



Gilbert Doctorow on Judge Napolitano - "Vanity is the shadow cast by inadequacies".

## When an "Expert" Loses his Footing

**Gilbert Doctorow—self-proclaimed Russia expert—is maneuvering himself into the sidelines with unsubstantiated and confused theories.**

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### Introduction

Gilbert Doctorow, who calls himself a “**Sovietologist**” and considers himself the **only real** Russia expert in the independent media, has been peddling theories for several days that leave even hardened political commentators speechless.

In an article published in his “Armageddon Newsletter” on Substack on October 1, 2025, he went so far as to claim that a [palace revolution](#) was imminent in the Kremlin in Moscow and that Russian society increasingly viewed Vladimir Putin as a hated [Gorbachev 2.0](#). He also makes cheap suggestions for a successor to the Russian president, whose government ship has now accumulated too much barnacle growth and become too cumbersome.

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## **“Vanity is the shadow cast by inadequacies”**

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This is so absurd that one could simply dismiss it with a shake of the head. However, such statements fuel dangerous daydreams among American and European warmongers who, despite all evidence to the contrary, have devoted themselves to the fantasy of exploiting Russia's imagined weakness. In doing so, they are happy to rely on an American historian with years of experience in the Soviet Union, who also prominently and publicly attributes to himself a professorship that he does not even hold – his academic achievements are limited to a Ph.D. in history. Furthermore, he has no current relevant direct sources in Russia except for his beloved talk shows on Russian state television.

## **Doctorow's confused thoughts**

### *Russian state television talk shows as a source*

This “expert” bases his theories on what he sees as sharp criticism of President Putin on Russian state television for promoting the strategy of attrition warfare in Ukraine.

Usually ultra-loyal pro-Putin talk shows such as “Sixty Minutes” and “Evening with Vladimir Solovyov” would prepare Russian society for Putin to be replaced by a much more aggressive figure on the Kremlin chessboard.

He says that the majority of Russian society demands—or at least deserves—a much tougher stance toward the West. The long-overdue decapitation strike against the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev must finally be carried out, thereby showing the West that Russia is not really a “paper tiger.” Otherwise, the West would continue to escalate its actions—all the way to nuclear war, which would then be upon us.

## *Verbal and other provocations*

Donald Trump told 800 assembled generals and top officers of the US military at a base outside Washington, D.C., [how disappointed](#) he was that Putin had not defeated Ukraine within a week at the start of Russia's special military operation, that US nuclear submarines deployed in positions near Russia were 25 years ahead of Russian submarines in terms of technology, and that Russia generally appeared to be a “paper tiger.” J.D. Vance also repeated the old myth in an [interview](#) on Fox News that the Russian economy is in ruins and that the Russian army's territorial gains in Ukraine are insignificant.

Doctorow claims that Russia did not respond appropriately to these and other provocations, thereby demonstrating its weakness and inviting further escalation on the part of the West.

Furthermore, Russia reacted far too hesitantly and cautiously to the American escalation in arms deliveries aimed at inflicting a strategic defeat on the Russians, instead resorting to a protracted war of attrition and futile negotiations with the US. Doctorow describes this as a strategic misjudgment on Putin's part.

## *The accusation of appeasement*

This Cassandra goes on to say that Putin has not taken a clear stance on any of this, but is instead engaging in a dangerous cosy relationship with Donald Trump. This began during meetings with Steve Witkoff on [April 25, 2025](#) and [August 6, 2025](#) in Moscow, and immediately afterwards with Trump in Alaska on [August 15, 2025](#).

Such negotiation efforts are grist to the mill of Western warmongers, because Russia is indulging in the futile illusion that such negotiations could settle the war waged by the collective West. The West, in turn, interprets this as a sign of Russia's weakness.

