart for humanity needs to stand up to force our own imperialists, as well as the Russians, to pull back from this constantly escalating war—and with the more fundamental goal of overthrowing our own imperialists and contributing to the struggle to put an end to all imperialists and all systems and relations of exploitation and oppression, and with that, an end to the predatory wars waged by oppressors and the accelerating destruction of the environment, with their potential existential threats to human civilization.

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