

P.G Wodehouse (via Reg Green), explaining the Ukraine war



by Lev Tsitrin

The following explanation of the causes of Ukraine war comes from one Sergey Karaganov, whose thinking is apparently so representative of the Russian government's mindset that he was deemed worthy of a long interview in the [New York Times](#): "we saw that the West was collapsing in economic, moral, political terms. This decline was especially painful after its peak in the 1990s. Problems within the West, and globally, were not solved. That was a classic prewar situation. The belligerence against Russia has been rapidly growing since the late 2000s. The conflict was seen as more and more imminent. So probably

Moscow decided to pre-empt and to dictate the terms of the conflict.”

This passage (and other suchlike, spread throughout the interview) characterized by, shall we say, foggy and fact-less thinking – if any thinking went into it at all, instantly brought to my mind the description of the mysterious Russian soul, unearthed and reported by [Reg Green right in the Iconoclast](#) – “the sort of abysmal soul-sadness which afflicts one of Tolstoy’s Russian peasants when, after putting in a heavy day’s work strangling his father, beating his wife, and dropping the baby into the city’s reservoir, he turns to the cupboards, only to find the vodka bottle empty.”

Mr. Karaganov is no peasant but is, as the *New York Times* assures us, “a prominent Russian political scientist.” Still, I think his utterances can only be explained by “abysmal soul-sadness” described above. “*In vodka veritas*” appears to be a core Russian truth. A genuine Russian, Mr. Karaganov should have known better than to talk to the *New York Times* without taking a few gulps from the bottle first. Or maybe he was, in fact, under the influence, and that explains his lack of substance? Or – more likely – there is no substance at all to begin with, but just the vague “abysmal soul-sadness” evidenced in Mr. Karaganov’s interview? One wonders whether it pervades Russian government – irrespective of whether its members are sober or drunk. The greater mystery to me is, why did the *New York Times* decide to publish Mr. Karaganov’s drivel. Was it to expose the paucity of the Russian thinking? Was it intended as a satirical piece? Or am I giving the paper too much credit?

But, speaking of credit, let me give credit where it is due. P.G Wodehouse (and Reg Green) gave us a much more plausible rationale for the Ukraine war than a whole bunch of Russian “political scientists” – and, in fact, Russian politicians – can. The “abysmal soul-sadness” in the Kremlin sounds about right.