

Putin's Conundrum

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The primary purpose of the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) is to deceptively "rebrand" the offensive use of nuclear weapons as a justifiable act of defense. The new criteria for using these lethal WMD has been deliberately maligned with the clear intention of providing Washington with a green light for their use and proliferation. Accordingly, US foreign policy warhawks have established the institutional and ideological framework needed to launch a nuclear war without fear of legal reprisal. These arduous preparations were carried out with one objective in mind, to preserve America's steadily-eroding position in the global order through the application of extreme violence.

Vladimir Putin is worried. Very worried.

In a recent press conference, the Russian President expressed his concern that the United States might be planning a nuclear strike on Russia. Naturally, Putin did not state the matter in such crude terms, but his comments left little doubt that that's what he was talking about. Here's part of what he said:

The United States has a theory of a 'preventive strike'...Now they are developing a system for a 'disarming strike'. What does that mean? It means striking at control centres with modern high-tech weapons to destroy the opponent's ability to counterattack."

Why would Putin waste time on the various theories circulating among foreign policy wonks in the United States if he wasn't concerned that these ideas were actionable?

The only explanation is that Putin is worried, and the reason he is worried is because he knows that these ideas (preemption and 'disarming strike') hold-sway among the elite cadres of powerbrokers who decide these matters in Washington. **Putin probably realizes that there is a sizable constituency in Washington that support the use of nuclear weapons and who believe they are essential to preserving the "rules-based order". In short, Putin believes these ideas are "actionable" which is why he expressed concern.**

So, let's think about the point Putin is trying to make. He's saying that **the US tacitly supports a preemptive "first strike" policy**, that is, if the US feels sufficiently threatened, then it claims the right to launch nuclear missiles at an enemy whether that enemy has attacked the United States or not.

Does that sound reasonable to you?

And what about Russia; does Russia support the same policy?

No, it doesn't. **Russia's Nuclear Doctrine explicitly precludes the first use of nukes.** Russia will not launch a first strike. Period. **Russia will only use Nuclear weapons in retaliation and only in the event that the nation faces an 'existential threat'. In other words, Russia will only use nuclear weapons as a last resort.**

US Nuclear Doctrine is the polar opposite of Russia's because the US will not abandon its support for a first strike. And what's more troubling, is that US Doctrine has been so grossly expanded that could be construed to include almost anything. For example, **according to the recently-released Nuclear Posture Review(NPR), nuclear weapons can be used: "in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners."**

Chew on that for a minute. That could include anything from a serious threat to national security to the sudden emergence of economic rival. **Are we going to nuke Beijing because their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is projected to be bigger than America's within the decade?**

We can't answer that, but it certainly meets the NPR's grossly expanded criteria.

Can you see why Putin might be concerned about all this? Can you see why Biden's unwillingness to jettison the "first strike" policy might make Washington's adversaries a bit nervous? Can you see why these new watered-down standards for the use of nuclear weapons might send up red flags in Capitols around the world?

Putin wants people to know what's going on. That's why he's speaking-out at public venues. He wants everyone to know that **the United States no longer regards its nuclear arsenal as purely defensive. It is now seen as an essential instrument for preserving the "rules-based order".** Can you see that?

And this is just part of what Putin said in a very short press conference. He also said this:

Now they (the US) are developing a system for a 'disarming strike'. What does that mean? It means striking at control centres with modern high-tech weapons to destroy the opponent's ability to counterattack."

The "disarming strike" meme is all the rage among Washington's foreign policy warhawks. It is based on the idea that the US can knock-out enough of Russia's decision-centers and hardened missile sites to eliminate the threat of massive nuclear retaliation. And while it's true that the idea could wind up reducing a large part of the world to smoldering rubble; it's also true that the theory is supported by a powerful constituency that is determined to see their theories on low-yield "usable" nukes put into play. Like I said earlier, **there are powerful actors in the political establishment and deep state who would like to**

see the taboo on nuclear weapons lifted so they can be used in more situations and with greater frequency. This is from the World Socialist Web Site:

The Nuclear Posture Review, a department official stated, **“establishes a strategy that relies on nuclear weapons to deter all forms of strategic attack. This includes nuclear employment of any scale, and it includes high-consequence attacks of a strategic nature that use non-nuclear means.”**

(Note: So the US can use nukes on enemies that don't have nuclear weapons.)

The publication of the document was rapidly condemned by arms control experts. “The Biden administration’s unclassified Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) is, at heart, a terrifying document,” wrote the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).

“It not only keeps the world on a path of increasing nuclear risk, in many ways it increases that risk,” the UCS argued, by claiming that “the only viable U.S. response is to rebuild the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal, maintain an array of dangerous Cold War-era nuclear policies, and threaten the first use of nuclear weapons in a variety of scenarios.”

(Note: This is the path ‘we are already on.’)

This marks a significant development from Trump’s 2018 National Defense Strategy, which largely referred to the use of military force to secure economic interests in the negative—asserting that it was China that was doing so. While this was the clear implication of the 2018 document, **the definition of “national interests” advanced by the Pentagon’s 2022 document to include “economic prosperity” constitutes an even more open step toward advocating the doctrine that war is an acceptable means to secure economic aims.”**

(Note: So, I was right, we are going to nuke China for growing their economy!)

