

How Both Putin and Biden Bungled in Ukraine

By [Eric Zuesse](#)

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Vladimir Putin’s repeatedly pre-announced goals for Ukraine, and for his invasion of Ukraine, consistently contained two main points:

(1) to permanently block Ukrainian membership for Ukraine in the anti-Russian military alliance NATO; and, (2) to “denazify” Ukraine.

On 21 March, AP reported that [“Zelenskyy said that Kyiv will be ready to discuss the status of Crimea and the eastern Donbas region held by Russian-backed separatists after a cease-fire and steps toward providing security guarantees.”](#)

This milestone was the very first time that Ukraine’s President Zelensky said that there might be circumstances under which “the status of Crimea and the eastern Donbas region held by Russian-backed separatists” could even *possibly* be negotiated by Ukraine’s government.

All Ukrainian-government leaders, after [U.S. President Barack Obama perpetrated in Ukraine a violent coup](#) which overthrew Ukraine’s [democratically elected](#) and [neutralist](#) President, and installed a U.S.-controlled [rabidly anti-Russian government](#) in Ukraine, in February 2014, have said that Ukraine will *never* consider the status of those two former regions of Ukraine to be negotiable — that they’re both parts of Ukraine, *regardless* of what the residents there want (which, clearly and overwhelmingly, *after* that coup, has been NOT to be ruled by that [regime](#)). (It definitely was a [coup](#) — NOT an authentic revolution — that installed [it](#).)

So: Zelensky was *now* saying that “after a cease-fire and steps toward providing security guarantees,” Zelensky would negotiate “the status of Crimea and the eastern Donbas region held by Russian-backed separatists.”

This was the first major change-in-position by EITHER side in the present conflict; and the fact that it was being made by Ukraine was indisputable proof that militarily Russia was winning the war, up to that moment in time. (Subsequently, however, the war-situation is far less clear; Ukraine might be winning it.)

The deeper, and continuing, *deadlock* is (2) denazification of Ukraine.

In my news-report on March 21, [“Why The Question Of Which Side Is ‘nazi’ Blocks Any Peace Settlement”](#), was explained WHY that issue is so extremely unlikely to be able to be agreed-upon between Zelensky and Putin — and, therefore, why Russia will either have to accept defeat in this war, or else defeat Ukraine 100% militarily before there will be any capitulation by Ukraine in this conflict.

However, even *if* Russia defeats Ukraine in this war, Russia’s *own* national-security situation (which is the ultimate reason that can justify ANY nation’s participation in *any* war) will be substantially *reduced* by the war, for the following reasons:

On March 14th, [Chris Hedges very realistically summed up the war-situation \(both present and future\) as follows](#):

The decision [by Biden) to destroy the Russian economy, to turn the Ukrainian war into a quagmire for Russia and topple the regime of Vladimir Putin will open a Pandora’s box of evils. Massive social engineering — look at Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya or Vietnam — has its own centrifugal force. It destroys those who play God.

The Ukrainian war has silenced the last vestiges of the Left. Nearly everyone has giddily signed on for the great crusade against the latest embodiment of evil, Vladimir Putin, who, like all our enemies, has become the new Hitler.

The United States will give \$13.6 billion in military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, with the Biden administration authorizing an additional \$200 million in military assistance. The 5,000-strong EU rapid deployment force, the recruitment of all Eastern Europe, including Ukraine, into NATO, the reconfiguration of former Soviet bloc militaries to NATO weapons and technology have all been fast tracked.

Germany, for the first time since World War II, is massively rearming. It has lifted its ban on exporting weapons. Its new military budget is twice the amount of the old budget, with promises to raise the budget to more than 2 percent of GDP, which would move its military from the seventh largest in the world to the third, behind China and the United States.

NATO battlegroups are being doubled in size in the Baltic states to more than 6,000 troops. Battlegroups will be sent to Romania and Slovakia. Washington will double the number of U.S. troops stationed in Poland to 9,000. Sweden and Finland are considering dropping their neutral status to integrate with NATO.

This is a recipe for global war.

On April 2nd, Russia’s RT bannered [“Finland can join NATO without referendum – president”](#), and reported:

The president of Finland, which borders Russia, has claimed that the widespread support for NATO membership expressed in recent opinion polls could pave the way for joining the US-led military bloc without a referendum. The attitude of the Finns towards NATO membership took a U-turn following Moscow’s attack on Ukraine. ...

Support for NATO membership reached a record-high 62% in Finland this month,

according to a poll by Yle. A poll commissioned by Helsingin Sanomat and released this week shows that 61% of Finns want their country to join the bloc.

This indicates a complete reversal of public opinion after Moscow sent its forces into Ukraine – according to Yle, previous polls showed that Finns were against NATO membership.

Putin's goal to block Ukrainian membership for Ukraine was part of his *broader* goal to *shrink* NATO (its membership) by reversing NATO's inclusion of the half of its member-countries that were added *after* 1991, which was when the Cold War ended on the Soviet Union's side but [secretly continued on the American side, and NATO therefore has expanded \(even after the supposed end of the Cold War on — also — America's side\) to include in NATO virtually all European countries right up to Russia's western border.](#) (This produces a Cuban-Missile-Crisis-in-reverse crisis now, but one which will be far longer and more drawn-out.)

