

## Playing with Fire in Ukraine

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*Today, the dangers of military escalation are beyond description.*

*What is now happening in Ukraine has serious geopolitical implications. It could lead us into a World War III scenario.*

*It is important that a peace process be initiated with a view to preventing escalation.*

*Global Research condemns Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.*

*A Bilateral Peace Agreement is required.*

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*Having been a soldier and correspondent in 14 wars, I’m trying to see through the inevitable fog of war that beclouds the current conflict in Ukraine.*

This is no easy task. Moscow has done a poor job of explaining its position and scared the hell out of everyone with its nuclear alert.

Western media has championed the cause of Ukraine in a totally one-sided manner. So, we have plucky David v. evil Goliath. Never mind that civil war between Ukrainian nationalists, militant rightists and the Kiev regime has been flaring for 14 years.

Russia, which ruled Ukraine with a few pauses since the 1700’s, sought to rapidly overthrow the western-backed Ukrainian nationalist government in Kiev by launching what the French calls ‘un coup de main’, a lightning attack to seize Ukraine’s centers of power.

But this effort did not work out. Ukrainian government forces, secretly armed with the latest anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons by the Western powers, blunted Moscow’s initial attacks. I strongly suspect the presence of US and/or British Special Forces. More heavy offensives

appear to be on the way. An initial attack on the key port of Odessa quickly petered out.

Did the Russian soldiers lack enthusiasm? Hard to say at this point. Many were reportedly loathe to attack their Ukrainian 'brothers.' This conflict was not popular in Mother Russia.

We have not yet seen any eruption of ever-mighty Russian nationalism that was so powerful in World War II. Nor the pure racial-religious hatred seen in the crushing of Chechen independence in 1990. In that gruesome conflict, Russia destroyed the Chechen capitol and many towns across Chechnya. But the fierce Chechen were Muslims, not fellow Orthodox Slavs.

So far, Russian forces, whose doctrine calls for massive artillery use, have been sparing in their use of big guns and rocket batteries. Much more is very likely to come. The Russian Air Force and Black Sea Fleet have also been notably absent. Perhaps President Vladimir Putin has sought to keep the Ukraine conflict to a low-key punitive action.

But many other dangers are evident. Turkey says it will adhere to the important 1936 Montreux Convention that limits the entry of warships into the Black Sea. The US Navy plans a very aggressive campaign against Russia in the Black Sea - and around Vladivostok in the North Pacific. Will Turkey bar the US Navy from that inland sea?

Regarding the nuclear scare. President Putin has previously stated that because of Russia's reductions in its conventional forces it would henceforth rely increasingly on tactical and strategic nuclear weapons. Anyone who attacked Russia could expect at least a limited nuclear riposte.

Western politicians have had a field day denouncing the 'barbarity' (Boris Johnson's words) of Russian attacks on Ukrainian civilian targets. This is shameless bunkum. British pilots and mechanics have kept the Saudi air forces pounding Yemen's cities and villages. The US Air Force and Navy have destroyed many of Iraq, Libya's and Syria's urban areas, notably Falluja, Aleppo and Mosul. Israel's US-supplied air force flattened parts of Gaza.

Our side is not without sin.

The western powers need to abate their righteous jeremiads against Russia and work to find a face-saving way for Russia out of this dangerous morass. France has made a good start. By contrast, Germany has again shown its total lack of independent policy.

As much as we feel sympathy for Ukraine, we must also remember that Russia remains a great power of sorts and needs to be shown a clear exit from this mess. America must not be carried away by glee at Russia's discomfort and try to complete the destruction of the once mighty Soviet Union into an eastern Yugoslavia.

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