

## AS I SEE IT

# Do we still believe in our cause?

**W**hen dealing with tyrants, appeasement and clarity of intent rarely work out well for the appeaser.

Beginning with that maxim, I see three courses of action with respect to the current tyrants running Russia. First, there is what I would like to do if I wielded the power of the presidency: simply with-



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draw, honestly acknowledge the state of the American empire and formulate a way forward that rebuilds our nation, starting at home.

Second, what I would do if

I wielded the power of the presidency: I would do what I think John McCain would have done — at the initial buildup of Russian forces, deploy NATO forces to their maximum forward positions, telegraph that new centers of operation are going to be set up in Poland and the Baltics, and only negotiations regarding the Russian military buildup to the east would modify that course of action. Yes, NATO members would balk, but others would cheer, and leadership is about leading.

Third, what I think an America tied to expanding its

empire should do: Do what we can to secure Ukraine territory by telegraphing nothing. Say nothing, but do everything we can to defend the people of Ukraine, including enforcing a no-fly zone over Ukraine.

If Russia attacks, so be it. They, in effect, would be attacking NATO, and the result would be to prevent the Russian army's gaining territory in Ukraine. Once lost, territory is too hard to regain — remember Normandy. The Russians remember the millions of dead soldiers on the flats of Ukraine the last time they drove out invaders.

Once Russia attacks, make defending the Ukraine border just the start by pushing back the invaders all the way to Moscow. One thing is clear: NATO countries have a population of 1 billion people, compared to Russia's 150 million people; a far richer economy; and better-equipped military forces. Despite the failures of past Russian invaders, I am sure of the outcome of this one. That last sentence is deliberately vague on specifics.

Having said all that, the Russian government is right that this situation is precipitated by the inconsistencies of U.S. foreign policy. Bush and Baker did assure Moscow that there would be no eastward deployments after the collapse

of the Soviet Union. They did it for a good reason: 20 million Soviets who died the last time Russia was invaded from Ukraine.

It was obvious this day was coming the minute the Clinton Administration started moving NATO eastward. But that does not change the facts on the ground today. To free Ukraine, to stop current tyrants, requires the will to lead and a belief in the cause. I know the Russian people believe in the right of their cause — which is why this outcome was so predictable once NATO moved eastward.

Do we still believe in the right of our cause? Independent of one's personal beliefs, this is a great opportunity, either for an expansion of the American empire or a rekindling of the American experiment in self-governance.

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