

Ukraine: Let's Not Pull the Pin on the Grenade to See What Happens

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Global Research, June 05, 2023

[Mind Matters and Everything Else with Dr. Joseph Sansone](#) 2 June 2023

Region: [Europe](#)

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Allowing Ukraine to join NATO is akin to pulling the pin on a grenade and waiting to see what happens. The threat of Ukraine's admittance to NATO was one of the stated reasons that prompted Russia to invade Ukraine. Pro war advocates claimed this was nonsense and there was no plan to admit Ukraine into NATO. That claim was dubious at best.

Still, if there were discussions and negotiations taking place regarding Ukraine's admittance into NATO, that discussion ended when Russia invaded Ukraine. If Ukraine's admittance into NATO was one of the issues that caused the war to begin, threats to allow admittance would only prolong the war or end any future peace treaties. It became a moot point.

Well, that actually isn't true. While Russia and Ukraine are at war, there are those that are still advocating that Ukraine be admitted to NATO. A Neocon organization called the Atlantic Council just released an article discussing security options for Ukraine, including [admittance into NATO](#).

No, seriously.

It appears that those holding this view give absolutely no credence to NATO expansion as provocative rather than a deterrence. The Obama backed Ukrainian color revolution lead to the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014. It would appear that this was provocative rather than a deterrence. At the very least an equal focus on avoiding provocation should be employed.

The Atlantic Council argues its case for Ukraine joining NATO:

There is a strong case for Ukrainian membership in NATO. The most obvious argument is that deterrence based on assurances, partnerships, threat of sanctions, and military

assistance has failed Ukraine twice. For the long-term security of Europe, deterrence cannot be allowed to fail again. This is especially true with regard to a country that has sacrificed so much for its freedom. It has fulfilled most of the criteria of the Membership Action Plan, including the economic, political, and military requirements. Ukraine deserves NATO's full protection. With the guarantee of long-term security, Ukraine will be able to participate in any future negotiation with Russia with greater confidence. In addition, during the past fifteen months of conflict, Ukraine has built firm cultural, political, and security bridges with all NATO members and with the European Union. Importantly, NATO membership for Ukraine would not be a one-way street. Ukraine's military is one of the most capable and certainly the most battle tested in Europe. They are fully trained on a wide array of NATO munitions and thus interoperable with NATO forces. Their knowledge of how Russia fights would be of incalculable value to the alliance.

Let's unpack this paragraph starting with an examination of what exactly the 'deterrence' would be?. The deterrence would be military conflict. Article 5 of the NATO treaty essentially says an attack on one member of NATO is considered an attack on all. While it may be true that there is a little wiggle room in the wording that a military response is not required, it is a high probability, and not doing so would likely crumble the alliance. If the deterrence is a military response, then inclusion of Ukraine in NATO would be another provocative action. Furthermore, it creates a tripwire for escalation of any future military conflict.

At NATO's July summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, there are a few paths toward NATO membership for Ukraine being considered. One is to fast track membership immediately upon a ceasefire with Russia. There are other options that would not be so quick. There are also non NATO membership alliances being discussed. One is admittance into the European Union. The European Union does not have the defense clause that NATO has, but it does require aid and assistance by all means in their power in the event of military aggression. Other proposed actions would be possible unilateral initiatives by the United States. This would call on Congress to 'Pass a concurrent resolution pledging to continue to provide necessary weapons to Ukraine after a cease-fire to ensure that Russia does not have the advantage to attack Ukraine again.'

The authors conclude:

NATO membership would provide the strongest long-term deterrence against renewed Russian aggression, but the difficulty Sweden is having in securing Turkish and Hungarian approval of NATO accession indicates the difficulty that Ukraine might have. Seeking immediate NATO membership amid armed conflict would probably not succeed since it would create an immediate Article 5 situation.

Well, at least they think it would be dangerous to include Ukraine into NATO while they are at war with Russia....Yet, the idea that military aid would be provocative rather than a deterrent is lost...

It is irrelevant which side is right and which side is wrong in the conflict. There are three sides to every coin. My side, your side, and then the truth. The truth is the narrow side of the coin. The rest is BS. The reality is that a series of events were set in motion that eventually led to this conflict.

There were those that warned [back in the 1990s](#) that NATO expansion was provoking Russia and damaging the U.S. Russian relationship. At the start of the current war many of us felt that we should have immediately sought to [deescalate the war](#). Instead, the opposite approach was utilized and a policy that only escalated the situation was pursued. This of course included billions of dollars in aid and arms to Ukraine. The policy of deterrence is not working. It is creating a much more dangerous war and weakening the U.S. economy.

Should we consider attempting to deescalate the situation or continue to use the provocative 'deterrence' approach?

Besides the countless Russians and Ukrainians that are dying, there is another reason to not continue to escalate the situation any further. Russia has the most nuclear weapons in the world and supersonic missiles that apparently can't be shot down. If this war escalated into an all out war between the United States and Russia, well, that's game over. We would have a global nuclear war. Nobody would win and everybody on the planet would lose.

When you have a bad hand in poker and get caught bluffing, you fold. You don't go all in. The 'deterrence' strategy has not worked for decades. It has not worked in this current conflict. It has only escalated the situation to a very dangerous point. At some point the people creating the problems ought to stop offering solutions.

Let's not pull the pin on the grenade to see what happens....

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