

Enquiry into causes and Early Days of SMO

Originated on Moon of Alabama

(June 2023)

[Discussion thread 1 June, 2023](#)

Et Tu # 8:56 utc | 176

Russia's greatest allies are history and facts. The extent to which they have been allowed to be hidden, distorted and obfuscated to western audiences is both a credit to its propagandists, and a failure of Russian strategic communication, actually.

I believe Russia is ably assisted by its composed, patiently considered approach to western blather and deceit. I suggest that no matter how good and persistent Russia could be at 'strategic communication' in a media sense, anything promoted would be strenuously and deviously countered by the extreme mendacity of the west in conjunction with its amazing capacity to whip up a media frenzy of bullshit aimed squarely at the people. See Skripal, Clinton emails, Trump collusion.

Pathetic mass formed citizens bombarded with this shit day after day after day and almost zero elected politicians to counter the narrative even if they could. The citizens are trapped in a bell jar of exhausting propaganda. What a world and it is so sad to see intelligent mammals conned into sleep day and night.

Posted by: uncle tungsten | Jun 1 2023 9:22 utc | [185](#)

Et Tu # 8:56 utc | 176

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Posted by: uncle tungsten | Jun 1 2023 9:22 utc | [185](#)

@ Posted by: uncle tungsten | Jun 1 2023 9:22 utc | [185](#)

I am not disagreeing with you. All i meant was, Russia could have done, could be doing a much better job, particularly considering they have history and truth on their side.

They are clumsy, their content is too politicised to appeal beyond their niche, devoted audience and it is not tuned into the sensitivities of Westerners. In great part because their media overseas is run by Russians who refuse to take the advice of westerners, i have some personal experience and insight into that, without giving too much away... I am also comparing that to my experience on the western side of the propaganda war, where just as with Russian outlets, workers are mostly natives and culturally aligned with their audience, but that extends to key staff and senior management too.

But to your point in terms of the extent of lies we get bombarded with, here is one fine example:

"The way the missile falls suggests it was intercepted by air defences before it could reach its target."

LOL. This is the BBC chooses to describe a Patriot missile falling onto a Kiev road after failing to intercept a Russian missile:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-65763731>

Posted by: Et Tu | Jun 1 2023 9:58 utc | [108](#)

Et Tu # 9:58 utc | 198

Thank you and I do get your point that Russia could do a better job. I assume that Putin and his political wing are cautious to bring the people along the path of victory with them and not let this immense struggle lapse into a contest of chauvinistic struggle between close contesting political factions. They have worked very hard over three decades to get where they are and stabilise the Russian Federation in the face of persistent sabotage by UKUSA and all.

From his appointment as prime minister in 1999 and president from early 2000 to now (with a brief few years lapse) This political machinery has maintained a majority and made the transformation possible. Most other political parties are exhausted after such a stint but the Russians go from strength to strength. A war done badly or disastrously could smash Russia and I would cut them some slack for being gradualist with this Ukrainian conflict.

So now the motherland is cut and injured, assaulted by the nazis of old and from what I see the Russian dragon is unleashed and the escalation is now inexorable. Given the destruction on so many critical stores, the Zaluzhny take down, and then the apparent annihilation of the second NATO command centre likely leaving Ukraine in dire distress and close to capitulation, Russia is dramatically less encumbered that it was a month ago. Across the entire front the Russian military presses forward and the dissembling blather from Ukraine about its counter-offensive increases daily.

I see a Russian people ably and carefully led by competent political operators. Sometimes too cautious but never getting too far ahead of the people it serves and with enough stored confidence to cop a bit of flack for the sake of solidarity overall.

Posted by: uncle tungsten | Jun 1 2023 10:46 utc | [205](#)

Posted by: Et Tu | Jun 1 2023 9:27 utc | 188

In response I would argue the following:

1) The SMO opened as a hasty attack undertaken to disrupt 404 military attack. Evidence for this is the crazy quilt of RF movements which resemble ink spilled on the map of 404 rather than a considered attack which sought either destruction of enemy force or occupation of territory. RF sought to confuse UAF, disrupt its attack, and move Z toward the peace and accommodation plan on which Z had been elected.

2) The RF disruption having been defeated by the intervention of Boris Johnston the RF found itself in an untenable military position. It then consolidated its position, and commenced mobilization of the force structure required to deliver military defeat to 404 and its various consorts. During the build-up, the bulk of the conflict was undertaken by Wagner PMC which steadily advanced assisted by RF artillery.

3) We now witness a third phase in which RF regular forces engage in "familiarization training" via undertaking small scale operations to expose them to the realities of combat. This proceeds along with RF attacks on 404 areas of concentration, command & control, and logistics centres. RF is now degrading the opposing military force. This inhibits 404 from "Grand Offensive" action and prepares the battle space for what comes next.

