

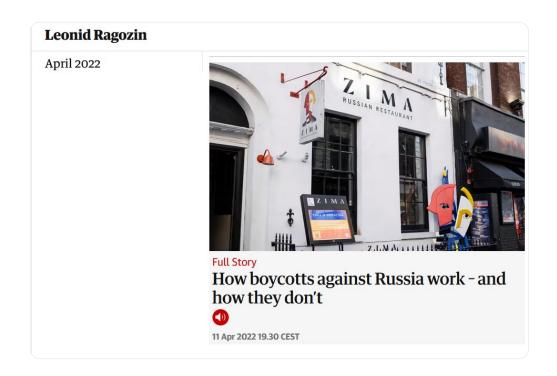
In today's Vatnik Soup, I'll introduce a Russian journalist, Leonid Ragozin (@leonidragozin). He's best-known for posing as a Russian dissident, while at the same time sneakily promoting the Kremlin's narratives about the Russo-Ukrainian War.

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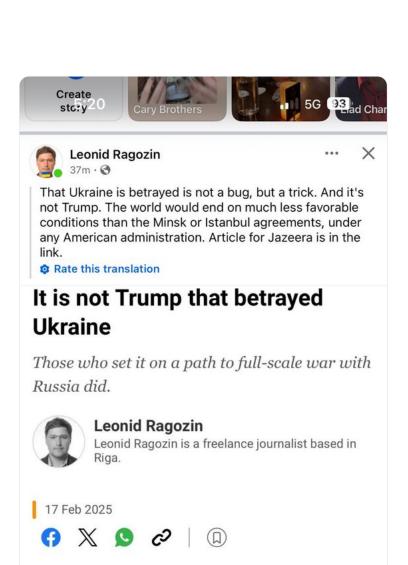


On paper, Leonid doesn't look like your typical Kremlin apologist - he's written and worked for prestigious Western outlets like the BBC, the Guardian, and he's even written some Lonely Planet guides for the Baltic countries!





But Ragozin's public commentary often seems to walk a fine line: condemning the war while pushing narratives that shift blame, dilute responsibility, or quietly carry the same old imperial baggage Russia - or its opposition - has never truly forgotten.





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He routinely warns the West not to "humiliate Russia," a talking point that eerily echoes Putin's own rhetoric. I mean, if your biggest concern during a war of aggression is that the aggressor might feel offended, are you really opposing the right things?





On a more sinister note, is the US abandoning Ukraine? Yes, but it has always been an inbuilt feature, not a newly acquired Trumpian bug.

Does it mean a win for the Russian dictator? Yes, but it's been the only realistic outcome since Ukraine got thrown under Putin's bulldozer. The question was only the ultimate cost for both sides and whether it comes to nuclear war.

One can't defeat Putin without Russians on board. But the West and Ukraine did everything to alienate even the most staunchly pro-Ukrainian anti-Putin Russians through xenophobic rhetoric and discriminative policies. It always seemed that hawkish crowd wanted the war per se, not a better Ukraine and Russia.

European peacekeepers not covered by Article 5, as proposed by Hegseth, is another step towards realism - away from the delusional talk about NATO peacekeepers.

There is a considerable chance that Putin will still see a Trojan horse here though. Also, Europeans will think twice before putting their troops in the line of danger without NATO backing.

Non-NATO European troops shouldn't be an issue, but it's only a few thousands that Austria, Switzerland, Serbia, etc could supply. Main contingents should come from the Global South.

That said, the whole peacekeeper business is overblown. It's Ukraine's genuine non-alignment and rapprochement between Russia and the US-led West (or its separating fragments) that matter when it comes to stable peace.

His framing consistently casts small, vulnerable democracies in Eastern Europe as aggressive, overreacting, or irrational — while subtly positioning Russia as a misunderstood giant, unfairly antagonized by its neighbors.





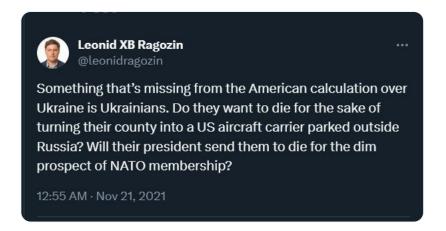


Just before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Ragozin repeatedly ridiculed the idea of a potential full-scale war, called Western support for Ukraine reckless and suggested that Ukrainian sovereignty was being manipulated by NATO interests.









