

On US Imperialism's Proxy War with Russia in Ukraine

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Here is my analysis of what's going on in Ukraine after one month. It may not prove acceptable to many. Certainly not liberals, the ruling elite in Washington, or even some left liberal and socialist left. But I've always spoken my mind on this blog and will continue to do so, with no allegiances to any political forces or organizations. So here goes:

First, this is a proxy war engineered by US neocons and political elites, that has its origins going back as far as 1999, when the neocons began to gain greater control over US foreign policy. The dress rehearsal for the current conflict originates with the Clinton administration. Once Clinton could not keep his zipper shut and the radical right used the opportunity to exact whatever concessions they wanted from him in his final two years in office, the shift in US foreign policy began and has gained momentum ever since.

In Bill's last two years, in domestic policy a shift began to a more hyper neoliberalism in tax, spending, war, monetary, industrial and trade policy. In foreign policy, the main elements were a rejection of the prior US position not to move NATO east that was given to the remnants of the Russian elite in 1991-2 after the collapse of the USSR. The 'old guard' of US foreign policy, led by advisers like George F. Kennan and other US ambassadors was abandoned in the late 1990s. NATO led by the USA became an offensive organization. Its first victim was Yugoslavia-Serbia and the bombing of Serbia-Kosovo. That same year the march of NATO east also began.

In 2005 the US supported the so-called 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine that ended in a stalemate between pro-US and pro-Russian forces in Ukraine. The US next moved on Georgia encouraging it to invade south Russia, which it did but lost. NATO moved further into east Europe in the wake of that conflict. In the Ukraine in 2010 the pro and anti-US elements came to an uneasy truce. The US then built up its influence by courting the ground forces of fascists as a popular uprising force, led by US under secretary of state, Victoria

Nuland, who bragged the US had spent \$5 billion financing the coup that occurred in 2014. The election of that year was narrowly won by the pro-Russian president. The street forces were then unleashed in mass protests in Kyiv that winter, 2014-15 and the pro-Russian president fled the country. Buttressed by publicly declared fascist elements in the street, many of whom then took seats in the new Parliament, the US deepened its economic and political involvement in Ukraine further. **Victoria Nuland** was appointed by the new Kyiv government as 'economic czar' over the Ukraine economy. (Made possible by Ukraine suspending its constitution that foreigners could not assume such a position. She was made an honorary citizen). Following her appointment the floodgates of US capital and business opened wide and US companies absorbed, purchased, and joint ventured with former Ukrainian companies. The US military advisers descended on Ukraine.

Russia responded by supporting the pro-Russia Donbass region. A local war in that area began. 14,000 pro-Russian Ukrainians died, as the fascist forces were organized in special military units and unleashed on the Ukrainian east (aka the Azov battalion). A peace armistice was arranged at Minsk in 2016 and the fighting and attacks slowed but never ceased. NATO moved east once again, a third time since 1999, absorbing the three Baltic countries after having already brought the rest of eastern Europe into the NATO fold.

Trump was elected president in 2017 and for the next four years a hiatus of sorts in the conflict followed. The Democrats believed Russian intervention in the US election of 2016 stole the presidency from **Hillary Clinton** and they never forgot. They waited their turn.

In 2020 Biden won and the preparation to step up the political pressure on Russia began anew: In late summer-fall 2021 the Biden administration deepened its military and political cooperation with Ukraine, as it pulled out quickly from Afghanistan. Joint US-Ukraine military exercises occurred. More US advisers poured into Ukraine to train the Ukrainian army. In November 2021 a preliminary agreement was signed by the US with Ukraine to bring it into the European Union, a necessary precursor to NATO membership. (Over the previous two decades the US withdrew from several missile treaties with Russia and set up advanced early warning radar in Poland and Romania.) All of eastern Europe and Baltics was now under NATO by 2021. Only Ukraine, which had repeatedly requested membership remained.

The US refused to acknowledge that NATO membership would not be offered to Ukraine, and repeatedly in 2021 refused when asked to clarify. Encouraged by these US statements and actions, Ukrainian president, Zelensky, became more strident in his request for US military protection, membership into NATO, and even began publicly saying Ukraine should be given nuclear weapons. Zelensky was being played like a violin by the US. A plausible explanation is the US was taunting and provoking Russia to invade. It had much to gain by a Russian invasion on a proxy country soil. (See my prior article '10 Reasons Why the US May Want Russia to Invade Ukraine' posted on this blog in February)

Russia began its military build up last winter in response. The US and neocon elements running US foreign policy used the threat of a Russian invasion to re-establish its hegemony over NATO among European nations which were showing signs of distancing from NATO, especially under Trump. US business interests, especially the oil and gas companies, had much to gain from a US policy of driving Russia out of Europe—not only in energy but in all areas of business. There was much profit to be gained by US corporations entering the European economic vacuum that would be left by a Russian exit.

