

# Russia or America: Who Is the Real Aggressor?

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

*As the crisis in Ukraine continues to perpetuate, one aspect that has been particularly striking is the language used by the Western media and politicians to describe Russia and its President, Vladimir Putin.*

*The country and its leader have been branded as aggressors, invaders, empire builders and have even been [compared to](#) Nazi Germany. In the field of psychology, there is a term to describe a defence mechanism - projection, which is characterised by projecting unwanted feelings onto other people. Perhaps, the US and its Western allies are experiencing a surge of projection, as the way they have been describing Russia is not only incorrect, but is also an appropriate way to describe the Western powers.*

## Russia's non-aggression

Let us start with Russia. Since President Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000, apart from the most recent crisis in Ukraine (which I will address shortly), Russia has been involved in just two major conflicts: The Chechen War between 1999 and 2009 and the so-called Five Day War with Georgia in 2008. In both of these events, it can be argued with some certainty that Russia did not instigate the conflict, and was in fact acting defensively. The Chechnya conflict began after the [Invasion of Dagestan](#), when the Chechnya-based Islamic International Brigade (IIB), an Islamist militia [ covertly supported by the CIA], led by warlords Shamil Basayev and Ibn al-Khattab, [invaded](#) the neighbouring Russian republic of Dagestan on August 2, 1999, in support of the Shura of Dagestan separatist rebels. Russia was left with little choice but to enter Chechnya on 1 October. The campaign ended the de facto independence of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and restored Russian federal control over the territory. It is even debatable to even consider this as a "foreign" conflict, as it is quite plausible to argue that this crisis was an internal one.

The conflict with Georgia follows a similar line of events as with Chechnya. During the night of 7 to 8 August 2008, Georgia launched a large-scale military offensive against South Ossetia, in an attempt to reclaim the territory. This move was [completely unprovoked](#). The Georgian attack caused casualties among Russian peacekeepers, who resisted the assault along with Ossetian militia. Russia rightfully reacted by deploying units of the Russian 58th Army and Russian Airborne Troops into South Ossetia one day later, and launched airstrikes against Georgian forces in South Ossetia and military and logistical targets in Georgia proper. It is now well established that the majority of experts, monitors and ambassadors agreed that the war was [started by Georgia](#).

## Ukrainian Crisis

Since Putin became President, Russia has never attacked or invaded another country, unless there was a clear provocation from the opposite side. This fact seems to have gone unnoticed by the Western leaders and the media who continue to portray Russia as a scary and unpredictable country. Following the coverage of events in Ukraine, especially in Crimea, one would come to sense that the media is very keen to portray Russia as a nation that has repeatedly violated international law and sovereignty of other nations, when in fact, the opposite is true. Can the crisis in Crimea be called an “invasion”? Firstly, no blood has been spilled and there has been no fighting or even shots fired, except for warning shots into the air.

There is an argument to be made that Russia has [violated](#) the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine, however, it must be noted that both Crimea and Russia do not recognise the current interim Ukrainian government and thus to them, the territory of Ukraine is under completely anarchy and chaos. Due to the well documented [incidents of neo-Nazi violence](#) in Kiev and other parts of Ukraine, it has been the responsibility of Russia to ensure that ethnic Russians in Crimea are protected. Let us remember that Russia has not claimed that Crimea now belongs to the Russian Federation. It has simply placed its troops to preserve peace in the region. Depending on the outcome of the upcoming [referendum](#) on the status of Crimea on 16<sup>th</sup> March, Russia will no doubt take appropriate action, i.e. either leave if Crimea chooses to remain part of Ukraine, or stay if Crimean votes to become a part of Russia.

#### US interventions and NATO expansion

While Russia has been adhering to international law and showing complete lack of aggression over the last 14 years, the US and NATO have been doing the opposite. US alone has [intervened](#) in the following countries: Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Philippines, Côte d’Ivoire, Iraq, Georgia, Haiti, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Pakistan, Lebanon, Somalia, Libya, Uganda, Jordan, Chad, Mali, Turkey. NATO, meanwhile, has been involved in the Bosnia and Herzegovina intervention, Kosovo intervention, the Afghanistan War and most recently the Libyan intervention; with the latter two being complete disasters that have left the countries in shambles and anarchy.

In addition, NATO has [broken its promise](#) to Russia. Mikhail Gorbachev reportedly agreed to allow German reunification within NATO after being promised that NATO would not expand “one inch to the east.” Instead, in 1999, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined the organization, despite NATO claiming that it had no plans to expand after the end of the Cold War. Another expansion came with the accession of seven Central and Eastern European countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania. These nations were first invited to start talks of membership during the 2002 Prague summit, and joined NATO on 29 March 2004, shortly before the 2004 Istanbul summit. Most recently, Albania and Croatia joined on 1 April 2009, shortly before the 2009 Strasbourg-Kehl summit. Future expansion is currently a topic of debate in many countries. Cyprus and Macedonia are stalled from accession by, respectively, Turkey and Greece, pending the resolution of disputes between them. Other countries which have a stated goal of eventually joining include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Georgia.

#### Russia’s worries justified

Putin rightly [feels worried](#) that NATO is on a mission to encircle Russia and the recent EU and US involvement in Ukraine only exacerbates those worries. Given the hostility that

Russia faces on a daily basis from Western politicians and the media, is it really a surprise that Russia vehemently opposes any Western-backed government in Ukraine, especially following a dubious revolution, [financed by the US](#)?

Russia is used to receiving negative press ever since President Putin came to power in 2000 and made it his priority to protect the Russian national interest and not allow the West to go on an interventionist spree. But the latest attacks on Russia are not only incorrect and hypocritical, but also illustrate the desire of the Western powers to discredit and vilify Russia for its own geopolitical objectives. However, the events of the last decade clearly illustrate that it is the West that has been aggressive and interventionist, and it is NATO that has a plan to create an empire, not Russia.

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