In Jan 2022, Ragozin tweeted that a "full-scale Russian invasion is an extremely improbable scenario," & compared the people who were claiming this to the antivax movement. He also called the military buildup at the border "deliberately demonstrative" & a "bluff". He visited... 7/20



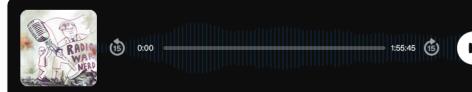


But given Putin's propensity to stealthy and surprising moves, the current deployment of troops is way too demonstrative to be a preparation of imminent invasion. Their enhanced visibility has made some observers conclude that they are meant as intimidation rather than outright aggression.

From the Russian perspective, however, the Kremlin is being reactive, not proactive, in the face of a newly emerging threat. The amassing of troops is the Kremlin's heavy-handed response to what it interprets as a coordinated attempt by Biden and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to upset the fragile equilibrium which underpinned a relative calm on the front line in eastern Ukraine.



... Mark "All russian girls want to be raped" Ames' War Nerd Radio, where he denounced the US intelligence leaks about an imminent war, claiming that it was "Russophobia". Ames has also been a harsh critic of Zelenskyy's government, and also denied any chance of invasion.



Radio War Nerd #306* [REPOSTED UNLOCKED] — Ukraine-Russia War Fever, with Leonid Ragozin

Dec 13, 2021

Guest: Leonid Ragozin, journalist

Originally recorded: November 29, 2021

Hysteria about an imminent Russia-Ukraine war—almost entirely manufactured from the bowels of certain DC/London thinktanks—has only worsened since we recorded this excellent, wide-ranging discussion with Riga-based journalist Leonid Ragozin. We're reposting this episode unlocked & free, as an antidote to counteract all the corrupt & sleazy blather that passes for Russia expertise.

Would you like to know more? This unlocked repost of RWN Episode #306 comes to you courtesy of our Radio War Nerd subscribers, who make our weekly podcast possible. Freedom isn't free, and neither is Radio War Nerd...Sign up here on the patreon page for the Radio War Nerd podcast, the newsletter, the RSS feed, and more...

Follow Leonid Ragozin in Twitter.



Head of Ukraine's largest opposition party arrested, handcuffed, humiliating photograph publicly shared by Ukraine's president. All signs of a healthy European democracy.

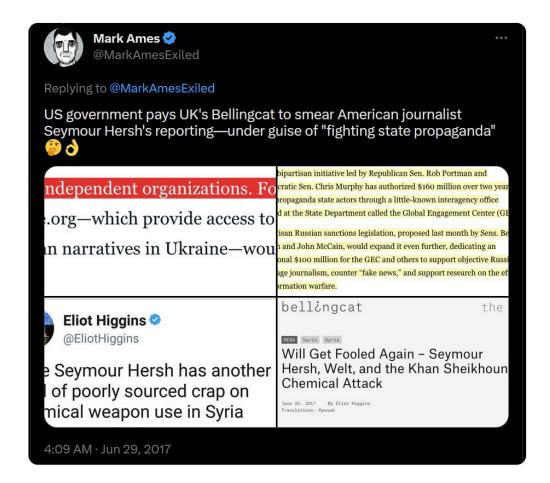
Christopher Miller 🤣 @ChristopherJM · Apr 12, 2022

!! President Zelensky just published this photo of Viktor Medvedchuk, Putin pal and Ukrainian pro-Russian politician, cuffed and dressed in Ukrainian uniform. He says the security service nabbed him in a "special operation." He had been on the run after breaking house arrest.

Show this thread







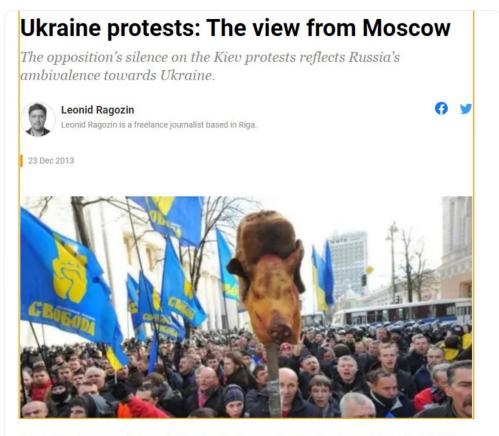
He also dismissed Ukraine's post-Maidan politics as "nationalist" and "alienating to Russians," a take that grossly misrepresents a country fighting for its right to exist. Leonid seems more focused on the feelings of Russians than on the survival of Ukrainians.

