

Countering NATO Propaganda on Russia: NATO Intervention in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Libya, Ukraine

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A follow-up of Professor Vladimir Kozin's comments on NATO's [Fact Sheet](#) about relations with Russia published in December 2014. The topics to be covered in this part:

- NATO's operation in Afghanistan was a failure;
- The NATO-led mission in Afghanistan failed to stop the Afghan drugs trade;
- NATO's operation over Libya was illegitimate;
- NATO's operation over Kosovo was illegitimate;
- The cases of Kosovo and Crimea are identical;
- Russia's annexation of Crimea was justified;
- The Ukrainian authorities are illegitimate.

NATO's operation in Afghanistan was a failure

NATO claim: NATO took over the command of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan in 2003.

Under NATO's command, the mission progressively extended throughout Afghanistan, was joined by 22 non-NATO countries and built up from scratch an Afghan National Security Force of more than 350,000 soldiers and police.

Threats to Afghanistan's security continue. However, the Afghan forces are now ready to take full responsibility for security across the country, as agreed with the Afghan authorities.

NATO has agreed to continue providing training, advice and assistance to the Afghan forces, and has planned a mission to do so, "Resolute Support", as of 1 January.



Prof. Vladimir Kozin:

Yes, the NATO mission in Afghanistan was a complete military failure. The armed opposition in that country was not destroyed, despite high numbers of casualties among civilians, as well as soldiers and officers from the Western coalition. If the Afghan armed forces were capable of truly maintaining control over security in the country, Washington would not have signed an agreement with Kabul about maintaining its military presence there until

2024. If not later.

The NATO-led mission in Afghanistan failed to stop the Afghan drugs trade

NATO claim: As with any sovereign country, the primary responsibility for upholding law and order in Afghanistan, including as regards the trade in narcotics, rests with the Afghan government.

The international community is supporting the Afghan government to live up to this responsibility in many ways, including both through the United Nations and through the European Union.

NATO is not a main actor in this area. This role has been agreed with the international community.

Prof. Vladimir Kozin:

NATO has not stopped and is not prepared to stop the Afghan drug threat, offering up the ridiculous excuse that it has no specific mandate to do so. But if they wanted, such a mandate could be written up and signed within a couple of days. Apparently, NATO's "non-interference" in drug production in Afghanistan is something of interest to the alliance: not only Russian citizens die from ingesting cocktails of Afghan drugs, but also Europeans.

NATO's operation over Libya was illegitimate

NATO claim: The NATO-led operation was launched under the authority of two UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR), [1970](#) and [1973](#), both quoting Chapter VII of the UN Charter, and neither of which was opposed by Russia.

UNSCR 1973 authorized the international community "to take all necessary measures" to "protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack". This is what NATO did, with the political and military support of regional states and members of the Arab League.

After the conflict, NATO cooperated with the UN International Commission of Inquiry on Libya, which found no breach of UNSCR 1973 or international law, concluding instead that "NATO conducted a highly precise campaign with a demonstrable determination to avoid civilian casualties."

✘ Prof. Vladimir Kozin:

NATO's operation over Libya was illegitimate, inhumane, and had extremely dangerous military, political, and economic consequences: there is still no civil peace there. Libya's ruler was killed in a barbaric manner. The Libyan economy has utterly disintegrated. As for NATO's air operation, once it began to destroy Libya's military hardware, soldiers, and civilians on the ground, NATO then overstepped its mandate to ensure a "no-fly zone" in the sky over Libya.

NATO's operation over Kosovo was illegitimate

NATO claim: The NATO operation for Kosovo followed over a year of intense efforts by the

UN and the Contact Group, of which Russia was a member, to bring about a peaceful solution. The UN Security Council on several occasions branded the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and the mounting number of refugees driven from their homes as a threat to international peace and security. NATO's Operation Allied Force was launched to prevent the large-scale and sustained violations of human rights and the killing of civilians.

Following the air campaign, the subsequent NATO-led peacekeeping operation, KFOR, which initially included Russia, has been under UN mandate (UNSCR [1244](#)), with the aim of providing a safe and secure environment in Kosovo.

Prof. Vladimir Kozin:

NATO's security operation over Kosovo was illegitimate because it was carried out without the approval of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at that time and was conducted against a backdrop of a barbaric, massive bombing campaign in Yugoslavia in 1999, including in the provinces of Kosovo and Metohija, which were part of that country. There was no full approval from the UN Security Council.

It should be noted that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia never attacked a NATO country.

As the director of the Regional Center of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and Metohija in 2001, I saw too many ruined buildings there that had been damaged by NATO air attacks. The damage caused by NATO aggression was in excess of \$100 billion. NATO has still never compensated Serbia for the human and financial costs that country endured.

Members of the alliance have still not fully complied with UN Security Council Resolution 1244, which was adopted after the end of the NATO bombing campaigns. What's more, they have grossly violated it. Of particular significance is the paragraph that provides for "substantial autonomy" for the territory of Kosovo and Metohija within the framework of the Yugoslav state, but without recognizing its independence. This position is reflected in the preamble to Resolution 1244 and in the addendum to it.

The territory's Serbian population still lives in confined enclaves and is unable to travel freely through the larger area around them.

The cases of Kosovo and Crimea are identical

NATO claim: The Kosovo operation was conducted following exhaustive discussion involving the whole international community dealing with a long-running crisis.

Following the operation, the international community engaged in nearly ten years of diplomacy, under UN authority, to find a political solution and to settle Kosovo's final status, as prescribed by UNSCR 1244.

In Crimea, there was no pre-existing crisis, no attempt to discuss the situation with the Ukrainian government, no involvement of the United Nations, and no attempt at a negotiated solution.

