

# This Is How the U.S. Does ‘Dialogue’: Triggering Financial Instability against Russia. “This Bill Sounds like a Declaration of War”

By [Pepe Escobar](#)

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*Washington will not consider Russian proposals on no expansion of NATO, and has no intention of even discussing the idea. So much for “dialogue”.*

*It was the first high-level Russia-NATO meeting since 2019 – coming immediately after the non sequitur of the U.S.-Russia “security guarantee” non-dialogue dialogue earlier in the week in Geneva.*

*So what happened in Brussels? Essentially yet another non-dialogue dialogue – complete with a Kafkaesque NATO preface: we’re prepared for dialogue, but the Kremlin’s proposals are unacceptable.*

This was a double down on the American envoy to NATO, Julianne Smith, preemptively blaming Russia for the actions that “accelerated this disaster”.

By now every sentient being across Eurasia and its European peninsula should be familiar with Russia’s top two, rational demands: no further NATO expansion, and no missile systems stationed near its borders.

Now let’s switch to the spin machine. NATO **Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg’s** [platitudes](#) were predictably faithful to his spectacular mediocrity. On the already pre-empted dialogue, he said it was “important to start a dialogue”.

Russia, he said, “urged NATO to refuse to admit Ukraine; the alliance responded by refusing to compromise on enlargement”. Yet NATO “welcomed bilateral consultations” on security guarantees.

NATO also proposed a series of broad security consultations, and “Russia has not yet agreed, but has not ruled out them either.”

No wonder: the Russians had already noted, even before it happened, that this is nothing but stalling tactics.

The Global South will be relieved to know that Stoltenberg defended NATO’s military blitzkriegs in both Kosovo and Libya: after all “they fell under UN mandates”. So they were benign. Not a word on NATO’s stellar performance in Afghanistan.

And then, the much-awaited clincher: NATO worries about Russian troops “on the border with Ukraine” – actually from 130 km to 180 km away, inside European Russian territory. And the alliance considers “untrue” that expansion is “an aggressive act”. Why? Because “it spreads democracy”.

### **Bomb me to democracy, baby**

So here’s the NATO gospel in a flash. Now compare it with the sobering words of Russian **Deputy Foreign Minister [Alexander Grushko](#)**.

Grushko carefully enounced how “**NATO is determined to contain Russia**. The United States and its allies are trying to achieve superiority in all areas and in all possible theaters of military operations.” That was a veiled reference to Full Spectrum Dominance, which since 2002 remains the American gospel.

Grushko also referred to “Cold War-era containment tactics”, and that “all cooperation [with Russia] has been halted” – by NATO. Still, “Russia honestly and directly pointed out to NATO that a further slide of the situation could lead to dire consequences for European security.”

The conclusion was stark: “**The Russian Federation and NATO do not have a unifying positive agenda at all.**”

Virtually all Russophobic factions of the bipartisan War Inc. machine in Washington cannot possibly accept that there should be no forces stationed on European states that were not members of NATO in 1997; and that current NATO members should attempt no military intervention in Ukraine as well as in other Eastern European, Transcaucasian, and Central Asian states.

On Monday in Geneva, **Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov** had already stressed, once again, that Russia’s red line is unmovable: “*For us, it’s absolutely mandatory to make sure that Ukraine never, never, ever becomes a member of NATO.*”

Diplomatic sources confirmed that in Geneva, Ryabkov and his team had for all practical purposes to act like teachers in kindergarten, making sure there would be “no misunderstandings”.

Now compare it with the U.S. State Department’s **Ned Price**, speaking after those grueling eight hours shared between Ryabkov and **Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman**: Washington will not consider Russian proposals on no expansion of NATO, and has no intention of even discussing the idea.

So much for “dialogue”.

Ryabkov confirmed there was no progress. Referring to his didacticism, he had to stress, “We are calling on the U.S. to demonstrate a maximum of responsibility at this moment. Risks related to a possible increase of confrontation shouldn’t be underestimated.”

