

Why Most of the World Isn't on Board with the NATO-Russia War

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As the war in Ukraine drags on into its second year, [protest demonstrations](#) have been taking place in major European cities. They express the growing sentiment that the people are tired of the protracted conflict and fearful of what could come should the war continue even longer. Memories of the catastrophic world wars that ravaged Europe in the first half of the last century and the terrible threat of nuclear annihilation that divided the continent in the second half of the century form the traumatic foundation from which Europeans are voicing their aversion to this conflict, which has the potential to spiral out of control and bring a major war to Europe and the world again.

Broad Opposition to War

There have been [protest demonstrations](#) occurring in Germany, France, the Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Great Britain, Belgium, Austria, Italy, Albania, Moldova, and others. European protests surrounding the anniversary of the start of the conflict notably span the Left-Right spectrum in opposing US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) imperialism as well as the economic hardships that have befallen ordinary Europeans against the backdrop of sanctions on Russia and the funding of Ukraine.

Italian port workers aligned with the Left [protested in Genoa](#) specifically to resist the use of Italian ports to supply arms deliveries to Ukraine. Meanwhile [in France](#), demonstrations organized by the right-wing Les Patriotes party in various locations across the country called for France's withdrawal from both NATO and the European Union.

In all cases, the people on the streets at these events identify involvement in the war as harmful to general economic well-being and have been expressing frustration with their countries' acquiescence to these intergovernmental and supranational organizations in fueling the violence while simultaneously discouraging dialogue. Feelings of skepticism toward NATO, the European Union, and the United States have become increasingly vocal in

Europe due to the way that western countries are handling the war. In the minds of many Europeans, their governments are recklessly following the will of Washington, which could lead them into a serious escalation to a wider war.

German Memory

Germany suffered tremendously during the two World Wars and continued to endure the pressures of division and foreign occupation during the Cold War. A century of pain and turmoil brought about by militarism and intervention still informs the collective consciousness of the country. As part of the anniversary protests, thousands of people gathered around the iconic Brandenburg Gate in Berlin for an event called the "[Uprising for Peace](#)," organized by prominent Left party member Sahra Wagenknecht and the feminist journalist Alice Schwarzer. The rally was a show of support for a "manifesto for peace," which had already received well over half a million signatures by the time of the rally. It calls for the end of military exports to Ukraine and for negotiations between Kyiv and Moscow. Demonstrations have also taken place in Nuremberg (in response to the German government's plan to send tanks to Ukraine), in Munich (during the Munich Security Conference), and outside of the prominent US air base in Ramstein where important matters regarding the Ukraine conflict are discussed among Western leaders.

At the [rally in Nuremberg](#), one demonstrator recalled the historical record, explaining that if Germany gets involved in another war with Russia, then "based on history, it is the worst sign that we can send." He emphasized that "no war must go through Germany, neither with arms deliveries nor anything else, because otherwise, Germany will be in the middle of it again."

The last time war broke out in Europe between the two countries, it was one of the most catastrophic events in human history. This view echoes the glimmer of hope from just a few months before the start of Russia's invasion that the [completion of the Nord Stream 2](#) pipeline could have strengthened ties and prevented conflict in Europe, especially with regard to Russia and Germany. Of course, the mysterious destruction of Nord Stream a year later and the report by [Seymour Hersh](#) identifying US and allied hands in the sabotage mission completely turned that hope on its head. Those who strive for peace and an end to the bloodshed are understandably disheartened, yet they are motivated to vocally speak out to European leaders to push for peace.

Across the Atlantic and Beyond

These gatherings have run parallel to the [Rage Against the War Machine](#) rally in Washington, DC, where Americans protested against the US's funding and arming of Ukraine as well as the diplomatic negligence in preventing the negotiation of an end to the fighting. Those speaking and demonstrating against US involvement in Ukraine have parallel grievances toward their government and echo those in Europe.

Voices spanning the political spectrum from socialists to libertarians have found common ground in opposing the many rounds of weapons packages and financial aid to Ukraine, as well as the lack of diplomatic responsibility on the part of Secretary of State Antony Blinken in communicating with his counterpart, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov. Since the rally, President Joe Biden has included \$6 billion in Ukraine and NATO funding as part of his \$842 billion [defense-budget](#) request for 2024. Meanwhile, Blinken [met briefly with Lavrov](#) on the sidelines of a G20 meeting in New Delhi with no tangible progress on the subject of

ending hostilities in Ukraine. While hopes from the American side remain dim, perhaps the protests in Europe may influence decisions at the levels of leadership in their respective countries.

The West's commitment to Ukraine has also struck opposition from other regions. At this year's [Munich Security Conference](#), leaders from non-Western countries expressed the necessity of finding peaceful solutions. Brazil's foreign minister Mauro Viera called upon the world to "build the possibility of a solution," while Colombia's vice president Francia Marquez said, "We don't want to go on discussing who will be the winner or the loser of a war. We are all losers, and, in the end, it is humankind that loses everything."

Namibia's prime minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila stressed the waste of money and resources in the name of hostility which "could be better utilized to promote development in Ukraine, in Africa, in Asia, in other places, in Europe itself, where many people are experiencing hardships." China went so far as to outline a [political settlement](#) to the Ukraine crisis on the anniversary of the invasion.

These statements and efforts show their acknowledgment of the much poorer state of affairs the world finds itself in as the war drags on. The Russian war in Ukraine must come to an end one day, and more people around the world are demanding a solution now.

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