In Kosovo, international attempts to find a solution took over 3,000 days. In Crimea, Russia annexed part of Ukraine's territory in less than 30 days.



Prof. Vladimir Kozin:

But in terms of their development, the cases of Crimea and Kosovo are not identical. The independence of the Republic of Crimea was proclaimed through an open and democratic referendum. The “independence” of Kosovo and Metohija was declared by its parliament, in which the vast majority of the deputies (up to 90%) were Kosovo Albanians. Kosovo Serbs opposed this decision. But they were driven out of the territory, and therefore were not able to take part in determining its fate.

After the collapse of the USSR, the leaders of the Republic of Crimea held repeated discussions with all the presidents of Ukraine regarding the issue of its independence and their requests for greater autonomy. But when they received it, it was a stripped-down version, with significant infringement of the rights and freedoms of the Russian-speaking, Crimean Tatar, and other non-Ukrainian populations.

Once the ultra-nationalist leaders took power in Kiev in Feb. 2014, their course shifted sharply toward the glorification of Banderites and Nazis, and toward the use of weapons against demonstrators and police officers on Independence Square in Kiev, which aroused deep concern among the residents of Crimea.

All of this preordained and hastened the Republic of Crimea’s withdrawal from Ukraine in 2014.

Russia’s reunification with Crimea was justified by ICJ Kosovo verdict

NATO claim: The court [stated](#) that their opinion was not a precedent. The court said they had been given a “narrow and specific” question about Kosovo’s independence which would not cover the broader legal consequences of that decision.

Prof. Vladimir Kozin:

A response has already been provided in regard to the “annexation” of Crimea.

This was no “annexation.” It is enough to cite the position of the UN Charter in regard to the right of nations to self-determination – a stance no one has yet renounced.

It is enough to take into account the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the citizens of the Republic of Crimea, who simply did not want to continue as part of Ukraine – a country that forbade them to speak their native language or use it in their schools, that collected taxes from the region and took the money back to Kiev, that oppressed the ethnic Russians, Tatars, and other nationalities who lived on the Crimean peninsula, and that had destroyed Crimea’s priceless historical monuments.

Essentially, officials in the national Ukrainian government had been actively carrying out “internal aggression” in Crimea since 1991.

The Ukrainian authorities are illegitimate

NATO claim: Ukraine’s President Poroshenko was elected on 25 May with a clear majority in a vote which the OSCE characterized (report [here](#)) as showing the “clear resolve of the

authorities to hold what was a genuine election largely in line with international commitments and with a respect for fundamental freedoms.” The only areas where serious restrictions were reported were those controlled by separatists, who undertook “increasing attempts to derail the process.”

The current parliament was elected on 26 October in a vote which the OSCE characterized (report [here](#)) as “an amply contested election that offered voters real choice, and a general respect for fundamental freedoms”. It again pointed out that “Electoral authorities made resolute efforts to organize elections throughout the country, but they could not be held in parts of the regions (oblasts) of Donetsk and Luhansk or on the Crimean peninsula”.

Finally, Russian officials continue to allege that the Ukrainian parliament and government are dominated by “Nazis” and “fascists.” However, in the parliamentary elections, the parties whom Russia labelled as “fascists” fell far short of the threshold of 5% needed to enter parliament. Ukraine’s electorate clearly voted for unity and moderation, not separatism or extremism, and the composition of the parliament reflects that.

In short, the President and parliament are legitimate, the actions of the separatists were not.



Grotesque presidential elections in Ukraine were held in May 2014

Prof. Vladimir Kozin:

The current Ukrainian government in Kiev took power illegally and with bloodshed.

The presidential elections in Ukraine were held in violation of Europe’s electoral standards. A large percentage of potential voters did not take part.

The term “separatists” is incorrect. The militia in the Donbass is made up of fighters for freedom and independence. They do not want to live in a state that grossly violates human rights and is decimating a people, their religion, language, and culture. One that wants to turn the Donbass into nothing but scorched earth.

The period since February 2014 has shown that this state represents an authority that is unprofessional and pitiless toward the people, and which has brought great suffering to the country and inflicted painful socioeconomic consequences upon the citizens of Ukraine.

This is an authority that can steal the energy supplies with which it is being provided and use lies to present its views.

This is an authority that destroyed the Malaysian airliner flying over its country.

This is an authority that has no intention of repaying its recognized financial and economic debts.

This is an authority that for the sake of its own selfish ambitions is prepared to shatter peace and stability in Europe and all over the world.

If NATO cannot or does not want to see this, that means that at present and for the foreseeable future, NATO is and will remain an accomplice to the aggressive, warring, and

inhumane regime in Kiev.

And one last comment. As Russian President Vladimir Putin noted at his Dec. 18 press conference, the Berlin Wall has collapsed, but “new walls are being built.” In his words “... the best thing to do is to stop building walls and to start building a common humanitarian space of security and economic freedom.”

If the United States and NATO are not able to understand this, then Europe and the entire world can expect to see some difficult times. The “Cold War” will continue. That war is unpredictable. We will be lucky if its main phase lasts only three years and is over by 2017, as the famous Russian astrologer Pavel Globa believes.

But what if it drags on?

Then that will be the sole fault of the US and NATO, which are consciously and deliberately making a shambles of regional and global stability.

Professor Vladimir Kozin was directly engaged in NATO-related issues during his 40-years-long professional career in the Russian Foreign Ministry. He was one of the leading negotiators from the Russian side at the most of the Russia-US diplomatic and military talks on disarmament, strategic deterrence and other issues in 1990s.

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