

How Will Unipolarists Respond to Putin's Red Line? An Expert Round Table Discussion

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With tensions rising to fever pitches in Ukraine, and in the wake of Putin's announced red lines regarding a mad frenzy for the absorption of Ukraine into NATO, Dr. Edward Lozansky, President of the American University in Moscow, arranged a roundtable discussion bringing together eight experts to provide their thoughts on the causes, trajectory and solutions to the current geopolitical disorder.

Participants included Martin Sieff (Senior Fellow American University in Moscow), Glenn Diesen (Professor at University of South-Eastern Norway), Peter Kuznick (Professor of American University), Matthew Ehret (Co-founder of the Rising Tide Foundation), Alex Krainer (economist thenakedhedgie.com), Jeremy Kuzmarov (editor of [Covert Action Magazine](#)), Mila Melnichuk (political strategist and Head of the Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Citizens and the Constitution of Ukraine), Jim Jatras (analyst, retired U.S. diplomat and adviser to U.S. Senate Republican leadership), and Professor Herbert Regimbogin (The Catholic University of America) delivered written remarks.

What sort of responses could we expect to see should these red lines be crossed? Could the West be trusted to react rationally in the face of Putin's explicit red lines? What are the risk levels of full-scale thermonuclear war? How does the Russia-China relationship play into this dynamic? What does the economic system's ongoing plunge into chaos have to do with the geopolitical maneuvers on Russia and China's perimeters? These questions and more were addressed by the speakers.

The video presentation of the full Roundtable [can be watched here](#) and the summary of the event follows below.

Martin Sieff: “The Situation is Desperate But Not Serious”

Martin Sieff began by emphasizing the importance of Putin's restraint and tone in which [he spoke on December 17](#) laying out the terms of Russia's red line regarding NATO's ambitions to absorb Ukraine, the placement of missiles, or war games on Russia's border. Martin

invoked the warning of a Habsburg diplomat years prior to WWI warning that “the situation is desperate but not serious” indicating his belief that a nuclear war is not likely in the near term, although very high in the coming two to three years.

Sieff warned of the hypocrisy of Western geopoliticians who have no capacity to reciprocate Putin’s measured tone, let alone treat his red lines as something deadly serious, as they are far too accustomed to use “salami tactics” in advancing NATO and lecturing the world on how to behave. The lack of ability from Western players to take Putin’s warnings with seriousness are exasperating an already terrible situation and make the danger of miscalculations run high.

Glenn Diesen: Indivisible Security vs NATO Unipolar Hegemony

Professor Glenn Diesen contrasted the many negatives weighing down the situation with a few positives created by Putin’s new approach to foreign policy on Russia’s border. Chief among these positives is that a correct discussion is finally being forced onto the table which has been avoided for years. After years of NATO growth, and unilateral pushing of the entire world towards a “rules based international order” at the cost of broader security for all, Russia’s firm red lines have forced the principles of pan European security to be made front and center. Such principles stand in stark contrast to the “right of each country to join NATO” regardless of the context or instability which such decisions would create.

Professor Diesen made the point that this more rational view of security is in alignment with the Helsinki Accords, the 1990 Charter of Paris emphasizing “equal and indivisible security”, and the 1994 Budapest document which all enshrined the principle that “no state should advance a security doctrine at the expense of the security of other states.”



Détente: Left to Right: Helmut Schmidt, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Erich Honecker, First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, Gerald Ford President of the United States, Bruno Kreisky, Chancellor of Austria, Helsinki, 1 August 1975. [Source: [osce.org](https://www.osce.org)]

The hypocrisy of the United States’s track record of sabotaging such organizations as the Eurasian Economic Union, Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and pan European security agreements (to name a few) make the “narrative reframing” that constantly paints Russia as a villain attempting to impose its sphere of influence onto Ukraine as Western

media and politicians repeat, more than a little unpalatable.

Peter Kuznick: How to Trust the Untrustworthy?

Peter Kuznick opened his remarks with a reminder of the broken 1990 promises made to Gorbachev by Bush Sr. and British and German representatives who promised that NATO would not encroach upon Russia and would always honor a buffer zone of former Soviet states that would remain free and independent.

