

Putin's Enormous Blunder

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Putin's biggest-ever blunder has been his failure to have offered to Finland a guarantee of peaceful relations, and of favored-nation status on trade (including on energy-prices of oil and gas, which, prior to the 2022 U.S.-imposed sanctions against Russia, European countries had, for decades, been buying at lower prices from Russia than from any other country, even without any favored-nation status), if Finland will not join NATO.

If Finland's Government would have turned down such an offer, then what excuses could they provide to their voters, for having said no to it? **(And, if the offer had been made privately and then privately rejected, Putin would then have made the offer publicly, and might have been able to get the Finnish public to support it, and then the Finnish Government to support it.)** If Finland would have accepted such an offer, then how much benefit would that provide to the Russian people?

Regarding the latter matter: the main reason why Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022 was that on 7 January 2022, both the U.S. Government and its NATO anti-Russian military alliance not only rejected Russia's 17 December 2021 proposal for there to be peaceful relations between Russia and The West, but neither the U.S. Government nor NATO were even willing to negotiate with Russia regarding any one of the specific clauses in Russia's thoughtful and lengthy — very serious — proposal.

Central to Russia's concerns in having offered the proposal was the 1962-Cuban-Missile-Crisis-in-Reverse issue that America is threatening Russia that America might place its nuclear missiles in Ukraine only 300 miles (or five minutes of missile-flying-time) away from blitz-nuclear bombing The Kremlin. Five minutes would be far too short a time for Russia to be able to identify the U.S. launch, and then to launch its retaliatory nuclear arsenal against the U.S. and its allied countries. Russia's central command would be beheaded before Russia could have any chance to respond.

Whereas in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Khrushchev and JFK negotiated, and thus averted World War Three, America and its NATO anti-Russian military alliance, on 7 January 2022,

refused to negotiate at all. Russia then had no alternative remaining, other than to take military action to achieve by military force, assurance that U.S. missiles *won't* be able to be placed a mere five minutes away from Moscow.

Finland is the second-closest anti-Russian country, and is 507 miles away from Moscow, which would be 7 minutes of missile-flying time away. Consequently, America's gaining Finland as a NATO member will be almost as life-threatening to Russia as if America had gained Ukraine into NATO.

Is Russia, then, now left without hope? Not quite. Here is a possible way in which Russia might — just *possibly* — be able to attain some protection (other than MERELY by military means) against what is now unquestionably a U.S. Government that is determined ultimately to conquer Russia:

Russia would now make, to any U.S.-allied country, the type of deal that it inexplicably had failed to offer to Finland. A possibility exists — though perhaps only a slim one — that one or more existing NATO-member countries might say yes to such a deal. **(The offer should be made only privately to each U.S.-allied country; and, then, if any such country privately says no, Russia should then offer the deal publicly to that country. Public opinion in that country might then force that Government — whose prior rejection of the deal would *not* be publicly known — publicly to say yes to it. Thus, there would then be two chances to obtain an agreement, instead of only one, and this would greatly increase the chances of success.)**

Right now, the high fuel prices in Europe are a huge factor in favor of such an agreement being able to be reached. Those high fuel-prices are due to the cut-off (on account of the U.S.-and-allied sanctions against Russia, and the destruction of the Nord Stream pipelines) of Europe's by-far-cheapest fuels-supplier, Russia. Thus, there is a strong incentive for each and every existing NATO-member country to negotiate with Russia about this matter. It would be a clear win-win deal for both sides. Obviously, the U.S. Government, and its NATO, would be strongly opposed to allowing any NATO-member country to say yes, but would they be able to prevent it from happening? Who knows?

What is irrefutable is that Putin shouldn't have waited this long to start thinking about this. Better late than never, but will he ever? He has publicly stated that he favors win-win arrangements. So, here's his chance to propose it. Why not *try* (first, privately; then — if necessary — publicly)? Why hasn't he tried? There might still be a chance to get this done.

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Featured image: Letters of application to NATO from Finland and Sweden, presented to Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on May 18. (NATO)

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