4) What comes next, and when, is up to Valery Vasilyevich Gerasimov. I suspect the timing will be soon and the objective will be the destruction of all UAF forces presently situated on the line of contact in the Donbass.

5) Having destroyed the UAF military, the RF will move to the final phase to complete the neutralization of 404 as a potential future threat or launch point for further NATO aggression. As Col Macgregor has opined, this may include putting 2,000,000 men on the borders of Europe. What is Europe to do in response? Have a conference? Sullivan to make testy comments in the NYT? WaPo tells us Washington has trapped RF in a web of global sanctions?

Posted by: Sushi | Jun 1 2023 12:16 utc | [216](#)

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This connects with a discussion of the start of the SMO here:-

<https://www.moonofalabama.org/2023/05/ukraine-open-thread-2023-126/comments/page/2/#comments>

Where your post on that comment thread links to other commenters on the same subject and details your own recollections of the very beginning of the SMO as you watched it through the night.

Posted by: Sushi | May 27 2023 2:42 utc | 137

From <<https://www.moonofalabama.org/2023/05/ukraine-open-thread-2023-126/comments/page/2/#comments>>

.....

Not long after the start of the SMO I collected accounts from, among others, Sleboda, Lee and Kofman relating to that period: at that time the two latter analysts had not settled into the more accepted view of the conflict we now see established in the Western media.

And of course I knew of the increased shelling across the LoC, later set out in detail by Baud, and of the concentrations on the Kiev forces along the LoC.

From these various pieces of information I had at the time it seemed obvious to me that the Russian incursion into the then Ukraine was a "forced move". That is, the Putin administration had no option but to seek to disrupt and prevent the movement of Kiev troops into the Donbass given all the difficulties that would have resulted had the Kiev forces occupied all or part of the Donbass.

This is an entirely different justification for the SMO than that given by most. Mearsheimer, for example, surveys the history of the preceding decades and argues that the SMO was an inevitable Russian response to the increasing pressure it was under from NATO. I believe this is an erroneous view: the SMO did nothing to relieve that increasing pressure and was not a logical response to that increasing pressure. Rather, the SMO was the only possible response to an urgent and immediate threat and would not have been undertaken had not that immediate threat existed.

I set out that argument in a comment to an article by Professor Robinson -

<https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/why-are-russian-neo-nazis-fighting-putin>

- And the best brief summary of the position Putin was in at that time I found in a comment on the Turcopolier site,

"Putin launched a spoiling attack against Ukraine forces who were forming up for an attack on Donbass, the way I read it."

<https://turcopolier.com/russia-invaded-by-russians/>

.....
A somewhat lengthy introduction to a question that I believe is central.

There is as yet, as far as I know, no detailed, coherent and referenced account of the circumstances surrounding the start of the SMO. Yet the question of why the Russians launched what was an invasion of another country, and whether they were right or wrong to do so, is the fundamental question that has to be answered before any other questions surrounding this war can be asked.

Might I ask, therefore, have you put together such an account or do you or other commenters have further details on what occurred at that time.

Posted by: English Outsider | Jun 1 2023 14:27 utc | 244

Posted by: English Outsider | Jun 1 2023 14:27 utc | 244

RE: Coherent Account of the Start of the SMO

Apart from MoA posts which I think you have already seen, I have not put together a complete account of the start.

I would agree with the Turcopolier comment. His use of "spoiling attack" is the proper military description of what I refer to as a "hasty attack."

My belief is that the attack was triggered by the delivery of Turkish drones the night of the SMO. These were reported to be fitted with attachments permitting the aerial dispersal of radiological / biological toxins i.e. a potential poor state's weapon of mass destruction (WMD). The RF likely had developed prior plans (all militaries engage in such planning) but the threat of 404 unleashing a potential WMD was the culminating incident that triggered the launch of the SMO.

Key to this interpretation is an analysis performed by PeterAU1 which demonstrated the RF military movements were targeting bio-toxin and radiologic sites within 404. Any viewer of the map of RF movements in the immediate aftermath of the SMO launch has to be struck by the military absurdity of those movements. The RF went nearly everywhere, but nowhere in force. The original RF entry into 404 was not intended to confront the enemy, or to size and hold terrain. The RF conducted a reconnaissance in force to determine the degree of threat posed by possible 404 weapons of mass destruction and/or seize evidence of such intent. The RF also sought to confuse the 404 military as to RF intent an objective which I believe they fully accomplished.

Just in writing this I realize the basic time line of events is uncertain. The bar hosts a great many acutely intelligent observers of recent events. Karlof1 was keeping us all up to date with regard to official RF statements, but there are a multitude of others.

