

NATO Expansion Is a Blunder of Epic Proportions

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The whole war in Ukraine could and should have been avoided. Russia had simple demands:

- Don’t join NATO
- Be Neutral
- Recognize Crimea, a part of Russia

But it seems NATO, dominated by the United States wanted this war.

Just like Afghanistan invasion by USSR in 1979, they want to repeat that in Ukraine to weaken Russia. So, they are waging a proxy war using poor people of Ukraine as pawns. Not only provoking Russia by expanding NATO closer and closer to Russia’s eastern border has created this war resulting in global food and oil shortage affecting millions of poor people around the world, but it has brought the world closer to nuclear World War-III.

It is an utterly irresponsible policy by United States and its NATO allies. There was no need for this. Russia’s invasion is a very unfortunate act but NATO’s arrogant policy towards Russia over the past quarter-century bears a major responsibility for this terrible war.

In 1990, the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev agreed to let both Germany unify provided America would not expand NATO one inch eastward towards Russia beyond the territory of East Germany.

James Baker, US Secretary of State promised. So, both east and west Germany were unified while USSR collapsed. But soon after, United States broke that promise by expanding NATO towards Russia. Bill Clinton and George Bush Jr. both kept expanding NATO by including former Warsaw Pact countries into NATO. In 1991, Bill Clinton added Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia into NATO. In 2004, George Bush Jr. welcomed seven more countries- Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia-to become NATO members.

In 1990, there were 17 countries in NATO. Today, there are 30. And now, they want to add Ukraine which is right on Russia's eastern border. Naturally Russia has been provoked.

Ukraine has no strategic value for the United States except to encircle Russia.

It is very unfortunate that Ukraine War is going on. Ukrainians are suffering a horrible situation. Thousands of Ukrainians and Russian soldiers are dying. The Russian invasion is brutal and horrible. Ukraine is being destroyed.

But could this horrible war had been avoided? Of course, yes.

Russia had simple demands: "Don't join NATO and be a neutral country." This was a fair demand as Ukraine is right on Russia's eastern border.

Russia rightly does not want a militarized Ukraine on its border which it will be if it joined NATO. NATO is a military organization created on April 4, 1949, to counter the "Russian threat" as perceived by the Truman administration during the beginning of the cold war. The cold war was the creation of Truman administration.

By the way, unlike what the United States and European Union claim, NATO is not a defensive organization. It is an offensive military pact with a purpose of controlling and dominating the world.

It has been involved in many wars such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Syria, or Libya. It is not a benign, benevolent organization as its members and its leader the USA want the world to believe.

As NATO was created to counter the "USSR Threat", once USSR collapsed in 1989-90, NATO's existence became obsolete, and soon it should have been dissolved. The so-called Russian threat was no more. But not only NATO remained but it started expanding eastward encircling Russia.

If Ukraine joined NATO, soon NATO will install offensive missiles and other offensive weapons there directed against Russia. No major country would allow that. This was a "red line" drawn by Russia...rightly so. We have had the example of Cuba allowing Russian nuclear weapons installed in its territory in 1962. What happened? America threatened Russia with military strike if it didn't remove those weapons. Kennedy Administration risked a nuclear third world war if Russia did not remove these weapons. Russia wisely complied.

The same way, would America allow Russia to have a military pact with Mexico? Would it allow Russia to put offensive weapons in Mexico near American border? Of course not.

America even has the so-called Monroe Doctrine of 1823 which held that "Any intervention in the political affairs in the Americas (North and South America) by foreign powers was a potentially hostile act against the U.S." That meant "No interfering in the internal affairs of these countries. If that happens, then United States will fight back. These countries are in the sphere of influence of the United States."

Would China allow Pakistan or Mongolia to have a military pact with USA resulting in offensive weapons directed against China in these countries? Absolutely not.

Would India allow China to have a military pact with Nepal or Bhutan? No; That will be a red line for India. United States, China or India will act militarily if put into such situations. But this is what United States, and its NATO member allies are trying to do against Russia.

Militarizing Ukraine was a red line for Russia. But America and the NATO countries poked the Russian bear in the eyes by constantly expanding the NATO towards Russia's border. They have been doing that for many years.

On June 26, 1997, some 50 prominent foreign policy experts that included former Senators, retired military officers, diplomats, and academicians, sent an open letter to President Clinton outlining their opposition to NATO expansion, saying, "We believe that the current U.S. led effort to expand NATO...is a policy error of historic proportions". But to no avail. Bill Clinton went on to expanding NATO.

Many foreign policy experts warned against NATO expansion. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger wrote in Wall Street journal in 2014 following the annexation of Crimea pointing out that Ukraine cannot act as an outpost for either party but rather should act as a bridge between the West and Russia. He said that Ukraine is an inalienable part of Russia's history and identity—similar but in varying degrees to what Russian president Vladimir Putin claimed in his speech before the so-called 'military operation' in Ukraine.

"To treat Ukraine as part of an East-West confrontation would scuttle for decades any prospect to bring Russia and the West—especially Russia and Europe—into a cooperative international system," Kissinger opined in Wall Street Journal.