9/20

Post-Maidan Ukraine is ridden with well-armed and murky paramilitary groups freelancing for the oligarchs and closely linked to various factions in security bodies. It is control over one or several of these groups, characterised as volunteer battalions or nationalist movements, which defines the ability of an oligarch or a political leader to stage a coup framed as another Maidan revolution.



Worth mentioning that right after emigrating to Latvia in 2013, Ragozin published an article ambitiously titled "Ukraine protests: The view from Moscow". There, he rants about "problems faced by the Russians in Ukraine," "the danger posed by the Ukrainian nationalists,"...



There, Ragozin peremptorily and without adducing any proof made strong claims about "problems faced by the Russians in Ukraine," "the danger posed by the Ukrainian nationalists," made provocative claims about "Russian regions of Ukraine" and the "artificial nature of Ukraine's borders" that were a perfect match to the Kremlin's propaganda. At the same time, he made false claims about "Russia's indifference to the events in Ukraine" to distract the Western audience.

...and the "artificial nature of Ukraine's borders." Again, all this could've come directly from a Kremlin-funded media. Ragozin even blamed Ukraine for the anti-semitic pogroms in Dagestan that took place in 2024 after the 7 Oct Hamas terrorist attack.



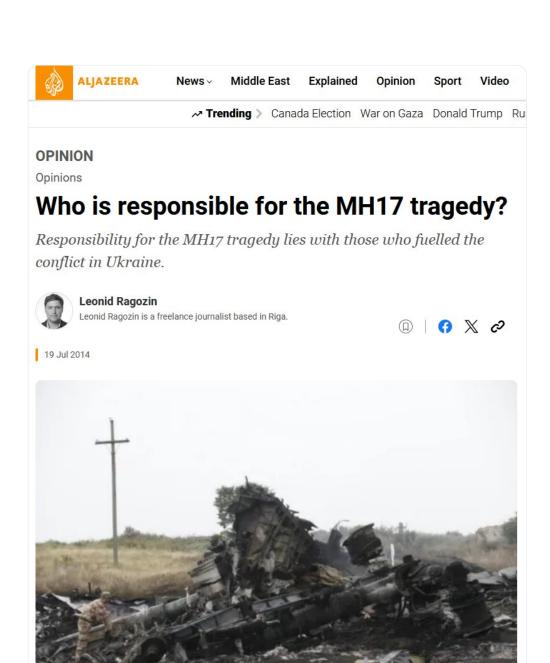


Anti-Semitic pogroms in Dagestan last October were inspired by Telegram channels run Ukraine-based Dagestani fugitives who didn't bother to hide their identity.

It remains to be seen whether latest attack can be traced to HUR's "partisan" network in Russia, but terror attacks targeting Dagestan's Mountain Jewish community were unknown prior to Ukraine war.

06:15 · 6/24/24 · 20K Views

But none of this is new. Already back in 2014, just 2 days after the MH17 tragedy, Leonid published an article in English titled "Who is responsible for the MH-17 tragedy?" where he simply chose to speculate on "versions of the tragedy", even gesturing towards Ukraine.



Flight MH17 was shot down over eastern Ukraine on July 17 [Reuters]

Meanwhile, the Kremlin official suggested the plane had been brought down by the Ukrainian Buk ground-to-air missile system. As with all other theories, this one should be investigated, even though it sounds less plausible considering the separatists' clumsy disclaimers. Back in 2001, a stray Ukrainian missile shot during a naval exercise hit a Russian airliner, killing all passengers on board.

Who shot down Flight MH17?

Given its sorry state and total unpreparedness for a war with Russia, the Ukrainian is entirely capable of unintentionally causing all sorts of tragic incidents.

However, it has shown a remarkable restraint throughout these several months of hostilities. Besides, why would the Ukranians target any plane given that the separatists have no air force of their own?

No matter who downed the plane, there is a much more prominent cause of the tragedy than a missile mistakenly or intentionally fired.

