

Background Box:

Overview on Jim O'Brien:

[Senate Confirms James O'Brien to Ambassador Role
Head of the Office of Sanctions Coordination](#)

Jim O'Brien's recommended reading list.

Tim Snyder, Bloodlands (WW2 in Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine)

Tim Snyder, on Tyranny, second edition (with Nora Krug). It's graphic book with 20 short lessons about how to prevent, survive, and overcome authoritarian turns in politics. I think everyone should buy it for the teenager or college student in their lives.

Serhii Plokhii, Yalta: The Price of Peace. He also has a book on the last days of the Soviet Union.

Adam Tooze, The Wages of Destruction. He's outstanding. Also has great books on the rise of the US and 2008. He has a weekly podcast called Ones and Tooze.

Scott Reynolds Nelson, Oceans of Grain, for Odesa, the Midwest, and the grain trade.

Other recommendations:

Putin's People (Catherine Belton) and Putin's Kleptocracy (Karen Dawisha) on how power and money are structured in 21st Century Russia.

Oliver Bullough, Moneyland, on how this corrupts our societies. He discusses more than Russia, but given his focus on London there's a lot about Russia.

Casey Michel, American Kleptocracy, for those folks interested in whether these issues matter at home. It includes an amazing tale of how a Ukrainian oligarch bought up and destroyed large parts of Ohio, including a chunk of downtown Cleveland.

Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation by Alan Little and Laura Silber.

Overview on the War on Ukraine:

[Ukraine/Russia-Related Sanctions \(2014\)](#)

[Putin: Russia may halt energy exports if West caps prices](#)

[Imposing Additional Costs on Russia for Its Continued War Against Ukraine](#)

[Statement from President Biden on Ukraine Independence Day](#)

[Shutting Down Nord Stream Marks the Point of No Return for Russian Gas](#)

[How Much Has U.S. Helped Ukraine? Aid Is Worth Most Since War Began](#)

As the war in Ukraine continues, debates on the effectiveness of sanctions have erupted across the U.S. From an economic perspective, sanctions do more harm than good. From the international perspective, sanctions are a necessary measure to protect and support democracy.

For more about why sanctions do not work, read:

[Why Sanctions on Russia Won't Work](#)

[Why Sanctions Don't Work, and Why They Mostly Hurt Ordinary People](#)

[Why Economic Sanctions Don't Work](#)

[Why Sanctions on Russia Don't Work](#)

[My Country, Right or Wrong: Russian Public Opinion on Ukraine](#) (scroll down to "Double-Edged Sanctions")

For more about why sanctions do work, read:

[US: Russia to buy rockets, artillery shells from North Korea](#)

[Economic Impact of Sanctions on Russia](#)

[U.S. Sanctions on Russia](#)

[United with Ukraine](#)

[In isolated Russia, a tale of two economies](#) (impact of sanctions in Russia)

[Russia and Sanctions Evasion](#)