Professor Kuznick explained that the reason it took so long for Putin to finally say “enough is enough”, is that up until recently, Russia was not militarily strong enough to assert itself in this manner. Peter noted that these red lines have been a long time coming and should come as no surprise to anyone, since already on March 1, 2018, five new nuclear warhead delivery mechanisms capable of circumventing Western nuclear defenses were unveiled by Putin in his annual state of the nation address. Now, nearly four years later, Russia’s nuclear defense technology has rapidly advanced with 70% of its nuclear deterrence forces modernized contrasted with the USA which still asserts that “modernization might occur within the coming 25 years.”



Russia’s nuclear weapons arsenal on display. [Source: [nationalinterest.org](https://www.nationalinterest.org)]

Despite Russia’s technological flank, war hawks embedded within Washington and NATO have continued to advance an aggressive and provocative posture with 16 advisers to Biden heralding from the Center for New American Security (the mostly Democratic version of the Project for a New American Century neocons who flooded the George W. Bush administration and brought a series of foreign policy debacles).

Biden has been under enormous pressure to stand up to Putin from hawks in both parties like Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Ted Cruz (R-TX), who have been berating him for the chaotic exit from Afghanistan. Republican National Committee chair Ronna McDaniel wasted little time in eviscerating Biden for the crime of having a phone call with Putin on December 7, deploring his “weak global leadership,” capitulation on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, “Afghanistan disaster,” and border failures, which she alleged were “emblematic of

his America last agenda.”

This regressive thinking was displayed in full ugliness by Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) [who called for a nuclear first strike on Russia](#) on December 7, and former Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul, [who wrote that](#) Putin’s remarks were based on a paranoid fabricated view of reality, thus fueling the fire of the war hawks.

Kuznick cited the need to return to the sort of rational approach seen between JFK and Khrushchev in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis and hoped that since China is likely a higher priority than Russia in the minds of unipolar war hawks, that perhaps some room for negotiation exists.

The problem here, Kuznick noted, is that, even should negotiations occur, international leaders believe that the United States simply cannot be trusted, as it has repeatedly broken its promises and withdrawn from one treaty after another since 2002. Even if a best-case scenario occurs whereby Biden agreed to some of Putin’s demands, there is no way the next U.S. administration can be trusted to honor said promises, which has been a major impediment in the ongoing negotiations over the Iran nuclear deal.



JFK and Nikita Khrushchev meeting at the Vienna Summit in June 1961. [Source: [wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vienna_Summit)]

Matthew Ehret: The Superiority of the Multipolar Alliance

Matthew Ehret introduced the context of Russia and China’s leadership of a new multipolar paradigm in contrast to the obsolete unipolarists obsessed with preserving their hegemony. Matthew emphasized the inevitability of the coming economic meltdown of the West, the factor of insanity embedded within the Western operating system and the de-dollarization now underway throughout Eurasia. Along with this de-dollarization, a sweeping array of economic and security agreements stretching across Eurasia, Southwest Asia, the Arctic and Africa has been unfolding with an alternative financial architecture emerging with Russian

and Chinese-led alternatives to SWIFT growing fast, [Indian-Russian agreements](#) to de-dollarize and also advancement of the [International North-South Transportation Corridor](#) (INSTC) stretching from Moscow through Central Asia, Iran and thence to India.

The INSTC's synergy with the east-west New Silk Road (especially the emerging Southern Corridor stretching from China to Syria via Iran and Iraq) was also brought up. Ehret emphasized his belief that there appears to be a policy of cutting off all trade, communications and economic cooperation between those countries invited to Biden's December 8-9 "so-called" Democracy Summit vs the multipolar "bad authoritarian" nations not invited.

The great irony is that it is the win-win paradigm of cooperation, interconnectivity, and long-term infrastructure creation that represents a way of thinking that the U.S. once believed in during saner years under President Kennedy who exemplified this paradigm with his [October 22, 1963 offer](#) to the Soviet Union "to jointly put a Russian and American on the Moon within the decade".

Such thinking was profoundly non-zero sum, and would have successfully broken the zero-sum logic of the Cold War had it not been sabotaged with the President's murder. It is this superior way of thinking that gives the Greater Eurasian Partnership the definitive edge needed to break the rigged rules of the great game today in a lawful way, and it is the concordance of this logic to the principles of natural law that give the Greater Eurasian Partnership the moral and creative flexibility needed to break the rigid logic of those seeking world government.