Leonid sees Ukrainian "Nazis" absolutely everywhere. Based on his tweets, one could even come to a conclusion that Ukraine is at the brink of falling into the hands of the evil Banderites — who for some reason have never passed 3% popularity in Ukrainian elections.

13/20

It's much the same story when it comes to Putin confronting liberal democracy in the West. You can't demand for Russia to ditch its nationalism and irredentism while you encourage far-right language and historical memory policies in Eastern Europe, or supply weapons to the Nazi-leaning Azov regiment in Ukraine.

You can't stop Russia from meddling in its neighborhood when you meddle all around the world, with grave results for local populations. You can't tell Russia to stop farming trolls and spreading fake news, when your own partisan troll farms and infowar operations do that on a larger scale, using your own online platforms that you fail to regulate.





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It's ridiculous when Witkoff says that people in occupied Ukrainian regions made their choice in referendums, like it was a real democratic vote.

But we've also heard senior Western officials say that war in Ukraine is better than peace, that Russia is going to attack NATO countries or that the issue of far right extremism in Ukraine is a product of Russian propaganda.

All of this is a part of modern political culture, in which words don't mean anything, facts and logic don't matter.

For many involved, the support of Ukraine is not a moral, but a circumstantial issue, stemming from domestic politics or lobbyist interests. If one political force is for Ukraine, their opponents will be against Ukraine and friendly with Russia – that's just the logic of political competition.

What's important is that none of them cares about Ukraine's actual interests – of surviving this war in more or less one piece and building a genuinely democratic, inclusive and prosperous European nation, not a Mad Max-styled militant frontline political tribe with Black Sun symbols and OUN chants.

11:13 AM · Mar 24, 2025 · 8,819 Views

In one of his op-eds for bne IntelliNews, Ragozin emphasized Hungary's efforts in "promoting peace" for Ukraine, and framed the evil Anglo-Saxon leaders as warmongers who sabotaged all peace efforts with Russia - as if any treaties with Russia could ever be trusted.



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RAGOZIN: What did we die for?



Volodymyr Zelensky's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, met with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Jeddah. He went in talking tough, but came out with a very thin agreement indeed. / bne IntelliNews



By Leonid Ragozin in Riga March 13, 2025

What did we die for?

The moment Jeddah talks finished and the ceasefire proposal was announced Hungarian foreign minister Peter Szijarto felt vindicated. "For three years, we have been urging a ceasefire and peace talks in Ukraine - only to be insulted for our stance", he said. "Now, after three years, ceasefire and negotiations are finally being discussed. Perhaps if there had been less condemnation, hundreds of thousands fewer would have died, millions fewer would have been displaced, and the damage would be far less".

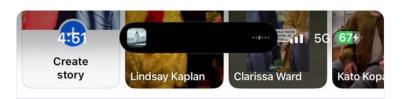
Ever since Ukraine's failed counter-offensive in 2023, it was only a matter of basic intellectual decency to realise that the longer this war continues, the worse the final outcome for Ukraine will be. But pro-war lobby made both Zelensky's administration and numerous governments in the West too invested in delusional expectations, which is what is making damage control particularly tricky at the moment.

Sadly for Western liberalism, it is now left to far-right governments of Victor Urban and Donald Trump to deliver the bitter truth. That's because they have never been invested in the risky enterprise of challenging a major nuclear power to what Western politicians, like Marco Rubio and former British prime-minister Boris Johnson are now openly calling a proxy war.

What politicians and lobbyists who helped to derail Istanbul agreements in the spring of 2022 (and Minsk agreements before that) can't possibly admit, is that Ukraine's terrible sacrifice was in vain.

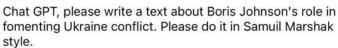
Under Vladimir Putin, Russia has violated or disregarded nine separate arms control agreements and treaties he either inherited or signed, including:

- The Helsinki Final Act of 1975, also known as the Helsinki Accords, wherein signatories pledged not to use military force to change borders in Europe
- The aforementioned Budapest Memorandum of 1994
- The Istanbul Document of 1999 (in which Russia pledged to withdraw its military forces from Georgia and Transnistria in Moldova)
- The Presidential Nuclear Initiatives of 1991 and 1992 (in which Russia pledged to withdraw from active service various naval tactical nuclear weapons and to eliminate all ground-launched tactical nuclear weapons)
- The 1992 Open Skies Treaty (in which Russia blocked U.S. access to parts of Russia clearly provided for under the treaty and also deviated from agreed flight paths over the U.S. that were mandated by the treaty)
- The 1999 Vienna Document (Russia falsified and concealed military exercise information which it had agreed to provide)
- The 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Agreement (which Russia violated by covertly developing and then deploying a missile which exceeded the permissible range limits established by the treaty
- The 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention banning retention of chemical warfare agents, and
- The 2011 New START Treaty (Russia has withdrawn from participation in treatymandated working groups and inspections)



