



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on March 3, 2014

Senator McCain Says, “We’re All Ukrainians”

If Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) had been elected president, we might now be hearing an address from the Oval Office beginning with the salutation, “My fellow Ukrainians.”

That would be us he would be addressing, because the senior Senator from Arizona has said “We’re all Ukrainians” in response to the Russian invasion and takeover of parts of Crimea. In an [interview](#) published in *Time* magazine’s political blog, named (appropriately enough) “Swampland,” McCain stopped short of calling for U.S. and NATO “boots on the ground” to counter Russian aggression in the disputed territory, but he did say the United States needs to “take certain measures that would convince Putin that there is a very high cost to actions that he is taking now.” Those measures would include an International Monetary Fund bailout for the new government of the Ukraine, economic sanctions against Russia, a move to gain condemnation of Russia at the United Nations, a renewed push to bring the former Soviet republic of Georgia into NATO, and the installation of U.S. missiles in the Czech Republic.



“That does not mean I envision a conflict with Russia,” said McCain, who sees it as more of “a chess match reminiscent of the Cold War and we need to realize that and act accordingly.” McCain plays a mean game of chess. He might recall that there was a bit of unpleasantness, leading to the brink of World War III, when Russians installed Soviet missiles in our neighborhood in Cuba. Yet McCain apparently believes planting U.S. missiles in the Czech Republic would not be a belligerent act that Moscow might justifiably view as hostile and threatening. But then he has also called for firing missiles into Syria and establishing a no-fly zone there against a nation and a government with which we are not at war and against which the Congress of the United States, where McCain has been a member for the past 31 years, has given no authorization for the use of military force. Details like that seldom trouble McCain.

And it’s doubtful that he has discussed with his constituents — those in Arizona, that is, not the ones he has adopted in Georgia or the Ukraine — the idea of a bailout for the fledgling government in Ukraine. Prudence might dictate that a government should be in office a little longer than half a week before it qualifies for a bailout. Considering that the American public was skeptical, to say the least, about the bailouts for Chrysler, General Motors, and the barons of Wall Street, it might be interesting to find out



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how much support there is for sending American tax dollars to the Ukraine, however they might be bundled as contributions to the International Monetary Fund.

It was in 2008, during a shootout between Russia and Georgia over the fate of South Ossetia, that McCain, then the Republican nominee for president, declared, “We are all Georgians.” Asked during the Swampland interview if we are now all Ukrainians, McCain was quick to make us all citizens of that land as well.

“We are all Ukrainians in the respect that we have a sovereign nation that is again with international boundaries ... that is again being taken in as part of Russia,” he said. “That is not acceptable to an America that stands up for the rights of human beings. We are Georgians. And we are Ukrainians.”

Yes, we are an America that respects the rights of human beings, except for those targeted for execution by drone attack. And we respect the right to remain silent, except for those being questioned with the help of “enhanced interrogation techniques,” formerly known as torture. (To his credit, McCain, a former prisoner of war, has objected to the use of those interrogation techniques.) And the United States government respects, of course, “international boundaries,” unless they get in the way of what President George W. Bush called a “global democratic revolution.” Secretary of State John Kerry seemed to forget that proviso over the weekend as he made the rounds of Sunday morning talk shows, minus Fox News Sunday, whose invitation was spurned by the Obama administration.

“You just don’t in the 21st century behave in 19th century fashion by invading another country on completely trumped up pretext,” Kerry [said](#) on CBS’ *Face the Nation*. It was, however, in the 21st century — 2003, to be exact — that the United States invaded another country on a “trumped up pretext.” And John Kerry, then the junior senator from Massachusetts, voted with McCain and most of their colleagues to authorize the president to take that action. And when our troops had been in Iraq for nearly a year and a half with still no sign of those “weapons of mass destruction,” Kerry, then the Democratic nominee for president, was asked if he had known at the time the Senate voted to authorize the use of force how it would turn out, would he still have still voted for that resolution?

“Yes, I would have voted for the authority,” Kerry [answered](#). “I believe it was the right authority for a president to have.” The Constitution of the United States says otherwise, stating it is a power of the Congress to declare war, not to “authorize” the president to declare and prosecute it on his own determination.

But that’s only the United States Constitution. Perhaps we will hear from Senator McCain of the Ukraine what the Georgian and Ukrainian constitutions have to say about it.

Photo of Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.): AP Images



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