

## The Ukraine/Russia Conflict is a Disaster

- The war is a humanitarian disaster:
  - 10% of Ukraine's population are refugees
  - 25% of population has been displaced
  - UNESCO reports that 50% of the children have been displaced
- This war is a foreign policy and diplomatic disaster, AND a failure of imagination
- The conflict has been 30 years in the making, and it is complex
- Politicians, legacy media, social media, and pundits in the West argue for escalation assuming Russia will capitulate because of resistance and sanctions
- Russia will destroy Ukraine rather than see it in NATO... whatever the cost!

*Useful dialogue requires setting aside anger, fear, and biases to view conflict issues critically and objectively*

## Geo-Political Realities: Winter is Coming!

- Europe gets 40% of its natural gas from Russia
- Russia is Germany's biggest trading partner
- US and EU economies are suffering significant inflation
- Most severe sanctions in history by the West have failed to so far wreck Russia's economy
- Putin's popularity in Russia is at 83% as of April 2, 2022
- Ukraine's economy is wrecked, cities and infrastructure are being badly damaged
- Eastern European neighbors are being destabilized
- US Foreign Policy blunders are piling up (see next slide)
- Biden escalation talk to show toughness is not credible
- US political situation becoming dire for Democratic Party

*Escalation rhetoric and more missteps can turn this "small" war into a big one!*

## US Foreign Policy blunders

- Capitulated on negotiations over New START
- Backed away from restrictions on Nord Stream 2
- Failed to engage in credible dialogue with Russia to prevent invasion
- Restricted lethal aid to Ukraine when it would have mattered
- Revived Iran Nuclear deal, with Russia as a lead negotiator
- Shifted energy policies away from domestic self-sufficiency
- Started oil talks with Venezuela while:
  - - Russia supports repressive Maduro regime in Venezuela
  - - Tar sands crude oil from Venezuela is ok, but not from Canada?
- Ended US support for Saudi war with Iran-backed Houthis
  - Saudis countered with a Chinese oil deal based on Yuan
- Implemented incompetent pullout from Afghanistan
  - Begram AB and massive weapons stockpile gift to Taliban was an act of national security malfeasance

*US allies all over the world are questioning the credibility of our commitments*

## NATO before German Unification in 1990



# Why the Conflict is Complicated

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- 1990–2022: NATO's Eastern Expansion deviates from 1990 US-USSR Helsinki Summit's understanding of "not one inch eastward" even though in the final Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), all parties agreed that all countries are free to join their own alliance
- 2006: NATO invited Georgia and Ukraine to become NATO members
- 2007: Russia declared National Security Impact of Ukraine as a NATO member was an "Existential Threat"
- 2014: Overthrow of a Russian ally Ukrainian President Yanukovich in 2014, followed by increased anti-Russia rhetoric
- 2014: Ukraine cut off water supply to Crimea threatening Sebastopol and Russia's Black Sea Fleet Base
- 2019: Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada voted to amend the constitution to state Ukraine's strategic objectives as joining the European Union and NATO
- Ukraine earns \$1.2 billion annually from Russia for pipeline transit to Europe
- Russia is building Nord Stream and South Stream pipelines with plans to shut down Ukraine pipeline transit
- Ukraine's Oil & Gas discoveries in the Black Sea Exclusive Development Zone threatens Russia's hegemony

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***The conflict is about security, economics of natural resources, water supply, national and international aspirations, historical grudges, ambitions and corruption***

**1990**

GERMANY

**1999**

CZECH REPUBLIC

HUNGARY

POLAND

**2004**

BULGARIA

ESTONIA

LATVIA

LITHUANIA

ROMANIA

SLOVAKIA

SLOVENIA

**2009**

ALBANIA

CROATIA

**2017**

MONTENEGRO

**2020**

NORTH MACEDONIA



**NATO MEMBERS**

## NATO Threat today - Russia's Perspective



## Ukraine in NATO -an “Existential Threat” to Russian National Security





## Robert Gates and William Burns on the subject

### 'TRULY OVERREACHING'



**ROBERT M. GATES**

FORMER DY SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S.

