

## Stop the Neocon from Starting a War

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Global Research, January 26, 2022

[LewRockwell.com](http://LewRockwell.com)

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

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*Amid surging tensions over Ukraine, the head of Germany’s navy had the courage to voice Europe’s fears over this totally unnecessary, contrived crisis.*

In a speech to an Indian think tank, **Vice-admiral Kay-Achim Schonbach** proposed the Western powers ‘respect’ Russian leader **Vladimir Putin** and accept that Crimea would remain in Moscow’s hands.

The German admiral’s remarks produced a major uproar in Washington and tut tuts in Europe where hatred of Russia has become a state fetish. Most aggrieved were the British and Americans who deeply fear an alliance or at least entente between Germany and Russia that might undermine US domination of the continent.

Germany, Europe’s leading military force and mainstay of NATO, has hollowed out its military power. Thanks to unqualified female defense ministers, Germany’s armed forces have degenerated into parade troops. Armor and aircraft, once hallmarks of German military power, have become feeble toys, lacking in munitions, spare parts and capable crews.

Polls show Germans have very little interest in confronting Russia. Memories of World War II are still raw. Today’s Germans live in a nation that was 50% destroyed by US and British bombing. Millions of Germans come from families driven out of eastern Europe.

There is not a lot of sympathy for Ukraine’s current government that was installed by a US-financed and stage-managed coup in 2013-2014. Germany’s US-dominated media and government support Washington’s hard line on Ukraine but many ordinary Germans and French don’t agree.

America’s media and politicians strongly support the military confrontation with Russia, a low-cost way of being loudly patriotic without actually doing anything serious.

Only Poland, the Baltic states and American neocons really hunger for war – provided it is

waged by the US. US **Secretary of State Anthony Blinken**, a rising star among the pro-war neocons, is pushing the confrontation with Russia – yet another bureaucrat with no military experience.

Military men quickly understand the logistic and climactic problems of fighting in the Black Sea region, but not Washington's desk warriors and their European satraps. The US has been unwise to provoke a confrontation with Russia in its backyard. Though Russia has lost much of its Soviet-era military power, it would be a mistake to underestimate its combat capabilities and overestimate those of NATO.

Remember, Napoleon (who was seriously defeated in Russia) prayed 'oh Lord, if I must go to war, please make it against a coalition.'

Washington's sofa samurais are playing with fire. The neocons' latest effort to overthrow President Putin risks backfiring badly by drawing China into the fray and undermining US domination of the continent. Let's say US-led NATO forces thrash the 106,000 Russian troops around Ukraine's borders. What then? An advance on Moscow? An assault on Crimea? Might Romania join the war to recover Moldova lost in WWII? Or tiny Finland? The Russians are unlikely to be quivering in their boots. Romanian troops, let's recall, were defending the flank of Germany's 6th Army at the Stalingrad disaster.

We are not going to see a rerun of the Great Northern War of the early 1700's. What we are seeing is the re-birth of Russian power in its traditional sphere of influence. Admiral Schonbach is quite right. Russia will never relinquish Crimea any more than Germany would give over Hamburg or the US cede Baltimore to Cuban control.

Luckily for us, Russia is currently being run by hard men from the old KGB who are experienced and cautious. It is well that they are because Russia has thousands of nuclear weapons pointed at the US and its allies. No one in their right mind should contemplate a nuclear confrontation. Russia has repeatedly made clear that if backed into a corner, it may well use tactical nuclear weapons. China is coming around to the same thinking.

Beaten in Vietnam, Iraq and now Afghanistan, the US is seeking a cheap victory in Ukraine. But the northern rim of the Black Sea is not known for its low-hanging geopolitical fruit. And Russia always surprises.

Mr. Blinken, be cautious lest a hypersonic Russian missile comes flying through your office window.

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