The highly knowledgeable Political Scientist and professor John Mearsheimer has rightly said:

"The United States and its European allies share most of the responsibility for the Ukraine crisis. The taproot of trouble is NATO expansion. For Putin, the illegal overthrow of Ukraine's democratically elected and pro-Russian president—which he rightly labelled a 'coup'—was the final straw."

NATO, led by the United States with its European surrogates have shown utter neglect and disregard for Russia's strategic interests and security by NATO's eastward expansion for two decades.

More than two decades ago, Western policy makers and Russian leaders were warning that NATO expansion was a bad idea, ending in a new cold war at best and a hot one at worst. George Kennan, the architect of America's containment policy during the cold war, perceptively warned in 1998 that NATO expansion was tragic mistake.

The Obama administration shockingly meddled in Ukraine's internal political affairs in 2013 and 2014 to help demonstrators overthrow Ukraine's democratically elected, pro-Russia president. That was a brazen provocation and it caused tension to pike. Moscow immediately responded by seizing and annexing Crimea, and a new cold war once again created by the United States had begun with a vengeance.

Ukraine even violated the 2014 Minsk agreement with Russia.

Former US Defense Secretary Robert Gates, in his 2014 memoirs conceded that “trying to bring Georgia and Ukraine into NATO was truly overreaching.” That expansion of NATO, he concluded, was a case of “recklessly ignoring what the Russians considered their own vital national interests.”

The famous linguistic scholar -turned-social/political commentator Noam Chomsky has called this Ukraine war America’s proxy war to the last Ukrainian, though he criticizes Russia’s brutal invasion. But he maintains that Russia was provoked into this invasion like John Mearsheimer. Biden’s overtures to Ukraine, according to Chomsky, inviting Zelenskyy and company to join NATO, were intended to provoke Russia to invade Ukraine.

By 2021, Kremlin’s patience and restraint had run dry. Moscow issued demands for security guarantees that included a draw-down of military forces already deployed in NATO’s eastern members. But with respect to Ukraine, the demand was absolutely clear and uncompromising: Ukraine should never receive membership invitation and NATO weapons and troops would never be deployed on Ukrainian soil. But West, led by the United States failed to provide those guarantees. So, Putin launched his devastating full-scale war.

Yes, Moscow’s cruel reaction is unfortunate. But did Putin have any other choice? He was provoked time and time again by the West. Except America and its European allies, no other country of the world in Asia (except Japan and Australia), Africa, Middle East (except Israel) or Latin America have joined the West and condemned Russia. China and India did not join the West. China even sided with Russia and India rightly stayed neutral.

The United States conveniently forgets how it reacted during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 when Russia deployed nuclear weapons in Cuba? The world at that time came very close to the nuclear third world war. Thanks to Khrushchev that he rightly backed out.

President Biden’s CIA director William J. Burns has been warning about the provocative effect of NATO expansion on Russia since 1995. When President Bill Clinton’s administration started accepting Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into NATO, burns warned that the decision was “premature at best, and needlessly provocative at worst.” He continued further, “As Russians stewed in their grievance and sense of disadvantage, a gathering storm of ‘stab in the back’ theories slowly swirled, leaving a mark on Russia’s relations with the West that would linger for decades.”

In 2008, Burns, then the American ambassador to Moscow, wrote to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice:

“Ukrainian entry into NATO is the brightest of all redlines for the Russian elite (not just Putin). In more than two and a half years of conversations with key Russian players, from Knuckle-draggers in the dark recesses of the Kremlin to Putin’s sharpest liberal critics, I have yet to find anyone who views Ukraine in NATO as anything other than a direct challenge to Russian interests.”

United States is addicted to wars everywhere. How many countries has Russia invaded and how many were invaded by the United States since World War-II? To keep its arms manufacturing industry going and to maintain its global hegemony, these wars are necessary. The so-called defense industry doles out millions of dollars for the reelection of America’s politicians. By creating wars, they payback their paymasters as in every direct or proxy war America engages in, these defense contractors make billions of dollars’ profit.

It is interesting to note that when Putin came to power, in 2000 he wanted to join the European Union and NATO. What a wonderful opportunity it would have been to unify the world! But NATO led by America and the European Union rejected the idea. Why? Is it because the United States needed an enemy to keep its arms manufacturing and selling to continue for enormous profits? If Russia became a friend, America would lose a huge block of European NATO member customers for its arms.

To justify these wars, America needs a boogeyman. Remember Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia, Assad in Syria, Gadhafi in Libya and now Putin in Russia. All American media always join in demonizing these “monsters”, toeing the government line. You will never find dissenting opinion in all our mainstream news media-TV, newspaper, or radio network.

History will note that Washington’s treatment of Russia in the decades following the demise of U.S.S.R. was a policy blunder of epic proportions. It was entirely predictable that NATO expansion towards Russia would ultimately lead to a tragic, dangerous, and perhaps violent breach of relations with Moscow. Many Russia experts warned of the likely consequences. But those warnings went unheeded by the Biden administration. The American people, the world and especially the Ukrainians are now paying the horrible cost of the United States’ myopic and arrogant foreign policy.

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