

Everyone Loses in the Conflict Over Ukraine

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Today, the dangers of military escalation are beyond description.

What is now happening in Ukraine has serious geopolitical implications. It could lead us into a World War III scenario.

It is important that a peace process be initiated with a view to preventing escalation.

Global Research condemns Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

A Bilateral Peace Agreement is required.

When two scorpions are in a bottle, they both lose. This is the preventable danger that is growing daily with no end game in sight between the two nuclear superpowers led by dictator Vladimir Putin and de facto sole decider Joe Biden.

Putin’s first argument is Washington invented the model of aggressive, illegal invasions, and destruction of distant countries, that never threatened U.S. security.

Millions have died, been injured, and sickened in defenseless countries attacked by U.S. armed forces. George W. Bush and Dick Cheney killed over a million innocent Iraqis and devastated the country in so many ways that scholars called it a “sociocide.”

Putin’s second argument is that Russia is being threatened on its sensitive western border which had been invaded twice by Germany and caused the loss of 50 million Russian lives.

Soon after the Soviet Union collapsed the West’s military alliance against Russia began moving east. Under Bill Clinton, NATO (The North Atlantic Treaty Organization) signed up Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in 1999, leading to major arms sales by the U.S.

giant munitions corporations.

More recently, Putin sees U.S. soldiers in these countries, ever closer U.S. missile launchers, U.S.-led joint naval exercises in the Baltic Sea, and intimations that Ukraine and Georgia could soon join NATO. Imagine if the Russians were to have such a military presence around the U.S. borders.

Even often hawkish New York Times columnists – Thomas Friedman and Bret Stephens – made this point this week about the brazen U.S. history of military hypocrisy while tearing into Putin. Stephens brought up the Monroe Doctrine over the entire Western Hemisphere in raising repeatedly the question, “Who are We?”

The chess game between Russia and the West has become more deadly with Putin’s military moves followed by immediate Western sanctions against some Russian banks and oligarchs close to Putin.

Travel bans and freezing the completion of the second major natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany are in place with promises of much more severe economic retaliation by Biden.

These sanctions can become a two-way street. Western Europe needs Russian oil and gas, Russian wheat, and essential Russian minerals such as lithium, cobalt, and nickel.

Sanctions against Russia will soon boomerang in terms of higher oil and gas prices for Europeans and Americans, more inflation, worsening supply chains, and the dreaded “economic uncertainty” afflicting stock markets and consumer spending.

The corporate global economy gave us interdependence on other nations instead of domestic self-reliance under the framework of corporate-managed free trade agreements.

So how many billions of dollars in costs and a weakened economy will Joe Biden tolerate as the price of anti-Putin sanctions that will blowback on the American people?

How much suffering will he tolerate being inflicted on the long-suffering Russian people? What will be the impact on the civilian population of more severe sanctions? And who is he to talk as if he doesn’t have to be authorized by Congress to go further into this state of belligerence, short of sending soldiers, which he said he would not do?

Is Congress to be left as a cheerleader, washing its hands of its constitutional oversight and foreign policy duties?

Also, watch Republicans and Democrats in Congress unify to whoop through more money for the bloated military budget as pointed out by military analyst, Michael Klare.

What energy will be left for Biden’s pending “Build Back Better” infrastructure, social safety net, and climate crisis legislation?

In recent weeks, the State Department said it recognizes Russia’s legitimate security concerns but not its expansionism. Well, what is wrong with a ceasefire followed by support for a treaty “guaranteeing neutrality for Ukraine similar to the enforced neutrality for Austria since the Cold War’s early years,” as Nation publisher and Russia specialist Katrina Vanden Heuvel urged. (See: Katrina vanden Heuvel’s Washington Post article and her recent Nation

piece).

Putin, unable to get over the breakup of the Soviet Union probably has imperial ambitions to dominate in Russia's backyard. Biden has inherited and accepted the U.S. Empire's ambitions in many other nation's backyards.

Events have polarized this conflict over Ukraine which is not a security interest for the U.S., into two dominant egos – Putin and Biden – neither of whom want to appear weak or to back down.

This is a dangerous recipe for an out-of-control escalation, much as it was in the lead-up to World War I. Neither the people nor the parliaments mattered then as seems to be the case today.

Putin isn't likely to make a cost-benefit assessment of each day's militarism. But Biden better do so. Otherwise, he will be managed by Putin's daily moves, instead of insisting on serious negotiations.

The Minsk II Peace Accords of February 2015 brokered by Germany, France, and the United Nations, that Russia and Ukraine agreed to before falling apart due to disagreements over who should take the first steps still makes for a useful framework.

It is too late to revisit the accords to stop the invasion but it should be proposed to introduce a climate for waging peace.

Already, New York Governor Kathy Hochul has spoken about an increase in cyberattacks and ransomware demands in her state in recent weeks.

Has Biden put that rising certainty in his self-described decades-long foreign policy expertise?

Watch out for what you can't stop, Joe.

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