On April 3rd, [NATO invited not only Finland but also Sweden \(both being officially neutral during the Cold War till now\) to become members.](#)

Consequently: Russia's precipitate invasion of Ukraine, which was intended by Putin to *shrink* NATO, might instead lead to *further expansion* of NATO — even *if* Russia will win the war in Ukraine.

This is *not*, however, to say that Putin made the wrong decision to invade Ukraine, but that he did it *at the wrong time*. Biden had forced him to invade in order for Putin to prevent American nuclear missiles from ultimately becoming installed into Ukraine just a 5-minute flight-time away from nuking Moscow and thereby ([in post-2006 U.S. strategic thinking](#)) able to ['win' a U.S.-planned World War III by blitz-invading Russia so fast as to disable Russia's entire retaliatory capability.](#)

I had therefore expected Putin to invade Ukraine, but *not* before Zelensky would finally unleash the 60,000 Ukrainian troops on the Ukraine-Donbass contact-line (border) for them to race into its former Donbass region in order to [slaughter](#) its [people](#) (who had voted [over 90%](#) for the [democratically elected](#) and [internationally neutralist](#) Ukrainian President whom [Obama](#) had [overthrown](#)) and to retake its land — *restore* it to Ukraine. If Putin had done that (*waited*, in order NOT to have *started* this war), then though many of the residents in Donbass would have been killed, and the war there would have been devastating, Russia would have been able to respond immediately and send its troops in within no more than a week to conquer and destroy almost all of those 60,000 invading Ukrainian troops (plus their civilian hostages or "human shields" in Donbass), and the international "optics" of the situation would then have been vastly less bad for Russia than has resulted from Russia's having invaded *first* — invaded "preemptively." Perhaps, in *that* situation, NATO's *own* future would be its shrinkage, *instead of* (as now seems to be not only possible but even likely) its *accelerated* expansion. (In addition, the international image then of Zelensky would now be vastly worse, because he would have been the first to invade.)

Consequently, Putin invaded *at the wrong time*.

He clearly was scared by what Biden and NATO were doing in this matter, by their backing Ukraine all the way, rushing weapons into Ukraine — continuing [the Obama-installed coup-regime of Ukraine](#) as being an American vassal-nation. On December 9th of 2021, Reuters

headlined [“Russia keeps tensions high over Ukraine”](#) and (styled as a news-report no commentary) said “Moscow has an interest in keeping tensions high.” On December 15th they bannered [“Russia hands proposals to U.S. on security guarantees”](#), which were [demands \(Putin’s “red lines”\)](#), *not* ‘proposals’.

On December 17th *IBT* bannered [“EU threatens Russia sanctions as NATO backs Ukraine”](#), and reported that NATO and almost all of the EU rejected Russia’s demands. NATO’s chief emphasized Russia would have no say, whatsoever, on whether or not Ukraine becomes a NATO member. RT headlined December 20th, [“Russia promises ‘military response’ to any further NATO expansion.”](#) Then, on the 26th, it was a [“‘life-and-death’ issue for Russia”](#). (It was — and is — an “*existential*” issue, as viewed by the Russian people, and has been referred-to as such by Putin.)

However, Biden himself has likewise vastly miscalculated in this matter, because of reasons that were well-described by Alasdair Macleod in his March 31st article [“Edging Towards A Gold Standard”](#). The response by Biden (and by the leaders of all of America’s vassal-nations) to impose upon Russia the sanctions that now have been imposed, will harm the entire world’s economy — not ONLY Russia’s — and could very well turn out to benefit greatly Russia’s economy; but, definitely, NOT the economies of the nations that are *cooperating* with those sanctions.

On the other hand, if the allegations that were published in CNN’s April 3rd [“Bodies of ‘executed people’ strewn across street in Bucha as Ukraine accuses Russia of war crimes”](#) turn out to be true, then Putin’s own reputation will be so negatively affected that he will lose this global conflict personally, even if Russia itself turns out to have won it. If that article is true, then he might even end up being prosecuted as an international war-criminal (as George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden — and Ukraine’s [post-coup leaders](#) Yatsenyuk, Poroshenko, and Zelensky — definitely *ought* to be, but never *will* be).

Read updates:



[Update: How Both Putin and Biden Bungled in Ukraine. Analysis of the Bucha Tragedy](#)

By [Eric Zuesse](#), April 06, 2022

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Investigative historian Eric Zuesse’s next book (soon to be published) will be AMERICA’S EMPIRE OF EVIL: Hitler’s Posthumous Victory, and Why the Social Sciences Need to Change. It’s about how America took over the world after World War II in order to enslave it to U.S.-and-allied billionaires. Their cartels extract the world’s wealth by control of not only their ‘news’ media but the social ‘sciences’ — duping the public.

He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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