To say, in Ryabkov’s words, that “significant” Russian effort has been made to persuade the Americans that “playing with fire” is not in their interests is the euphemism of the young century.

### **Let me sanction you to oblivion**

A quick recap is crucial to understand how things could have derailed so fast.

NATO’s not exactly secret strategy, from the beginning, has been to pressure Moscow to directly negotiate with Kiev on Donbass, even though Russia is not mentioned in the Minsk Agreements.

While Moscow was being forced to become part of the Ukraine/Donbass confrontation, it barely broke a sweat smashing a coup cum color revolution in Belarus. Afterwards, the Russians assembled in no time an impressive strike force - with corresponding military infrastructure - in European Russia territory to respond in lightning quick fashion in case there was a Ukrainian blitzkrieg in Donbass.

No wonder an alarmed NATOstan had to do something about the notion of fighting Russia to the last impoverished Ukrainian. They may at least have understood that Ukraine would be completely destroyed.

The beauty is how Moscow turned things around with a new geopolitical jiu-jitsu move. Ukro-dementia encouraged by NATO - complete with empty promises of becoming a member - opened the way for Russia to demand no further NATO expansion, with the withdrawal of all military infrastructure from Eastern Europe to boot.

It was obvious that Ryabkov, in his talks with Sherman, would refuse any suggestion that Russia should dismantle the logistical infrastructure set up in its own European Russia territory. For all practical purposes, Ryabkov smashed Sherman to bits. What was left was meek threats of more sanctions.

Still, it will be a Sisyphean task to convince the Empire and its NATO satrapies not to stage some sort of military adventure in Ukraine. That’s the gist of what Ryabkov and Grushko said over and over again in Geneva and Brussels. They also had to stress the obvious: **if further sanctions are imposed on Russia, there would be severe blowback especially in Europe.**

But how is it humanly possible for seasoned pros like Ryabkov and Grushko to argue, rationally, with a bunch of amateur blind bats such as Blinken, Sullivan, Nuland and Sherman?

There has been some serious speculation on the timeframe ahead for Russia to in fact not even bother to listen to the American “baby babble” (copyright Maria Zakharova) anymore. Could be around 2027, or even 2025.

What's happening next is that the five-year extension of the new START treaty expires in February 2026. Then there will be no ceiling for nuclear strategic weapons. **The Power of Siberia 2 gas pipeline to China will make Gazprom even less dependent on the European market. The combined Russia-China financial system will become nearly impervious to U.S. sanctions.** The Russia-China strategic partnership will be sharing even more substantial military tech.

All of that is way more consequential than the dirty secret that is not a secret in the current "security guarantees" kabuki: the exceptionalist, "indispensable" nation is congenitally incapable of giving up on the forever expansion of NATO to, well, outer space.

At the same time, the Russians are very much aware of a quite prosaic truth; the U.S. will not fight for Ukraine.

So welcome to Instagrammed Irrationalism. What happens next? Most possibly a [provocation](#), with the possibility, for instance, of a chemical black ops to be blamed on Russia, followed by - what else - more sanctions.

The package is ready. **It comes in the form of a bill by Dem senators supported by the White House to bring "severe costs" to the Russian economy** in case Moscow finally answers their prayers and "invades" Ukraine.

**Sanctions would directly hit President Putin, Prime Minister Mishustin, Foreign Minister Lavrov, the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Gen Gerasimov, and "commanders of various branches of the Armed Forces, including the Air Force and Navy."**

**Targeted banks and financial institutions include Sberbank, VTB, Gazprombank, Moscow Credit Bank, Alfa-Bank, Otkritie Bank, PSB, Sovcombank, Transcapitalbank, and the Russian Direct Investment Fund.** They would all be cut off from SWIFT.

**If this bill sounds like a declaration of war, that's because it is.** Call it the American version of "dialogue".

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