I have been writing a series of posts on the Future of the SMO. **What I now propose is to draft a series on the Past of the SMO**, at least the first week, and then post it on MoA, obtain the benefit of the raucous intelligence that inhabits the bar and see if it is possible for us to thrash out a rough history. History is open to alternate interpretations and it should be possible to state alternate interpretations/explanations and the evidence to support each such alternate interpretation.

Cheers!

Posted by: Sushi | Jun 1 2023 18:51 utc | [279](#)

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Posted by: English Outsider | Jun 1 2023 14:27 utc | [244](#)

As far as this invasion goes I consider it ended. They retreated. There is currently no invasion to my mind at all. All the warfare takes place on Donbas land, does it not?

The only 'invasion' I see at this time is the invasion by Kiev Ukraine into Donbas Ukraine. Which, of course, considers itself part of Russia. But Kiev and Washington, et al, don't see it that way. **So talking their language we have a Civil War with Kiev invading Donbas.** And no Donbas invasion of Kiev and no Russian invasion of anywhere, not Kiev, simply not there, and not Donbas: there by invitation.

Why do I bother to say all this? Well not for present company, they're aware and probably don't care. But for the masses that are ignorant and docilely accept their govts ripping them off and destroying their economies to fund this war. For I think those masses would change their opinions if they saw it in that light.

Posted by: [abrogard](#) | Jun 1 2023 19:33 utc | [280](#)

Sushi | Jun 1 2023 18:51 utc | [279](#)--

Yes, going after WMD sites was clearly a priority. In the run-up to 22 Feb 2022, there was very little chatter about the bio program and much about the nuke. Unfortunately, we're not privy to the minutes of the many Security Council meetings and thus don't know the degree of emphasis put and can only extrapolate from observed behavior. We can also learn from the Outlaw US Empire's reaction to the seizure of those labs and their materials, which I'd describe as frantic. There was a key meeting towards the end of 2021 where Lavrov was asked by Putin to give his assessment. On my VK Wall, there are several articles that record what occurred and link to the relevant documents and other media in the lead-up. [This is one](#), and [here's another](#), followed by [this one](#), and [another](#), the key meeting between Putin and Lavrov on 14 Feb, [is here](#), and [the document that emerged from that meeting](#). Then come Putin's speeches and actions leading to the initiation of the SMO on 22 Feb 2022. I wish I'd done more documenting.

Posted by: [karlofi](#) | Jun 2 2023 16:54 utc | [289](#)

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Dunno which rock you have been lurking under these past months...

BUT most of the above is CRAP straight from the CIA/NSA/MI6 propaganda machine....

My rebuttal...

1. The intervention was precipitated by the Ukie's intended decapitation strike against Donetsk, which was heralded by vastly increased shelling.
2. The intervention was delayed while Russia sanction proofed it's economy, and built reserves.
3. The Deployment to the airfield NW of Kiev was for the purpose of forcing the Ukies to move forces to defend their capital, leaving much of the front line thinly defended. This gave the Russians the opportunity to take Kherson and Zaporizhe Oblasts including the dam controlling the irrigation canal to Crimea, which was one of the first things taken control of and was opened within the first week(s).
4. The early moves were for the purpose of pushing the Ukies to negotiate, which culminated in the Ankara meeting where a deal was nearly stuck, foiled at the last minute by Boris Johnson PM of the UK.

5. Following the breakdown of a diplomatic option the Russians did a rethink, which led to the mobilization of 300,000 plus 100,000 volunteers.

6. Suvrokin was brought in. He immediately rationalized and armoured the contact line. He brought in Akhmat and Wagner to buy time for the mobilized to train and equip. That phase was prolonged due to FUBARS that needed and were addressed.

7. Suvrokin created a strategy of forcing the Ukies to defend and hold territory, so they could be decimated via artillery fire. This includes the Artemovsk, Marinka, and Advivka battles. This killed > 90,000 and wounded > 300,000 Ukies, basically destroying their second and third armies.

8. The Russians are now destroying Ukraine's 4th army..

Capische??

