

Trump's Biggest Test So Far

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On December 7th, was posed the biggest test so far of the mettle of America's President-Elect, Donald Trump.

He had said several times during his campaign, that if elected President, he would seek a new, less-hostile, relationship between the U.S. and Russia. Now the moment has come when he must either make his first move forward with that historic commitment, or else — by his own inaction when the circumstances (such as right now) demand immediate action on this very promise — set his future U.S. Presidential Administration onto exactly the opposite path: following through with and accepting the existing hostilities, even when they are the most blatantly irrational and counter-factual on their American basis (as now is the case).

The precipitating event here is this: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier [said on December 7th](#) that they want to continue the existing hostilities against Russia: specifically the economic sanctions that U.S. President Barack Obama initiated against Russia after Russia had accepted the overwhelming (90%+) request of the residents in Crimea to restore Crimea's pre-1954 status, of being for hundreds of years an integral part of Russia.

The way Steinmeier phrased it was, "The necessary significant progress" by Russia in the implementation of the Minsk Peace Agreement for Ukraine, has not been achieved, and so the sanctions against Russia ["will continue to exist."](#)

By "the necessary significant progress" he was referring actually to the thing that has been blocking the carrying-out of the Minsk agreements: the Ukrainian Government's refusal to adhere to provision #11 of the Minsk II Accords, the provision that says Ukraine will pass an amendment to its Constitution so as to provide "special administrative status" within Ukraine to the two breakaway regions, Donbass (where 90% of the residents had voted for the Ukrainian President whom [U.S. President Barack Obama's Administration had overthrown in a bloody coup in February 2014](#), which coup sparked Donbass's breakaway), and Crimea (where 75% had voted for that deposed President, whose [bloody removal by Obama's operation](#) sparked Crimea's breakaway on 16 March 2014, three weeks after that [coup](#)).

What Stoltenberg and Steinmeier ought to be demanding, then, certainly is not continuation of sanctions against Russia for something that Russia isn't responsible for and actually opposes (a breaking of that promise by the Ukrainian Government), which is [Ukraine's refusal to comply with provision #11 of the Minsk II Accords](#), but, instead, sanctions against the Ukrainian Government itself, and perhaps also against the U.S. Government, for their

opposing and blocking implementation of that key provision of the Accords (and, perhaps belatedly, also for [that coup](#)).

However, since NATO and Germany are not (such as they're claiming to be) demanding Ukraine's compliance with the Minsk Accords, perhaps other nations should instead consider imposing economic sanctions against NATO and Germany, as a possible alternative way of achieving implementation of those Accords, by penalizing NATO and Germany for pushing forward with this lie and moving in the opposite direction — toward war — from the direction (ending the West's confrontation with Russia) which the U.S. President-elect had said he wants. And, of course, economic sanctions against the United States Government, for its having illegally imposed a coup-government in Kiev, and so precipitated the entire confrontation, might also be considered. Those options could be rational, but what Steinmeier and Stoltenberg are demanding is certainly not.

U.S. President-Elect Donald Trump can eliminate any such necessity, however, and also fulfill his basic campaign promise regarding U.S.-Russian relations, by informing both NATO and Germany that, unlike his immediate predecessor in the U.S. White House (Obama), a President Donald Trump will push for an immediate end to the Obama-sanctions against Russia.

This move on Trump's part needn't necessarily be accompanied by any official repudiation of his predecessor's actions regarding Ukraine and regarding Russia, but it would, in and of itself, establish a new and far more peaceful future course in international relations, in which all nations will be able to unify around the common goal for international security, of wiping out jihadists — no longer any trumped-up accusations and hostilities that extend and needlessly continue old-style big-power rivalries, which unnecessarily drain the world's resources and kill thousands of people, for merely partisan, and clearly counter-productive and potentially catastrophic, purposes.

If President-Elect Trump declines to take advantage of this ["blatant"](#) opportunity to change course in a constructive direction on U.S. foreign relations, then what realistic expectation can there be that he ever will do so? Can a more ["blatant"](#) instance to initiate his promised change-of-direction be even imagined?

Also on December 7th, Mr. Trump [named a passionate opponent of regulations against global warming, to become the head of America's Environmental Protection Administration](#), which enforces those regulations. The appointee is Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, who is no scientist and who even denies that there is any significant [scientific consensus](#) that global warming exists or has any human involvement in its cause if it does exist, and has fought *against* regulations to reduce or prevent runaway global heating. Unless he would reverse those positions of his, approval by the U.S. Senate of his appointment would make any concerted international agreements against runaway global heating, such as as the recent Paris agreement to reduce greenhouse gases, impossible to achieve or enforce. This would be yet further reason for imposing economic sanctions against the United States — but this reason would be due to Mr. Trump's own international malfeasance, rather than to Obama's.

Consequently, the real test now isn't only for Trump; it's also going to be a test for every government on this planet. And not only international peace is at stake; our livable planet *also* is.

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).

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