

# The Basic Truth:

## “LEGIT GANGSTERS” — GANGSTERS WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

by Bob Avakian

The events of today, and in particular the events relating to the war in Ukraine, bring back again memories of a friend of mine from back in the day, Billy Carr. Billy got caught up in “the life” and ended up being killed as a result, while he was still in his 20s. But he had a sharp mind, and one time, when I described what the imperialists who rule this country were doing, not just to people here but all around the world, he captured something essential about this right away: “Legit gangsters,” he said.

Today we hear Biden and other “legit gangsters” who rule this country, and their media mouthpieces, chanting a constant chorus about Putin as a “war criminal” because of the destruction and carnage Russia is responsible for in Ukraine. This is like the biggest mob boss (or head of a criminal cartel) self-righteously condemning the crimes of a rival, but less powerful, gangster.

Let us not forget: *The U.S., a country founded on slavery and genocide, by far holds the record for invasions, coups, and in other ways violently interfering in countries whose governments it does not like—slaughtering huge numbers of people in the process, far beyond what Russia has done in Ukraine.*

In short, none of what is going on around Ukraine is about a holy war of “democracy vs. autocracy” that Biden and the rest are constantly proclaiming. The goal of the U.S. imperialists, in relation to this war and overall, is strengthening and expanding their empire of exploitation, and beating back challenges to their domination.

The motivation, on the part of the U.S./NATO as well as Russia, is very much that of gangsters—gangsters who claim “legitimacy” because they are heads of governments, rulers of countries. But these gangsters are not just fighting over turf in a city—the “turf” they are fighting over is the whole world. And these are **gangsters who control powerful arsenals of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons with the capacity to kill off all of humanity.**

These “legit gangster” imperialists commit monstrous crimes on a massive scale, way beyond what someone like Don Corleone, the mob boss in *The Godfather* movie, could even think about committing. As I said in *BASics*, “These imperialists make the Godfather look like Mary Poppins.”<sup>1</sup>

**What we need is a radical transformation to where revolution, not gangsterism, is setting the tone and the terms—not just on a block or in a neighborhood, but in this country overall and ultimately in the world as a whole.**

<sup>1</sup> See *BASics*, from the talks and writings of Bob Avakian, Chapter 1, #7. Information for ordering the print edition of *BASics*, and instructions for downloading the free e-book version, can be found at [revcom.us](http://revcom.us).

See also:

**Longer Version—The Fuller Picture:**

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