Russia took the US bait and invaded on February 24, 2022. The US media-propaganda corporation machine immediately went to work to freeze out any and all global alternative commentary on the origins and state of the military conflict. The American public was force fed carefully selected stories about the plight of refugees, estimates of civilians killed, heroic Ukrainian fighters, and how the US was again the leader of protecting Democracy and Freedom. Little or nothing slipped through the US media to provide an actual picture of what was going on in Ukraine on the ground. The story was Russian military forces were bogged down, poorly equipped and led, being killed by the thousands and about to be defeated. Much of the reporting taken directly from Ukrainian government press releases.

Then the US media drumbeat began to assume an ominous character: the Russians were preparing chemical or biological weapons under a 'false flag' (but whose?); the Russians were prepared to continue on to invade NATO countries; and, most concerning, talking heads began to appear increasingly proposing how a tactical nuclear war could be won with Russia. Biden in recent days assumed the even more disconcerting public position declaring Putin was a 'war criminal' and that 'Putin had to go'. The former declaration made it difficult to negotiate a truce at some point; the latter a virtual declaration of 'regime change' for Russia that would make Russia assume no hope in negotiating a truce whatsoever. It almost amounts to evidence the US does not want a truce or end to the conflict. It wants to debilitate Russia economically with its sanctions for some time to come, foment popular unrest in Russia, and humiliate it into a virtual surrender instead of a negotiated compromise at some point. The US still has much to gain geopolitically and economically from an extension (and perhaps even intensification) of the Russian-Ukraine conflict. How else can one interpret the US president's declaration of Putin as 'war criminal' and need for 'regime change'?

But Putin and Russia are not Milosevic and Yugoslavia. Nor Quaddafi or Saddam Hussein. Nor Noriega of Panama. Nor the Taliban. Russia is one tenth of the global economy and source of much of its economic resources. And it's a country with 6500 nuclear weapons.

One may ask, how can US neocons pushing the conflict in Ukraine be so short sighted? To that one can only recall their disastrous invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan that they drove the US into. Biden appears increasingly unable to halt the US neocon insistence on further extending NATO and provoking Russia into a deeper conflict. Thoroughly neutralizing Russia is a necessary strategic precursor to taking on China in Taiwan or South China sea.

We are in an era of US imperialism running amuck. The same year, 2021, that the US ended its 20 year long disastrous war in the middle east, it is slouching toward another in Ukraine. Biden says US won't get involved in Ukraine directly. But it already is. Ukrainian forces have many US advisors fighting side by side, directly tactics on the ground and use of US made weapons. US weapons like drones are likely US directed, being used with some effect to ambush Russian advanced forces. There's also the very likely use of US satellites and AWACs helping Ukrainian forces identify where Russian forces are advancing on the ground so they can be ambushed. The US is sending thousands of javelin and stinger missiles, and training thousands of Ukrainian troops in the far west of Ukraine. As the conflict continues, it is almost inevitable NATO & even US forces will be drawn into the fight-under the cover as mercenary or volunteers.

My Position on the Conflict

Ukraine is a proxy war between US and Russia that has its origins in the US, going back to

1999 and continuing and growing ever since. It is US imperialism that is at play here. It's not a Russian imperialism. Russia is desperately trying to prevent further penetration of US imperialism, not advance to the west. Russia lost whatever empire it had with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The US media-Neocon narrative that Russia is planning to restore the former Soviet empire into the Baltics and Eastern Europe is nonsense. Russia clearly lacks the military resources to do so if it wanted. Even its 150,000 troops in Ukraine are dangerously spread thin along four fronts. Russia has plans to attack the Baltics or Poland is a neocon narrative used to restore US leadership over NATO and serves as an excuse to increase US military combat forces in Eastern Europe.

