

West Tells Global South ‘You Can’t be Neutral’ in Ukraine War: You Are Either with Us, or Against Us

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Global Research, February 23, 2023

[Geopolitical Economy Report](#) 20 February 2023

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

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

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The foreign ministers of the United States, Germany, and Ukraine have told the world “you can’t be neutral” in [NATO’s proxy war with Russia](#), recalling President George W. Bush’s infamous declaration, “You are either with us, or against us”.

In doing so, these Western officials are implicitly criticizing the vast majority of the countries on Earth, which are in the Global South, and which have maintained strict neutrality over the war.

In a [joint event](#) at the [Munich Security Conference](#) on February 18, Germany’s Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock declared,

“Neutrality is not an option, because then you are standing on the side of the aggressor”.

Baerbock emphasized that

“this is a plea we are also giving next week to the world again: Please take a side, a side for peace, a side for Ukraine, a side for the humanitarian international law, and these times this means also delivering ammunition so Ukraine can defend itself”.

The German foreign minister’s comments were echoed by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

“As Annalena [Baerbock] said, there is no neutral position... There is no balance”, Blinken said, stressing, “You really can’t be neutral”.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba praised the West for “stand[ing] for principles and rules”, while implying that the Global South is barbaric and lawless.

“We see an unprecedented unity of one part of the world that stands for principles and rules this world is based on, but we also see other parts of the world, some are neutral, which means effectively the support of Russia”, Kuleba said with disgust.

Baerbock had previously made it clear that the West is waging war on Russia, declaring at the Council of Europe in January, “[We are fighting a war against Russia](#)”.

The tone and context of the comments made by top Western officials at the Munich Security Conference on February 18 made it clear that they are angry with the Global South for [refusing to join their proxy war](#).

The foreign ministers of the US, Germany, and Ukraine told the world, “Neutrality is not an option” in the West’s proxy war against Russia.

They were implicitly criticizing the Global South, which is neutral, and represents 6+ billion people.

Full video: <https://t.co/99Q5Y6GM66> pic.twitter.com/gBSQm3CsLd

— Ben Norton (@BenjaminNorton) [February 20, 2023](#)

Vast majority of world population, located in Global South, is neutral in Ukraine proxy war

A day before this discussion at the Munich Security Conference, French state media outlet France 24 published an article complaining that, “Over the past year, most Global South countries adopted a position of studied [neutrality on the war in Ukraine](#)”.

In a deeply arrogant voice, the French state media outlet wrote dismissively that “what binds this diverse group [in the Global South] together is the quest for a ‘multipolar’ world order stacked against the ‘unipolar hegemony’ of the West”. It added smugly that this “also happens to be Russia’s favourite talking point”.

This condescending talking point has been a consistent refrain coming from Western governments and media outlets, criticizing the Global South for not taking NATO’s side.

The global population is roughly 8 billion people, and more than 6 billion live in countries that have been neutral in the Ukraine proxy war.

These include the world’s most populous countries, such as:

- China (1.41 billion people)
- India (1.38 billion people)
- Indonesia (276 million people)
- Pakistan (236 million people)
- Nigeria (219 million people)
- Brazil (216 million people)
- Bangladesh (170 million people)
- Mexico (129 million people)
- Ethiopia (105 million people)

- Egypt (104 million people)
- Vietnam (99 million people)
- Türkiye (85 million people)
- Thailand (67 million people)
- Tanzania (62 million people)
- South Africa (61 million people)
- Kenya (48 million people)
- Argentina (46 million people)
- Algeria (45 million people)
- Sudan (45 million people)
- Uganda (43 million people)
- Iraq (42 million people)
- Morocco (37 million people)
- Uzbekistan (36 million people)
- Saudi Arabia (34 million people)

As [Geopolitical Economy previously reported](#), two former US diplomats published an article in Newsweek in September admitting, “[Nearly 90 Percent of the World Isn’t Following Us on Ukraine](#)”. They wrote:

While the United States and its closest allies in Europe and Asia have imposed tough economic sanctions on Moscow, 87 percent of the world’s population has declined to follow us. Economic sanctions have united our adversaries in shared resistance.

Less predictably, the outbreak of Cold War II has also led countries that were once partners or non-aligned to become increasingly multi-aligned.

This global divergence is especially clear when one looks at a map of which countries have imposed sanctions on Russia.

These nations only represent a bit over 1 billion people: the United States, Canada, Britain, European Union, Australia, South Korea, and Japan (the last two of which have been militarily occupied by the US for decades).

Russia commonly refers to this bloc as the “collective West”, and their comparatively wealth population as the “golden billion” that has benefited from the economic exploitation inherent in the imperialist world-system.

The countries in yellow have sanctioned Russia. The countries in gray have not sanctioned Russia. pic.twitter.com/Omd8fPxOoB

— Ollie Vargas (@OllieVargas79) [March 25, 2022](#)

[Geopolitical Economy previously cited](#) an article published in March 2022 by British newspaper The Guardian, titled “[Cold war echoes as African leaders resist criticising Putin’s war](#)”, which lamented that “Many remember Moscow’s support for liberation from colonial rule, and a strong anti-imperialist feeling remains”.

The publication noted with anger that most African nations were “calling for peace but

blaming Nato's eastward expansion for the war, complaining of western 'double standards' and resisting all calls to criticise Russia".

Today, almost all African countries are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, and are decidedly neutral.

Western attacks on the Non-Aligned Movement

This Western narrative that Global South countries are not actually neutral goes back to the First Cold War.

In 1961, leftist leaders of India, Ghana, Egypt, Indonesia, and Yugoslavia formed the Non-Aligned Movement. This bloc represented the majority of the world population and consisted of countries, largely in the Global South, that opposed colonialism and imperialism and did not want to participate in the cold war. They sought to build a truly multipolar world, not a bipolar one.