X





Boris and the War Drums

In Downing Street, so firm and bold, Sat Boris, tousled, sharp yet cold. With speeches grand, his voice was clear: "We must defend our allies dear!"

To Ukraine's aid, he sent with glee, Some NLAWs, missiles—two, then three. "Defensive tools!" the papers said, But Moscow saw the path ahead.

"They arm our foes, they plot, they scheme— The West is chasing Russia's dream!" With fury bright and warnings grim, The Kremlin's patience grew too slim.

While talks were held and doors ajar, Came Boris, roaring from afar: "No deals, no peace, stand firm, stand tall— We back Ukraine, we'll give it all!"

A treaty stalled, a line was crossed, And soon the world would count the cost. For war began, as tanks rolled in, With cities crushed and blood-stained sin.

Yet later, when the dust had spread, And lists were filled with names of dead, Some asked aloud, with voice so low: "Did Boris help the flames to grow?"

For though the blame on Putin fell, Did Britain push the warning bell? With guns and words so firm, so loud, Did Boris please his homegrown crowd?

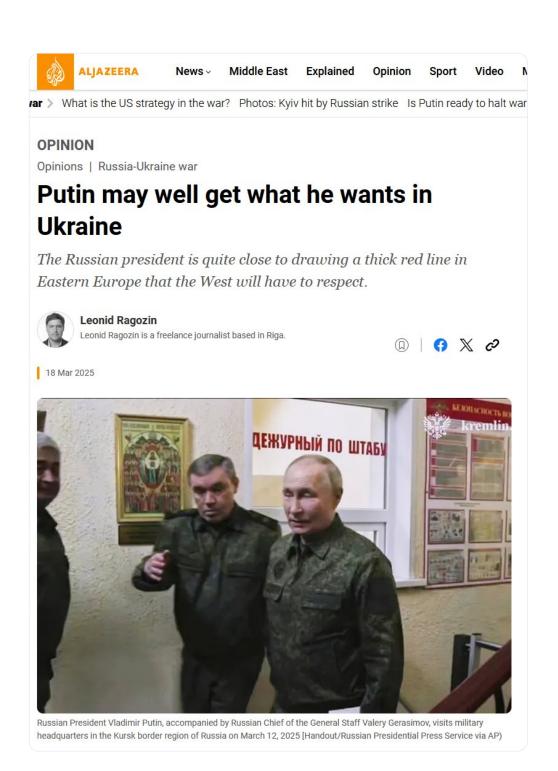
A tale of might, a tale of woe,
Where heroes shine, but shadows grow.
For history writes in shades unclear—

And Leonid still has a hard time believing any imperialistic tendencies of Putin. According to him, Russia's not fighting for territory, but for new red lines that would stop NATO's eastward expansion in the future. But this simply isn't true, as Russia is currently...