Alex Krainer: Watch the Game Masters, not the Puppets

Alex Krainer opened his presentation by warning that the insanity pervasive across the Western liberal order is isolated to the puppets, but that on a higher level (ie. where significant policy is made above national puppet governments by a banking cartel and financial elites), there is a very clear rhyme and reason animating global strategy. This strategy is behind the relentless efforts to provoke a violent reaction from Russia and China in both Ukraine and Taiwan.

Krainer re-emphasized that at this higher level (where an integration of banking, intelligence and military affairs unite), the cold hard logic of empire stands as an unbreakable iron rod devoid of humility, flexibility or morality. This system is driven relentlessly by a drive to eliminate rivals, excludes the possibility of cooperation, seeks only domination and exerts vast control over nominally "right" or "left" sides of the party systems in the West.

This is why Krainer believes no solution to today's crisis will be found within the current political forces active in Western governments. Since no qualitative change is possible under current conditions, Alex believes Putin's decision to stand firm and resolutely at this time with a clear red line and list of demands creates the sort of external pressure that the morally bankrupt Western system requires that cannot be changed from within.

It is hoped that Putin's new strategy will flush out the most insane fanatics of the West from the shadows and into the surface, which may also allow for fissures between radical vs moderate elements of the political establishment to polarize among themselves inducing battles over policy to arise which could not occur otherwise. Being an economist, Krainer added the economic insight that the Western financial cartels are currently starved for

collateral having overextended themselves far into a debt-driven speculative frenzy over decades devoid of any actual systems of value sustaining hyperbolically growing rates of fictitious capital. It is here that the desire to gain control of Eurasian collateral is so high with Russia's debt: GDP rate being only 16% compared to the 180+% in the USA, all of which is needed to run a credit creation cycle.

Jeremy Kuzmarov: The Crisis of MICIMATT and the Loss of Sanity

Jeremy Kuzmarov re-emphasized the importance of not losing sight of the hidden agendas operating above the puppets on the stage. He discussed the role of the military industrial complex that desperately needed a new villain after the Afghan debacle fell apart and hence the trumpeting of the "Russian threat" was needed to justify the record-breaking defense budget pushed by both Biden and the Congress. Kuzmarov warned of the vast media and academia black out of dissenting voices opposed to the current war drive, referencing the case of former CIA analyst Ray McGovern who has been entirely silenced by the mainstream media despite his illustrious career briefing presidents for decades.



Ray McGovern: A voice of sanity and truth who has been silenced. [Source: covertactionmagazine.com]

Kuzmarov referenced McGovern's term MICIMATT (Military-Industrial-Corporate-Intelligence-Media-Academic-Think-Tank Complex) as a modern mutation which has parasitically taken over all influential branches of society, resulting even in so-called progressive liberals like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez supporting war measures against Russia, while promoting totalitarian programs at home.

Mila Melnichuk: Perceptions vs Reality

Mila Melnichuk raised the issue of the manipulation of perceptions vs objective reality. Much effort is made by powerful forces representing NATO to induce both the Ukrainian government and people to perceive Russia as a threat and NATO as salvation.

Yet despite this manipulation, Melnichuk pointed out that there is still nothing approximating a consensus about joining NATO within the broader population (with more than half the population surveyed wishing Ukraine be kept out of the alliance). Mila pointed to the importance of the Minsk agreements which demand certain basic constitutional changes in Kyiv in order to guarantee autonomous region status to the pro-Russian Donetsk and Donbass republics. She pointed out that it is likely that Russia will recognize these territories as autonomous republics without any need for military intervention.

Melnichuk went further to propose a broader reform of international security beyond the borders of Ukraine as the western system has proven itself ineffective at achieving the objectives of security. A Russian-NATO council should be re-established, and NATO should cease provoking a violent reaction from Russia.

Jim Jatras: It’s Time to Pray

Jim Jatras began his presentation with a systemic overview asserting that “things are going to be happening on the macro level that are baked into the cake” and that “the world order built up over the last few decades is a house of cards and something is going to crack” both domestically and internationally. Jim pointed to the collapsing status of the dollar and the often over-looked danger of a civil war within the deeply divided United States as cultural civil war has already been launched across “wokeism” in the military, education, media, and beyond.