“ TRYING TO BRING GEORGIA AND UKRAINE INTO NATO WAS TRULY OVERREACHING. THIS MOVE WAS A CASE OF RECKLESSLY IGNORING WHAT THE RUSSIANS CONSIDERED THEIR OWN VITAL NATIONAL INTERESTS. ”

### 'A DIRECT CHALLENGE'



**WILLIAM J. BURNS** FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO RUSSIA

“ UKRAINIAN ENTRY INTO NATO IS THE BRIGHTEST OF ALL REDLINES FOR THE RUSSIAN ELITE. 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. ”

GRATIAS PLUS

Play (k)

## Henry Kissinger: Washington Post Op-Ed in 2014



- Penned shortly after the Russian annexation of Crimea
- Public discussion about Ukraine is all about confrontation
- To settle the Ukraine crisis, start at the end.
- Yes, countries have a right to self determination
- But must also accept that choices have consequences
- If Ukraine is to survive and thrive, it must not be either side's outpost against the other – it should function as a bridge between them
- Message to NATO: Stop poking the bear!

*Mediation needed to resolve long-standing issues and achieve a durable and equitable resolution*



## **Black Sea**

**Development Zone  
discoveries position**

**Ukraine as a threat  
to Russia's**

**Oil & Gas hegemony  
in Europe.**

**Ukraine's cut off water supply  
to Crimea in 2014 threatening  
civilian population and Russia's  
Black Sea Fleet with reservoirs  
now  
down to 7% of capacity.**



# Did NATO Dupe Zelensky Into A Fight He Can't Win?

- Russia, the largest landmass country in the world, with the GDP of New Jersey
- Ukraine, the size of France with the GDP of Nebraska, 1/3 of the population, and less than 1/4 the military resources of Russia
- NATO has been willing to provide enough weapons to keep Ukraine in the fight, but not enough to be dragged into war with Russia.



***Escalation rhetoric and more missteps can turn this "small" war into a big one!***

## Facts that don't matter...

### Russia has a second-rate military

- Poorly trained and equipped
- Poor logistics support
- Poor maintenance
- Is taking heavy losses
- Is making tactical blunders

### And.. it doesn't matter!

- It will continue attacking
- It will swap military leaders
- It will alter military tactics
- It will exhaust Ukraine's resolve
- It will tear Ukraine apart an inch at a time.



*Russia will destroy Ukraine if the issues aren't resolved by mediation sooner than later*

## Winter War Offers Useful Insights

- The Russo-Finnish War Nov '39 – March '40
- Stalin demanded a land swap with Finland for the Karelian Isthmus to protect Leningrad against German attack
- Finland refused
- Winter invasion initially gave Finland a great edge with high Russian casualties. But USSR eventually prevailed
- Finland signed the treaty of Moscow giving up 11% of its territory
- League of Nations expelled the Soviet Union for the illegal invasion of Finland. Stalin couldn't care less.

## Zelensky Has Already Blinked!

- **Zelensky: "Ukraine must recognize it will not join NATO."**
- **Kremlin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov: "...this proposal for Ukraine to become a neutral country ...could be viewed as a certain kind of compromise."**
- **This exchange led to first round of mediation in Turkey**



## Russia's Bottom Line

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- What exactly is NATO's purpose post USSR?
- Why was Russia excluded from joining EU and the NATO?
- Russia sees NATO as the military arm of the EU
- NATO was already in process of making Ukraine a defacto NATO member
- Zelensky was led to believe that NATO and US had his back
- Russia will never permit Ukraine to join NATO as it undermines their National Security:
  - How is this different than the Cuban Missile Crisis?
  - How is this different than the Monroe Doctrine?
- Russia went into Georgia to "send a message"
- Russian annexed Crimea to protect its national security
- Russian invaded Ukraine because NATO backed them into a corner

*Russia chose to fight a small war now that it could win, rather than a large war later that it would lose*

## Probable Mediated Outcome

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- Ukraine signs an Agreement stating that it will never join NATO and will be a neutral buffer zone
- NATO signs an Agreement stating that Ukraine will never join NATO
- Parties agree on permanent Crimea annexation by Russia
- Located in Ukraine, self-proclaimed break away states Donetsk People Republic and Luhansk People Republic conduct referendums on Russia's annexation
- Parties agree on settlements around Crimea Water Supply
- Parties agree on joint development costs and shared profit in the Black Sea Exclusivity Zone
- Parties agree on global settlements around Western sanctions and Russian reparations
- Lots of second tier issues worked out in non-public annexes

*The question remains – who can successfully mediate?*