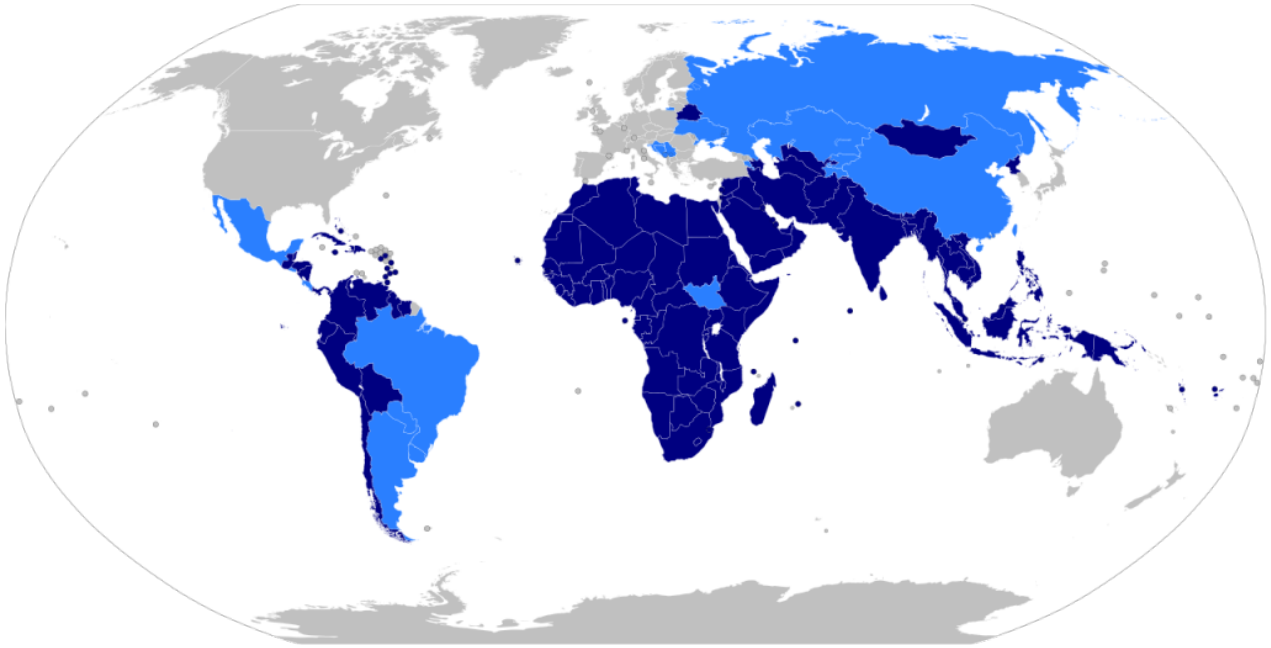
Because the Non-Aligned Movement was led by socialists (India's Jawaharlal Nehru, Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, Indonesia's Sukarno, and Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito), the United States and its cold war allies attacked the movement and claimed that being non-aligned really meant being a secret supporter of the Soviet-led communist bloc.

The CIA backed a coup against Nkrumah in Ghana in 1966. The year before, the CIA sponsored a coup against Sukarno in Indonesia (and subsequently supported the genocide carried out by US-backed right-wing dictator Suharto, who killed between 1 and 3 million leftists). The United States also repeatedly tried to overthrow Nasser, but failed.

Western imperialist powers have long adopted this George W. Bush-esque position, that any country that did not actively support them was against them.

Ukraine itself had been an observer state in the Non-Aligned Movement. In 2010, the government of democratically elected President Viktor Yanukovich voted to officially declare Ukraine non-aligned.

But in February 2014, the [United States sponsored a coup d'état in Ukraine](#), which overthrew Yanukovich and installed a pro-Western regime. Soon after the violent putsch, Kiev officially [dropped its non-aligned status](#) and declared its intention to join the US-led NATO military alliance.



A map of Non-Aligned Movement members (dark blue) and observer states (light blue)

Global South countries condemn Russian invasion, but blame Western aggression and maintain neutrality

The misleading comments by Blinken, Baerbock, and Kuleba claiming the Global South is not actually neutral about Ukraine are objectively false. But this doesn't mean that all of these Global South countries support Russia's war.

Many countries in the Global South have condemned the Russian invasion.

On March 2, 2022, a week after Russia sent its troops into Ukraine, the majority of member states of the United Nations did vote to condemn the invasion, including many countries in the Global South.

However, Eritrea, the DPRK, Syria, and Belarus voted against the resolution, and 35 member states abstained, including massive countries like China and India (which together have nearly 3 billion people), as well as Pakistan, South Africa, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Mozambique, and Lao.

Then in April, the General Assembly held another vote, this time to expel Russia from the UN Human Rights Council.

There was less support for this resolution, with 93 votes in favor.

58 countries abstained, such as India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan.

24 countries voted against the measure, including China, Iran, Algeria, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Cuba, Ethiopia, Mali, Laos, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.

URGENT□

The UN General Assembly votes to suspend Russia's membership in the UN Human Rights Council [@UN_HRC](#)

In favor: 93

Abstained: 58

Against: 24 pic.twitter.com/6EavdZJspc

— UN News (@UN_News_Centre) [April 7, 2022](#)

The Western bloc wants the world to believe there are only two options: aligning with it, or opposing it.

But most countries on Earth, representing the vast majority of the world's population, in the Global South, truly are neutral.

NATO is simply frustrated that 87% of the planet won't join its war efforts.

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Featured image: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba condemn neutrality at the Munich Security Conference on February 18, 2023 (Source: BR24 via GER)

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