While Ukraine is at “the tip of the sphere” internationally, Jim pointed out that “the bigger problem has been the expansion of NATO” where the veneer of “democracy” has been wiped away many times over with nations like Montenegro being absorbed into the security organization despite the majority of its citizens completely rejecting it. Jatras made the point that assuming Western unipolarists might be trusted to agree to any formal security guarantees is akin to expecting Bolsheviks of the 1920s agreeing to reject international revolution or the labor theory of value.



Source: nato.int

Citing Patrick Armstrong’s recent article [“We’ve Seen the Ultimatum- What is the “or else?”](#), Jatras summarized a series of possible options going forward, asking what is the “or else” which Moscow is threatening should her red lines be crossed? What would Moscow’s

countermeasures look like?

Here Jatras notes one reasonable measure would be publicizing a list of NATO targets that would receive the full response of Russia's defense systems under the condition of war, the idea being that such a list might force a shift in the calculus of European NATO states whose fear of total annihilation might shake them out of their stupor. While back-channel diplomacy run via the networks of the Vatican and Russian orthodox church should be attempted, Jim didn't see much hope in that domain and suggested that the best course of action is to pray.

Addendum: Written contribution to the Roundtable by Professor Herbert Reginbogin of The Catholic University of America

Russian President Vladimir Putin is a man leading a country that in the last few months has amassed tens of thousands of soldiers and advanced military equipment on Ukraine's border, now asserting that it is Ukraine which is planning an invasion of Russia. Putin claimed (without evidence) that the U.S. intends to arm Ukraine with hypersonic missiles. "They just have to understand that we have nowhere left to retreat," Putin said during his four-hour television interview with journalists.

Under this circumstance a Russian proposal was issued on December 17 to resolve issues between the U.S. and Russia proposing the instrumentalization of neutrality and neutralization to resolve geostrategic conflicts between both countries. The proposal should be recognized as an effort of goodwill but also distortion of the facts with Russian President Vladimir Putin's proposal going beyond the Ukraine conflict but to include the in-between states of the West and Russia by advocating nuclear disarmament of Eastern and Central Europe, restrictive conventional military exercises, and military assets in the territories belonging to the former Soviet Union during the Cold War.

The U.S. should go beyond the concept of neutrality and neutralization as a geopolitical instrument by advocating these concepts as statecraft that is not only limited by geography and history for the in-between states but as statecraft that assures them strategic competitiveness to sustain and uphold neutrality and neutralization as an armed neutral to deter any country from invading their territories like Ukraine.

Moreover, the West should underscore that strategic competitiveness as a neutral must have mutual assurances from the U.S. and Russia regarding energy policy and the fight against corruption attributed by other outside parties to combat attempts to undermine and destabilize a neutral country like Ukraine.

These mutual assurances will also spill over to restricting U.S.-Russian use of gray zones of diplomatic and military coercion through mutual agreements of engagements in the international world order. Lastly, the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church should continue their back-channel diplomacy of dialogue to deal with the separation of the Ukraine Orthodox Church to restore greater harmony among the institutions and their flock as this will also impact President Putin's decision making as many Russians are of this faith.

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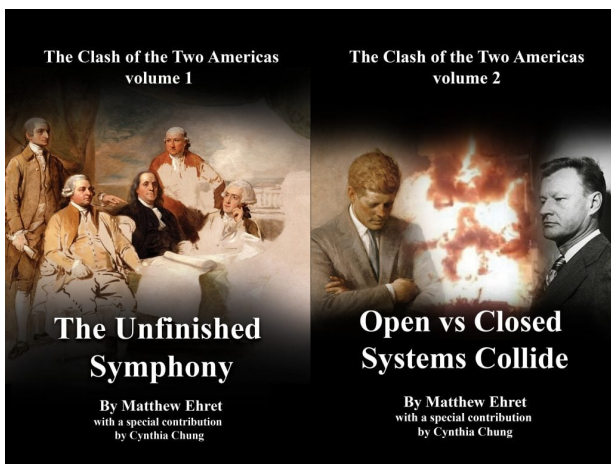
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He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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