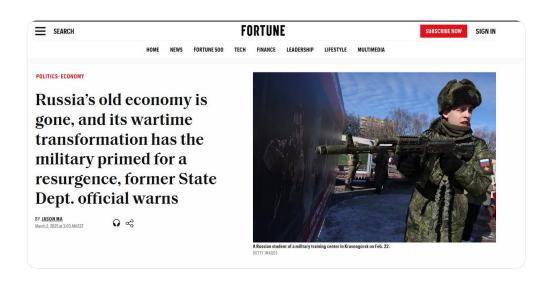


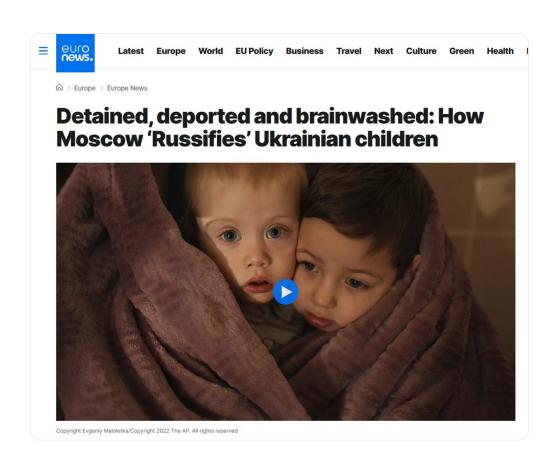
Putin is not fighting for territory (or for annihilating Ukraine's statehood). He is fighting for a thick red line limiting NATO expansion and for Russia's non-subordinate status in its relations with the West. He might be getting what he wants - perhaps faster than he expected, thanks to Trump. My latest for @AJEnglish aliazeera.com/opinions/2025/...

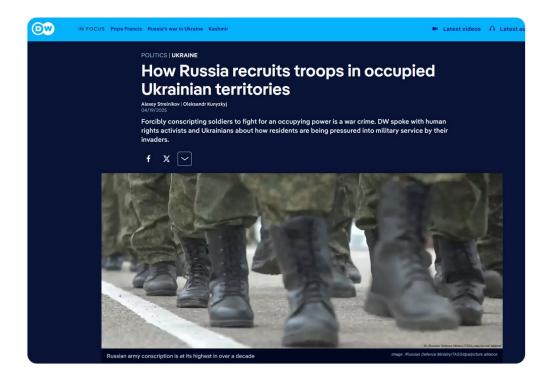
2:18 PM · Mar 19, 2025 · **62.8K** Views



...in full war economy, their education system has been transformed into a fascist brainwashing machine, they're force-recruiting soldiers from occupied regions, and they're provenly collaborating with North Korean and Chinese soldiers in their barbaric invasion.









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N Korea confirms it sent troops to fight for Russia in Ukraine war

1 day ago

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Joel Guinto Jean Mackenzie
BBC News Seoul correspondent



South Korean and Western intelligence have long reported that Pyongyang dispatched thousands of troops to Kursk last year

North Korea has for the first time confirmed that it sent troops to fight for Russia against Ukraine. $\,$

For someone who claims to be hunted by the regime, Leonid still seems to find a way to visit his beloved home country. He's made hundreds of trips to Russia since 2014, and he was there even when the full-scale invasion started (flew in on 17 Feb, left on 3 Mar).

17/20

And that's not all - through 2020, Ragozin worked for Vremya, a newscast described as the "flagship propaganda outlet" of Russia. For being a harsh critic of the Kremlin, Leonid had no trouble working for this state-funded propaganda mill.

Makes you wonder, eh?

18/20



We don't need more Russian commentators telling us that Estonia is overreacting, that Ukraine is being divisive, or that NATO is to blame. We need voices committed to defending democracy and Ukraine's sovereignty — not to protecting Russia's reputation.



Thirty-day limit is what might make Putin agree to ceasefire despite the obvious disadvantage for the advancing Russian forces. It will bring the ball back into Ukraine's court and allow him to press for more concessions from Kyiv.

If nothing is achieved, he can resume the offensive after 30 days – a term not long enough for any significant change of capability on either side. I don't think he is afraid of Western reprisals after three years of Russia sustaining what Rubio and Johnson call "proxy war".

Putin is not fighting for territory. He was ready to strike peace in Istanbul on the basis of Feb '22 line of contact and he was ready to implement Minsk (the way he interpreted it) before that. He is using occupation as punishment for intransigence.

The main sticking points remain the same -

- Ukraine's neutrality: That's likely to be achieved
- Small-sized army: Ukraine and Europe will strongly resist it, but this issue is linked to the previous one from the Russia pov
- Legalisation of "pro-Russian" parties and media: There will be maximum resistance here because that undoes the main geopolitical achievement of Maidan revolution and may eventually result in Ukraine returning into the Russian fold. Putin can achieve more by the means of genuinely democratic elections than by fighting.

Last edited 11:11 AM · Mar 12, 2025 · 21.9K Views





To conclude: Ragozin is a classic case of a Russian "dissident" - someone who seemingly criticizes Putin's barbaric invasion, yet at the same time telegraphs his willingness to help the country in its "patriotic struggle".



The 2nd edition of "Vatnik Soup — The Ultimate Guide to Russian Disinformation" is officially out!

You can order your copy here:



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