

# Where Are Corrective Systems as West and NATO Leadership Cross One Red Line After Another in Escalating Direct Confrontation with Russia?

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*In the middle of several serious risks and conflicts the safety of our world has been somehow ensured on the basis of certain basic understandings that till recently were well appreciated by almost all of the top leaders and diplomats of the international community. One of the most basic of these understandings is that there should be no direct confrontation between the USA/NATO and Russia. As these two sides have about 11,000 nuclear weapons and supportive systems (as well as other weapons of mass destruction) it has been well understood that any direct confrontation which can also lead to exchange of nuclear weapons is a threat to all life on earth, and therefore must be avoided in all circumstances.*

Very unfortunately, confounding all rationality and considerations of safety, in recent years Western and NATO leaders have been steadily acting in violation of this understanding to an alarming extent, and this continues to get worse.

All mature democracies are supposed to have in place in-built mechanisms and institutions of correcting serious mistakes but in the case of this biggest of all dangers these do not appear to have worked at all and do not appear to be working at all.

The result is that in terms of what can lead to a direct confrontation of USA/NATO with Russia, one red line after another has been relentlessly crossed with incredible irresponsibility, imposing unacceptably high risks not just on these countries and regions but on the entire world as the phenomenon of nuclear winter spares no one.

The very fact that several red lines were drawn by prominent establishment leaders and

diplomats implies that the dangers relating to these were well understood and established.



Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and U.S. President Ronald Reagan signed a landmark nuclear arms control treaty in 1987. (Photo: White House Photographic Office/National Archives and Records Administration)

To trace the history of these red lines very briefly, at the time of the break-up of the Soviet Union and the unification of Germany, top Western leaders had promised to Gorbachev that NATO would not expand eastwards even an inch. The very fact that such a promise was made implies that the high sensitivity of Russia on this issue was well understood by senior Western leaders and diplomats at that time.

However what actually happened was that over the next several years, in glaring violation of this promise, NATO expanded eastwards relentlessly and for hundreds of miles. In addition weapons and missile systems capable of inflicting great destruction on Russia were installed very close to the Russian border in the territory of new NATO members. This process of relentless eastward expansion was opposed by a very large number of senior western diplomats, academics and experts but to no avail.

In 2008 a new danger point in this escalation appeared when it was announced that NATO membership was open also for Ukraine and Georgia. Again several Western experts and even some prominent leaders warned that this would escalate tensions greatly but again these concerns were ignored.

Image: Viktor Yanukovych



The next high escalation point came in 2014 when the USA and close allies instigated a coup which led to the ouster of the democratically-elected leadership in Ukraine and its replacement by rulers committed to pursuing anti-Russian policies, a situation that has more or less continued since then.

The new regimes took several policy decisions against ethnic Russian citizens of Ukraine and against those parts of eastern Ukraine where they are more highly concentrated. Several thousand people died in this violence. The Minsk Accords with the mediation of some western countries were supposed to sort out these problems, but could not, as some involved leaders of these Western countries themselves admitted later openly that the accords were only meant to give time to Ukraine to collect arms etc. to prepare better for war.

As this violence and attacks were intensified in early 2022 and at this point Russia invaded.

Within weeks of the invasion with the mediation of Turkey an effort to achieve ceasefire and peace reached an advanced stage but the USA and its closest ally Britain pulled Ukraine back from the peace settlement at the last stage following a surprise visit of **Prime Minister Boris Johnson** to Ukraine.

The USA had placed several restrictions on arms supply to Ukraine but one after the other these were withdrawn. First it was agreed that M1 Abrams tanks will not be given to Ukraine but later these were provided.

It was first stated that F16 fighter jets will not be provided to Ukraine but later US allies were asked to provide these to Ukraine.

Similar first cluster ammunition were refused but provided later. More important, earlier long-range missiles like ATACMS were denied but provided later.

Earlier permission was not given to Ukraine by the USA to use USA-supplied weapon systems to strike the interior of Russia but later this permission was more or less given, although some conditions may still be attached to this.

The latest debate is on sending US military contractors to Ukraine and there are indications that this is also likely to be finalized soon.

The USA has recently signed a 10-year bilateral security agreement with Ukraine. More control has been passed on to NATO by the USA for actions relating to helping the Ukraine war effort in various ways. The NATO leadership is stated to be taking steps to create a bridge to Ukraine's future membership of NATO.

Image: Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy meets French President Emmanuel Macron during a state visit to France, 17 June 2019. (Source: President.gov.ua)



Leaders of several other Western countries and NATO member countries have also been making escalatory announcements and provocative statement. French President Macron was the first to say that his country may be willing to send its soldiers to fight in Ukraine.

Clearly this is a very long list of various red lines being crossed one after the other. It appears that President Biden in particular has been extremely hawkish in escalating tensions and confrontation while discouraging early ceasefire and peace.

However there is no doubt that early peace and ceasefire in this war is extremely important for the peace and safety of the world. As there are various contentious issues, the best way forward is to have immediate ceasefire on the basis of the existing line of control, and then to sort out all contentious issues including territorial issues on the basis of peace negotiations which can take their own time but should not be allowed to break down.

On the other hand if the war continues and the USA/NATO continue to increase their involvement in it in various ways, then it may be only a matter of time when a more direct, a very direct confrontation or war between the NATO/USA and Russia can start with all the risk of this in turn escalating into a life-destroying nuclear war.

What exactly is NATO/USA trying to achieve? Despite all their help and weaponry the Ukraine war effort is in a mess just now. If on the other hand the USA/NATO succeed beyond their wildest hopes in creating a very adverse situation for Russia or an existential crisis, then Russia will use its nuclear weapons and then it will be a war which will burn both sides and the rest of the world with it. It is truly a strange situation. If all the aggressiveness of NATO/USA in siding with Ukraine does not succeed in improving the waning prospects of Ukraine, then Of course the US/NATO efforts are a failure. But if these succeed in a big way to result in a big threat for Russia with advanced weapons inflicting big damage to Moscow and other centers of Russia, then Russia is most likely to use nuclear weapons and then there may be no one left to write this most tragic and destructive episode of history.

Hence the crossing of successive red lines on the part of USA/NATO to risk a direct confrontation with Russia is clearly highly dangerous, irrational and unethical (in terms of endangering the safety of all people) and reflects incredibly narrow and irresponsible vision of present day USA/western/NATO leaders. What is even more surprising is that opposition parties, media and civil society have not been able to play the essential corrective role as would have been expected in mature democracies. This is at least partly because of highly undemocratic means being used to create false consensus on certain issues which are

considered to be of crucial importance by the top leadership or even the deep state. Such undemocratic means have led to the erosion and weakening of the corrective mechanisms and institutions so that they are unable to play their important role of correcting serious mistakes and policy distortions at a relatively early stage. By practicing such manipulation, democracies are acting in suicidal ways and losing the natural advantages they have over authoritarian systems. Only a big and sustained people's movement can now correct the serious policy distortions that have endangered the entire world.

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