Doctorow further claims, that in his speech at the [Valdai meeting](#) in Sochi on October 2, 2025, Putin—as he had repeatedly done in the previous years—avoided the most pressing issues with the West. Europe was arming itself and actively preparing for a war against Russia, which was to begin in three years (*sic!*). Furthermore, Europe was currently attempting to impose an air and sea blockade on Russia in the Baltic region and was likely to grant Ukraine a loan of \$145 billion, with frozen Russian assets serving as collateral so that Kiev could continue the war for several more years. Finally, the United States would probably equip Kiev with nuclear-capable Tomahawk cruise missiles with a long range that could reach Moscow from Ukrainian territory.

Instead of fawning over Donald Trump, the Russian public were demanding that their leaders finally show some backbone by, for example, destroying the German production facility for Taurus missiles or decapitating the Ukrainian leadership, including Zelensky, with the help of the Oreschnik system, in order to finally end the war before it escalated into a third world war.

### *Alarmist scaremongering*

*„We are headed into WWIII any which way. If Putin continues to show "restraint" such as his latest ass licking to Trum he will be deposed, replaced by Russia's war hawks and there we go... If he does not show his teeth to Trump right now we are all doomed.“*

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Putin was already regarded as “Gorbachev 2.0” in Russian society. It was high time for him to be kicked out. Vladimir Putin's popularity, as confirmed by polls (recently allegedly falling from 80% to 79%!), was merely based on the fact that the wrong questions were being asked in these polls – if the Russian population were asked whether Putin was conducting the war in Ukraine correctly, his poll ratings would be significantly negative.

### *What effect do such statements have?*

This adventurous so-called “Sovietological” theory has no factual basis whatsoever, but springs from a dangerously hyperventilating brain prone to megalomania.

In Russia, such propaganda chimeras find no support; they have no influence on Russian politics.

If we are nevertheless addressing this issue here, it is because this talk gives momentum to those forces in the US and Europe who constantly claim that Russia is weak and that regime change is imminent. Russophobic American and European warmongers could point to the fact that even a Russia expert who is critical of them assumes that “Putin's throne is shaking” and that we just need to wait a little longer until the Russian people overthrow their “king.”

## Reality

## *The Russians cannot be provoked*

The Russians do not respond to such provocations. They do not allow themselves to be baited by these attacks from the arsenal of **cognitive warfare**. They are professionals. They look at the map, they look at the numbers. Military professionals pay attention to what is happening at the level of actual operations, they know their statistics and understand scientific probability theory and the analysis of forces and means (Correlation of Forces and Means – COFM). Russia's strength or weakness is not determined by the bombastic chatter of dishonest, corrupt Western politicians, but by the facts – and these are clear.

Russia did not respond appropriately to the West crossing red lines? Russia has twice destroyed an entire quasi-NATO army in Ukraine, equipped and financed by the West, and is currently destroying the third and last such army in the course of its war of attrition against the West. Russia is destroying Ukraine's infrastructure and its arms industry. Russia is winning the war.

So why launch “decapitation strikes” against the Nazi regime in Kiev? This would put Russia on the path to a completely different kind of warfare, namely a path of significant escalation with a different outcome to the war than Russia is currently seeking. Russia is not trying to physically destroy NATO or occupy Europe.



Russia's territorial goals from the Ukrainian perspective

Russia is presumably attempting to bring the ancient Kievan Rus back into Russia in order to avert the existential threat to Russian territory posed by the aggression emanating from Kiev at the behest of the US, Europe, and the collective West—nothing more. And Russia will achieve this goal within its own timeframe and operational plan.

Vladimir Putin has an approval rating of around 80% for good reason – and has had for 25 years. Where in world history has there ever been a coup – even if it was “only” a palace revolution – with such approval ratings? Our Cassandra studied history, so she should know this too.

### *Russia's economic strength*

Russia also dominates economically. Its economy is growing steadily despite considerable war efforts.