The foregoing is not to approve of the current Russian invasion. It is just to acknowledge the Russian security reasons, fears and concerns driving it. One can only imagine if Mexico joined the former USSR 'Warsaw Military Pact' and began joint military exercises with the former Soviet Union, what the US response would have been. It would have been a US Mexico invasion in a New York minute, as they say. That's how Russia views the situation in Ukraine. It knows if Ukraine joins NATO, then Finland and Sweden would quickly follow. The next US/NATO destabilization 'targets' would be Belarus and Kazakhstan (where popular uprisings have already occurred with no doubt some degree of US encouragement). A Ukraine in NATO would mean a Russia completely surrounded by NATO and it would either have to capitulate to US/NATO demands (including demobilizing its nuclear forces) or else in desperation fight a war next time using those nuclear weapons—an even worse scenario than the present. Russia no doubt believes it is either a fight in Ukraine now, before Ukraine joins NATO, or a much worse conflict later. Today's Ukraine proxy war may be the last non-nuclear war in the 21st century.

To continue to see the conflict as a moral issue of unjustified invasion will not bring a resolution to the conflict any closer; in fact, it will perpetuate and risk a deeper conflict as public opinion is corralled in support of war hawks, neocons, and elites' plans to continue it.

This is not to deny that Russia is a capitalist country and economy and its government deeply integrated with greedy capitalist Oligarchs. But the US is not any different: it's a capitalist country with its own gaggle of even greedier oligarchs (bankers, shadow bankers, oil corps, and the more visible tech versions—Musk, Zuckerman, Bezos, et. al.)

Leftists and socialists are wrong to assume the position of "a plague on both their houses. They're both capitalists and oligarchic and therefore we should support neither and call for a workers revolution to overthrow them all (as per Lenin's call in 1914)." Their demand is Europe out of NATO! And Russia out of Ukraine!

But a workers revolution is not even remotely on the agenda anywhere. That therefore will not stop the conflict from escalating into an even wider, or more dangerous nuclear, confrontation. Nor is Europe about to exit NATO. Quite the opposite. So this left position sounds good but is completely naive. The demand should be to oppose US imperialism, even if it means another capitalist country (in this case Russia) is being attacked by that imperialism. The socialist left position sees Russia and US imperialism as equivalents. And in taking that view it in effect abstains. But to take an abstentionist position with regard to US imperialism, which is now running amuck in the 21st century, is tantamount to supporting it. It ignores which is the greater threat to world peace? Russia's invasion of Ukraine or US imperialism intent on driving NATO east into Ukraine (and likely points to follow)? It should be asked which policies originated the conflict and now show indication of a desire to perpetuate and even deepen the crisis?

The demand should be an immediate truce and halt to the fighting. Ukraine and US/NATO should immediately sign a formal agreement of no extension of membership in NATO and no US military presence in Ukraine as part of the truce agreement. Ukraine should assume a model of Finland neutrality in its relation to Russia. Finally, Russian speaking areas of eastern and southern Ukraine should be allowed an independent international observed vote as to what country they want to join as independent republics. All sanctions should be rescinded within 30 days of a settlement. And no Ukrainian military units should tolerate soldiers or officers with extremist political associations or views.

There is no denying that fascist elements have been present in Ukraine since 2014 at least, and have a deep role within the Ukrainian military and influence within the Ukrainian Parliament and government itself. The US and west does not understand how deep the memory and fear of anything fascist runs in Russia. Russia may be over-estimating the fascist threat. But what the unleashing of the Azov battalion and other such forces did in 2015-16 and after is a stark reminder. And is it also a fact that the Azov and other forces were once again shelling and attacking the eastern provinces of Donetsk and Lughansk in 2021.

The greatest danger to world peace is US imperialist interests now reacting irrationally to growing indications that the American empire is now under threat like never before; that the US global unipolar world order since 1991 can no longer be sustained. With neocons largely in control of US foreign policy since the late 1990s it is likely the US is about to engage in another, even more dangerous adventure in Europe than it did in the middle east in the previous two decades. That conflict ended with a tremendous loss of life, trillions of dollars of wasted US resources, a region left in shambles from Libya to Syria to Iraq to Afghanistan. A repeat of that policy on the Eurasian continent will prove many times more destructive and very likely lead to a tactical nuclear conflict that cannot be contained.

This proxy war in Ukraine is not at all about freedom or democracy. That's just bullshit propaganda. It's about money and power. It's about restoring US imperial hegemony over Europe, breaking Russia as a global challenger to the US, and a dress rehearsal for then going after China.

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