

# Review of: "Rebuilding a 'Greater Russia' and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine"

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The main message of the article – that Russia tries to reinstate Russian empire, and as the first step to conquer former USSR states, is correct. However, there are a few dubious statements and definitions in the text stemming from the fact that the author mostly uses either Russian sources or works of Western academics who have been promoting Russian propaganda (e.g. Sakwa, 2021). In particular, these dubious statements are claims that Russia supported some “separatists” or “secessionists” in Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. These people were either collaborators or Russian agents in disguise, since all those “separatist” movements were inspired and financed by Russia and basically were just a hybrid part of its war against the named states. Looking at these three cases, one can recognize that Russia always acts using the same scenario: creating some [pseudo]separatist force and supporting the attack of this force on the legitimate government of a country. If the government of that country is weak enough, Russia ends up as a “peacekeeper” making the legitimate government negotiate with Russian puppets.

The same scenario was used earlier in history too – e.g. USSR created a fake “Finnish communist republic” that invited USSR to attack Finland in 1939; Russia created a “Ukrainian socialist republic” that invited Russian forces to fight the legitimate Ukrainian government in 1918. Hence, there are no separatists in the described conflicts, there is an aggressor – the Russian state – and some people who agree to act as its collaborators.

There are also a couple of factual mistakes, i.e. Russia recognized so-called Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics only on Feb.22, 2022, right before the full-scale invasion, and the “referendum” in Crimea was fake, as well as “referendums” conducted in autumn-2022 in other occupied areas of Ukraine. Also, the wars in Chechnya did not just “break out” or “started” - Russia attacked Chechnya to prevent it from restoring its independence (many people may believe that Chechnya was “always” Russian but in fact Russia occupied it only in 19th century, and Chechens never stopped fighting for their independence).

For the future, I suggest that author consults Ukrainian, Georgian or Moldovan sources when writing about respective countries.