Doctorow is also completely wrong in his statements about the Russian economy. For example, he claims that wages in Russia have multiplied and that the population is thus being artificially pacified—complete nonsense: certain professions (e.g., truck drivers and security personnel) have seen enormous salary increases. Many of these employees were veterans. They returned to the army during the war, leaving large gaps that had to be filled. This was naturally costly. However, most other people did not receive double or triple salaries. In December 2024, the average monthly wage was 21.9% higher than the previous year, representing the fastest wage increase since 2008. In January 2025, real wages rose by 6.5% year-on-year, while nominal wages rose by ~17.1%.

### *Russia's military might*

Serious [commentators](#) (see also [here](#)) and military experts such as Douglas Macgregor, Lawrence Wilkerson, Jacques Baud, Andrei Martynov and Ralph Bossard (to name but a few) know that Russian military technology is quantitatively (in terms of production capacity) and technologically at least a generation ahead of the Western alliance.

### *Russia's international strength*

There certainly is no question of Russia being internationally isolated. The list of international associations with which Russia is connected is impressive: BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Arctic Council, the Organization of Islamic



Cooperation (OIC – observer status), and as a dialogue partner of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). The Global South and all of Asia are also deepening their economic and cultural ties with Russia.

### *Misunderstood internal controversy*

Recently, there has been talk of controversy within the Russian leadership team. In his speech to the State Duma on October 8, 2025, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov [stated](#) that the momentum created by the two heads of state of Russia and the US at the summit in Anchorage, Alaska, to conclude agreements had essentially been exhausted. This negative outcome was mainly due to the destructive activities of the Europeans.

Some commentators have interpreted this statement as a sign of irreconcilable controversy within the Kremlin. This is misguided. They do not understand the collective leadership style of Russian government circles. Different nuances and emphases in political statements are part of the internal opinion-forming process. Those who base their analysis on the old Soviet sclerotic model and refer to it as “Sovietology” are imposing a completely inappropriate template on modern Russia and, as a result, are fundamentally mistaken in their “analysis.”

### *Foreign policy approach toward the US: “Speak softly and carry a big stick.”*

Of course, Russians are familiar with this old saying, and they know that the US only understands its own language. Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th President of the United States, first used this phrase publicly in 1901 in a speech at the Minnesota State Fair: “Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far.” The phrase became a motto of his foreign policy: resolve conflicts as diplomatically as possible (“speak softly”), but always have the power to enforce your own position (“big stick”).

It has been made clear above that Russia has a clearly formidable stick at its disposal.

### *Keep the door open for negotiations*

From this position of strength, Russia also plays to one of its greatest strengths—its ability to engage in professional diplomacy. Its basic foreign policy stance toward the US is expressed in this [speech](#) by President Putin on October 2, 2025, in Sochi at the Valdai Club:

*"As is well known, our countries have many differences of opinion, and our views on many global issues clash. This is normal for major powers,*

*even to be expected. The decisive factor is how these differences of opinion can be resolved and to what extent they can be resolved peacefully. (...)*

*“Russia also reserves the right to be guided by its national interests, which, incidentally, include restoring comprehensive relations with the US. And regardless of our differences, if we treat each other with respect, negotiations—even the toughest and most persistent ones—will ultimately lead to a consensus, which will ultimately enable solutions that are acceptable to both sides.”*

*"Multipolarity and polycentrism are long-term realities."*

## VLADIMIR PUTIN 2 OKTOBER 2025 IN SOTSCHI

This kind of thing cannot be achieved by rushing into things, and certainly not with hot-headed bravado. You have to keep an eye on the whole world. We are fortunate that the head of government of the world's strongest military power is such a level-headed, calm, balanced person with a broad overview.

## Conclusion

If one compares Doctorow's statements with verifiable facts, it becomes clear that the theories of this self-proclaimed Russia expert turn out to be complete nonsense. Recent developments (Putin's phone call with Trump and Trump's subsequent [withdrawal](#) from the plan to supply Tomahawks to Ukraine) are proof to that effect.

### ARTICLE TAGS:

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Ryabkov, Sergey Alexeyevich   Trump, Donald   Vance, J.D.   Witkoff, Steve   Solowjow, Vladimir  
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