

Putin Deftly Eludes the US-laid War Trap

Egg on American and Ukrainian Political Faces

By [Kim Petersen](#)

Global Research, February 23, 2022

Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)

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*Going to war and using expensive war machinery and missiles can be enticing and perversely exhilarating, but the lethality and devastation of war must not be downplayed as a game. The latest political maneuver by Russian president **Vladimir Putin** was a game-changing masterstroke to avoid the American war trap. At every step in the build-up of tensions surrounding Ukraine, Russia has foiled US enticements to attack. To understand it all, one needs to start further back in time.*

9 February 1990 — US **Secretary of State James Baker** promised USSR **President Mikhail Gorbachev** that NATO would “not [move] one inch eastward” in exchange for allowing German unification.

1999 — Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland join NATO and move several inches nearer the dissolved USSR.

2004 — Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia join NATO.

2009 — Albania and Croatia join NATO.

February 2014 — A US-backed coup in Ukraine results in a Nazi-friendly government coming to power.

March 2014 — Crimeans vote overwhelmingly in a referendum to secede from Ukraine and become part of Russia.

September 2014 — The Minsk I Agreement is signed by Ukraine, Russia, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) calling for an immediate ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons, and prisoner exchanges.

February 2015 — The Minsk II Agreement calls again for a ceasefire, the withdrawal of weapons, ceasefire monitoring by the OSCE, and the holding of local elections in the

Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics on their future status in Ukraine. [Differing interpretations](#) have led to major disagreements over Minsk II.

2017 — Montenegro joins NATO.

2020 — North Macedonia joins NATO. It is apparent that there is an increasing eastward crawl, and Ukraine is also seeking membership.

18 November 2021 — Russia reiterates its red lines.

17 December 2021 — Russia presents its concerns about security in proposals to the US.
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16 January 2022 — Putin identifies Ukraine's membership in NATO as a red line in Russia-NATO relations that impinge upon Russian security. US secretary-of-state Antony Blinken dismissed Russian security concerns: "I can't be more clear — NATO's door is open, remains open, and that is our commitment."

26 January 2022 — Russia received a written response from the US to its security proposals. Russia would not be pleased.

16 February 2022 — According to national-security adviser Jake Sullivan, based on credible US intelligence, this was the date that Russia would invade Ukraine. The date came and went without any invasion.

17 February 2022 — Russia responds to US and NATO proposals about Ukraine and European security.

There have been many provocations leading up to the Russian recognition of the independence of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics. Among them are NATO expansion, not taking Russian security concerns seriously, the arming of Ukraine, and demonizing Russia via the western monopoly media. The final nail was the shelling from Ukraine into Donbass causing the evacuation of its civilians into Russia.

It appears to be a foolhardy act by Ukraine. **If Ukraine had adhered to the Minsk Agreements, Donetsk and Luhansk would still be a part of Ukraine, autonomous though they may be.** Autonomy is not uncommon within countries. Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Tibet, Xinjiang are autonomous provinces in China. Russia also has one autonomous region and 10 autonomous areas. Nonetheless, the lure of war and playing with fire has caused Ukraine to shrink a little bit more.

Russia, for its part, did not take the bait and invade Ukraine. It has instead sent peacekeepers into Donbass. It would seem highly unlikely that Ukraine would attack the [powerful state-of-the-art Russian military](#).

So Joe Biden does not get his Russian invasion. Biden's planners have been foiled again. Biden made the right call to withdraw the US forces from Afghanistan, but that withdrawal was badly botched, evoking memories of the tail-between-the-legs escape from rooftops in Viet Nam by US troops. Then to compound the fiasco of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, Biden had the shamelessness and heartlessness to steal the poor Afghan peoples' monies. He follows in the footsteps of his predecessor Donald Trump who openly stole Syrian oil — a theft that continues under Biden.

Meanwhile, the situation in and around Ukraine and the breakaway republics will continue to evolve. It is hoped that saner heads will deescalate the tensions and avoid war.

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Kim Petersen is a former co-editor of the *Dissident Voice* newsletter. He can be emailed at: kimohp at [gmail.com](mailto:kimohp@gmail.com). Twitter: [@kimpetersen](https://twitter.com/kimpetersen). He is a regular contributor to *Global Research*.

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