US hypocrisy & exceptionalism

America has empathy for Ukraine but not the other countries it seeks to destroy



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NEWS EDITOR

On Feb. 24, Russia invaded Ukraine in a major escalation of the two countries' ongoing conflict. This is Russian President Vladimir Putin's latest step in gaining control over the region, following the 2014 annexation of Crimea, while also backing separatist forces in the southeastern region of Donbas.

The invasion has brought widespread condemnation unlike any we've ever seen. Western nations including the United States have placed strict sanctions on Russia, making it the most sanctioned country in the world according to a Monday Bloomberg article.

The U.S.'s track record of meddling in foreign affairs has created the perfect breeding ground for dictators, including Putin, who have their own intentions for the region of Eastern Europe.

Media outlets in the U.S. have also brought sharp criticism toward Russia in support of Ukraine, including a cartoon in solidarity by FOX animated comedy "The Simpsons." Late-night comedy show "Saturday Night Live" also brought in a Ukrainian choir for its cold open on Feb. 26.

The hypocrisy is surreal. The U.S. has helped spur the condemnation of Russia worldwide, with good reason.

Hypocrisy lies in the U.S.' actions elsewhere in the world; most recently, in Palestine.

Swift sanctions were placed on Russia, but sanctions against countries including Israel for its actions against Palestine have brought on more support for Israel, and condemnation against Palestinian-led movements including Boycott, Divest, Sanctions (BDS).

The BDS movement supports economic divestment away from Israel, modeled after the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

While prominent figures including Palestinian fashion model Gigi Hadid have called for support for Palestine, magazines including Vogue decided to remove any references to Palestine in reporting of Ukraine, furthering the hypocrisy of the West. If someone like Hadid is being censored because of Palestinian support, imagine how Palestinians fighting for their home everyday feel.

How can we look to the U.S. to be the moral arbitrator of the world when it's so far from that?

The U.S. has caused so many of the problems the world faces today, including this one.

The country may not have had a direct hand in Vladimir Putin's decision to invade Ukraine, but it sure helped set the groundwork for it.

Putin used the excuse of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, an intergovernmental military alliance, to encroach on Russian territory through Ukraine and hide his own ambitions for the country.

Much of the surrealness stems from how reporters have decided to speak about Ukraine, expressing "shock" that such a "civilized" country could be attacked like this.

Ukrainian Deputy Minister, David Sakvarelidze said in a February 26th interview with BBC News that the invasion was emotional.

"It's very emotional for me because I see European people with blue eyes and blonde hair being killed," he said.

Other stories of Nigerian students and citizens fleeing Ukraine to Poland only to be denied at the border have been reported by The Guardian, a stark reminder of how western countries have treated asylum seekers and refugees who are not white. While they are sent back into untold dangers, Ukrainians are met with open arms, as they should be.

The problems western imperialism has created in other countries means the offending nations have an obligation to help people fleeing their respective regions, it's the least they can do.

I wish I could say I can't believe reporters are saying this, but I can. We would always like to think of journalism being an objective career, but where is the objectivity in statements like this?

Over these past ten days we have seen blatant biases coming out in reference to this conflict and I can't help but feel frustration.

The Russian government deserves widespread criticism for what it has done to Ukraine and it's not wrong for the U.S. to condemn its actions, but it's ironic considering the U.S.' history of involvement with regime changes in Asian and Latin America countries. The U.S. also affected domestic social justice movements with projects including the counter-intelligence program to disrupt organizations including the Black Panther Party, anti-war campaigns and civil rights movements with aims for a better and different country. It doesn't feel fair constantly watching the U.S. hypocrisy.

The U.S. has had a massive role in creating the destabilization in Eastern Europe and has brought this problem onto itself.

In 1980, the Soviet-Afghan War was a conflict in the larger Cold War, which was fought as a proxy war involving the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

While the Soviet Union backed the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, the U.S. and other countries including Saudi Arabia backed the Mujahideen which led a vicious and costly war against the government of Afghanistan, causing the Soviet Union to back out in 1989.

With the proxy war's end and the Soviet Union on the brink of collapse, the Mujahideen fought a civil war leading to the collapse of the Moscow-backed government, which eventually led to the Taliban's emergence, a consequence of the U.S. involvement.

Within these ten days of watching this conflict unfold, it almost makes my head spin thinking about the amount of times conflicts like this circle back. It's complex and frustrating to watch everyone have an opinion on something so egregious, but turn a blind eye to what has really gotten us here. You almost feel hopeless in thinking, 'will this ever stop?'

The Russian Government is horrible because of its cruelty toward its citizens and other countries with its own show of imperialism, but the U.S. is no better. In fact, it's worse.

Both countries have imperialist governments focused on furthering agendas behind a capitalistic backdrop.

Following the Soviet Union's December 1991 collapse, democratic elections were held and U.S.-backed Boris Yeltsin became Russia's new president. During the country's transition from communism to a capitalist market economy, inflation and economic volatility ensued while oligarchs obtained a massive majority of national wealth.

Not only did this lead to corruption within the government, it created a perfect opportunity for Vladimir Putin's emergence.

Ukraine's push towards the west by joining NATO and the European Union has created an excuse for President Putin's government to attack Ukraine and gain control over a region that was once part of the Soviet Union.

Whether its racism, showing the hypocrisies of how we treat brown and Black refugees, or how the West collectively forgets the most recent conflict in Europe prior to Ukraine, the West has shown its compassion extends only so far as to where its interests lie.

I hope it won't always be like this. There will be a change in the way this world works, because what we live under currently is not sustainable.

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