



# P E R S P E C T I V E S

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## **Fareed Zakaria Got it Wrong!**

### *A dishonorable peace*

No doubt many of you know of Fareed Zakaria, the very intelligent columnist for the Washington Post and popular host of “Fareed Zakaria GPS” (where GPS stands for “Global Public Square”). Fareed is more than a popular pundit; he is a significant opinion maker himself. For years his prestigious interviews of global elites in government and business from Davos and in “on air” television interviews are newsmakers in their own right. His CNN show and weekly column are extremely popular (particularly with other opinion makers); and, he has a widely followed Twitter account. Yes, he’s a powerful intellect who affects an incredibly broad base of folks with his thoughts.

Refuting him over an editorial piece he did recently as his “take” on the “end game in Ukraine” is therefore no easy task. Unfortunately, his opinion on what to do about the Russian genocide occurring in Ukraine was so wrong it demands a thoughtful response.

In essence, Fareed argued that the war in Ukraine is producing such a destabilizing effect on Europe, Arica, and the US that it needs to come to an end as soon as possible—even if that means carving off a big chunk of Ukraine to assuage Putin’s warmongering. You have to wonder if he would have said the same thing when Hitler grabbed the Sudetenland in 1938?

The similarities between what Hitler did and what Vladimir Putin has been doing with Ukraine’s Donbas region for the last six years are strikingly obvious. Hitler claimed that the German-speaking population of Northern Czechoslovakia wanted to be re-united to the “Fatherland”, so he decided to annex it by activating a large Nazi separatist party in Sudetenland to protest for reunification with Germany. Putin has had similar goals for the Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine (comprised of Donetsk & Luhansk regions) by supporting Russian-speaking separatists in Donbas to break away from Ukraine and be reunited with “Motherland” Russia. He has actively sponsored a war in the Donbas since 2014 with money, weapons, mercenaries, and even Russian troops.

Hitler’s demands for the Sudetenland were granted with the signing of the Munich Agreement on September 30, 1938, by a rogue’s gallery of signers: Adolf Hitler (Germany), Benito Mussolini (Italy), Neville Chamberlain (England), and Édouard Daladier (France) who was imprisoned two years later by Germany.

The goal, as described by Chamberlain, was to secure “peace in our time” by getting Hitler’s agreement to forestall invading the rest of Czechoslovakia. Despite this, Hitler did exactly that the very next year, immediately followed by crushing Poland, also in 1939.

Obviously, attempting to obtain peace agreements with genocidal maniacal dictators like Hitler or Putin is a terribly flawed strategy. It never works—it only feeds their rapacious greed for additional military conquests. That’s why the successful Russian invasion of the Republic of Georgia in 2008 led to the

successful “annexation” of Crimea and the subsequent uprising of Russian partisans in Donbas, and where we find ourselves today. Even with all this history, and with a crystal-clear picture of how Putin is truly Hitleresque, Fareed suggests we do a modern-day equivalent of the Munich Agreement to give Putin what he wants (the Donbas) in order to avoid causing further “pain” to Europe and the global economy. That is patently absurd.

First off, ceding Sudetenland is widely viewed as a primary reason that Hitler was emboldened to start World War II only one year later. It will only fuel more confrontation to “cave” to Putin’s insatiable appetite for extending “Mother Russia’s” boundaries to the historical borders enjoyed by Peter the Great. The pain Europe is currently enduring is a mere shadow of what will come if Putin is not stopped decisively. If Putin were to cut off all gas and oil into Germany, it would cause a significant recession to be sure. But how does that compare with the obliteration of Ukrainian cities that has already occurred? Yes, the global recession (likely already underway) will get worse until the war is brought to an end. Where is the unified European and American action that occurred when we realized we had to stop Hitler? It wasn’t a choice. And stopping Putin isn’t a choice either.

The idea that permitting Putin to carve up Ukraine will satisfy him is like saying giving a single drink to an alcoholic will satiate their thirst. It won’t. It only leads to more alcohol. Similarly, forcing Ukraine to reach a “peace deal” with Russia to secure “peace in our time” will not only fail, but it is also morally reprehensible. What a terrible way to honor the incredible bravery and effectiveness of the Ukrainian people in holding the line against a Russian army that has outnumbered them 10-1 in weapons and manpower since the February invasion.

So, what is the choice? There is only one: victory.

President Zelensky is absolutely correct when he says that his people are fighting to save all of Europe from a larger conflagration with their bravery and fierce commitment to stand up to the worst dictator since World War II. It is unconscionable that the West hasn’t yet given Ukraine adequate weaponry to turn the tide against Russia. They desperately need to protect their skies from the continuous genocidal bombardment of their civilian populations that is reducing every city in the line of attack to rubble. Those weapons should have been sent in overwhelming numbers three months ago. Thousands of lives would have been saved. Major cities would have been preserved.

The Ukrainians can beat the Russians on the ground if they have adequate weapons. They cannot stop cruise missiles, sophisticated armed drones, and a vastly superior Russian air force without massive quantities of advanced Western equipment. With it, they can beat the Russians. So, let’s avoid even more economic and civilian damage by getting those advanced weapons to Ukraine FAST.

What is amazing is that even with all the foot-dragging in the West, it’s likely that Ukraine will ultimately outlast the Russians and achieve victory, at a horrible cost. They should not have to pay for the rest of us to avoid further Russian aggression. And, every one of us should get behind that idea rather than proposing, as Fareed has, the modern-day equivalent of the Munich Agreement.

Quoting Winston Churchill immediately upon Chamberlin’s return from Munich: “You were given the choice between war and dishonor. You chose dishonor and you will have war.”

You see, a dishonorable peace never prevents war.

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