A section of the 2022 National Defense Strategy:

These documents, which were not seriously discussed in the US media, make clear the fundamental falsehood that the massive US military buildup this year is a response to “Russian aggression.” In reality, in the thinking of the White House and Pentagon war planners, **the massive increases in military spending and plans for war with China are created by “dramatic changes in geopolitics, technology, economics, and our environment.”**

These documents make clear that the United States sees the economic rise of China as an existential threat, to be responded to with the threat of military force. The United States sees the subjugation of Russia as a critical stepping stone toward the conflict with China.” ([“Pentagon national strategy document targets China”](#), Andre Damon, World Socialist Web Site)

Repeat: “These documents make clear that the United States sees the economic rise of China as an existential threat, to be responded to with the threat of military force.”

This fact—and it is a fact—should be fairly obvious to anyone that hasn’t been living under a

rock for the last decade. What it tells us is that **the United States is no longer competitive**. Western elites have run up \$31 trillion in National Debt, hollowed out America's industrial base, savaged their own Capital markets with endless debt-generating Ponzi-scams, and balanced the entire crooked system on a currency that is crumbling before our very eyes.

So how do western elites intend to preserve their grip on global power when the economy is built on a foundation of pure quicksand?

They're going use raw military force, relentless propaganda, and Mafia-like coercion. That's what they're going to do. They're are going to skip the diplomatic niceties and impose their will with an iron fist. Is there any doubt about that? Here's more from Putin:

The United States has a...concept of a preventive strike...We do not. Our Strategy talks about a retaliatory strike.... **But if a potential adversary believes it is possible to use the preventive strike theory...this still makes us think about the threat that such ideas...pose to us.**

"If [a country] doesn't use [nukes] first under any circumstances, it means that it won't be the second to use it either, because the possibility of using it in case of a nuclear strike on our territory will be sharply limited," [Putin said](#).

This sounds vaguer than it is. What Putin means is that **'if the US launches a massive nuclear attack on Russia, then Russia's ability to retaliate could be greatly compromised**. That is why Putin added this: "Perhaps we should think about using...their ideas about how to ensure their own security." In other words, **if "preemption" and "disarming strikes" are the only way to defend one's national security, then maybe Russia should follow Washington's example**. Putin was being sardonic, but his point is clear: 'If defending our own security requires that we engage in reckless and destabilizing behavior then, perhaps, that's what we should do.'

In any event, **you can understand Putin's dilemma. He does NOT support preemptive nuclear attacks, but—at the same time—he realizes that if he doesn't act preemptively, he might not be able to respond in the future. This is the conundrum he faces.**

In my opinion, the reason Putin has discussed this issue on two occasions in the last week, is because he really didn't think there was the remotest possibility that the US would attack a country that has the biggest nuclear arsenal in the world. He believed that US actions would be shaped by obsolete theories of Deterrence and Mutually Assured Destruction. But now, **he is beginning to realize that we have entered a Brave New World where calculations are based on more proactive theories that ignore the threat of retaliation because the perpetrators believe they can effectively "disarm" their adversary.**

And so, Putin is worried; he's genuinely worried. And his confused response ("Perhaps we should think about using...their ideas about how to ensure their own security.") suggests that he has not yet figured out what to do.

So the question is: What do you do? How can you defend your country when a nuclear-

armed superpower has decided that you are an obstacle that must be removed to achieve their own geopolitical ambitions? How do you stave off a civilization-ending attack when your enemy wholeheartedly believes that nuclear war is the only way he can preserve his dominant position in the global order?

It's a conundrum.

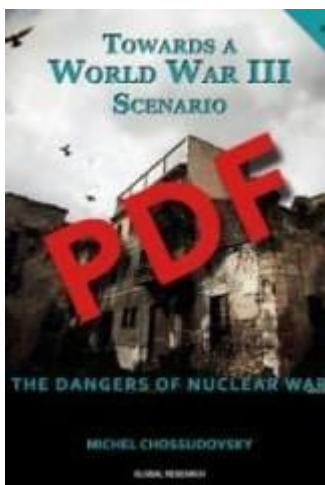
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Reviews

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–John McMurtry, Professor of Philosophy, Guelph University

"In a world where engineered, pre-emptive, or more fashionably "humanitarian" wars of aggression have become the norm, this challenging book may be our final wake-up call."

–Denis Halliday, Former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations

Michel Chossudovsky exposes the insanity of our privatized war machine. Iran is being targeted with nuclear weapons as part of a war agenda built on distortions and lies for the purpose of private profit. The real aims are oil, financial hegemony and global control. The price could be nuclear holocaust. When weapons become the hottest export of the world's only superpower, and diplomats work as salesmen for the defense industry, the whole world is recklessly endangered. If we must have a military, it belongs entirely in the public sector. No one should profit from mass death and destruction.

–Ellen Brown, author of 'Web of Debt' and president of the Public Banking Institute

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