INDY

Posted by: [Dr. George W Oprisko](#) | Jun 3 2023 0:10 utc | [290](#)

[Discussion thread 1 June, 2023](#)

Posted by: Sushi | Jun 1 2023 18:51 utc | 279

" ... *What I now propose is to draft a series on the Past of the SMO, at least the first week, and then post it on MoA, obtain the benefit of the raucous intelligence that inhabits the bar and see if it is possible for us to thrash out a rough history. History is open to alternate interpretations and it should be possible to state alternate interpretations/explanations and the evidence to support each such alternate interpretation.*"

Posted by: Sushi | Jun 1 2023 18:51 utc | 279

From <https://www.moonofalabama.org/2023/05/ukraine-open-thread-2023-131/comments/page/3/#comments>

I look forward to that immensely! As said in that comment to Professor Robinson, I don't believe there has been any comprehensive account of the circumstances surrounding the launch of the SMO. Nor of the very early days. Bluntly, I believe the academics have failed us here as they have on so many other aspects of this war. I entirely reject the notion that this was a war of conquest and believe it was forced on the Russians by us.

That can be shown even if one discounts the fears of biological warfare or of the prospect of Kiev getting nuclear weapons. A large army poised on the LoC and the increase in shelling, that with Minsk 2 having failed as well, was cause enough for Russian intervention in anyone's book. As Ritter says in his cheerful way, FAFO. Fool around like that on the borders of a well armed and resolute Russia and you can expect fireworks. Putin would have been derelict in his duty had he not intervened.

But it's the sanctions that were surely the reason for provoking that Russian intervention. I don't believe the Western publics would have got behind those crippling sanctions - for us in Europe, it turns out! - had they not been horrified by the picture given to them by the Western media. That was, that instead of the Russians moving to pre-empt, they were engaging in a war of conquest.

Most of us in Europe still believe that false picture. That is why I believe a closer examination of the events of that February is so important.

Posted by: English Outsider | Jun 2 2023 10:30 utc | [189](#)

Posted by: English Outsider | Jun 2 2023 10:30 utc | 189

Re: Putin's options regarding SMO
Have you read Geoffrey Roberts' piece "[Now or never: Putin's Decision for War with Ukraine](#)"?

Posted by: [Ulrike](#) | Jun 2 2023 12:38 utc | [215](#)

[Discussion thread 2 June, 2023](#)

Posted by: English Outsider | Jun 2 2023 10:30 utc | 189

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Posted by: [Ulrike](#) | Jun 2 2023 12:38 utc | 215

From <<https://www.moonofalabama.org/2023/06/ukraine-open-thread-2023-132/comments/page/3/#comments>>

The exchange deriving from an exchange with "Sushi" and others of "b's" commenters here:-

<https://www.moonofalabama.org/2023/05/ukraine-open-thread-2023-131/comments/page/3/#comments>

Those in turn deriving from previous exchanges. (Gets a bit complicated, all these references. Hope I've got them to the right page!)

.....

Ulrike - Thank you very much. I had not seen it. I know him by reputation as a leading scholar in this area.

I believe Roberts has it dead wrong. So wrong it hurts:-

"As I and other Russian studies specialists state elsewhere: "The invasion is Putin's war, a war of choice not necessity. **The prime responsibility for the conflict, and all its sorrowful, devastating and dangerous consequences, is his.**" 3 "

(<https://geoffreyroberts.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Now-or-never-Putins-Decision-for-War-with-Ukraine.pdf>)

This is Patrick Armstrong, ex-diplomat, Russia specialist, on target:-

*"The second reason for the attack was the assessment– and some documents have been said to have been discovered – that Kiev was planning an assault on LDNR in March. Definite proof has not yet surfaced but **the fact that the bulk of the Ukraine Armed Forces were positioned to attack LDNR rather than to defend Ukraine's borders is suggestive.** Observing this, Moscow evidently decided on a pre-emptive strike. Putin has mentioned this as a factor.*

From <<https://patrickarmstrong.ca/2022/03/18/what-i-got-wrong-and-why/>>

Suggestive!!! The Kiev forces massed on the LoC, numerically superior to the LDNR forces? The increase in the shelling?

The Kiev forces were only a few miles from Donetsk. These were not the ill-prepared forces of 2014. They were NATO trained and equipped. They were behind fortifications that we now know had been prepared for years and that were (and are) strong. No chance of slipping round the back and cutting the spearhead off.

And had those forces got into Donetsk getting them out would have been more difficult even than Mariupol. We know there were ultra-nationalists in those forces and we know how they conducted themselves last time they got into the Donbas.

No responsible General Staff could have risked allowing those Kiev forces to attack. There are indications, as said before, that Putin left it quite late enough in any case. Putin had no option but to pre-empt. It would have been enormously risky to hope the Kiev forces would not attack in those circumstances and no Western leader would have taken that risk. Neither did Putin.

I believe that if these facts were set out the reason for the SMO would be regarded as self-evident.

Since those facts have never been set out in detail, the Western press can tell us that Putin invaded to restore lost empire. I believe that is incorrect. He invaded because we left him no choice.

.....

(Putin's remark linked to by Armstrong:-)

(This is what I would like to say for the first time: at the very start of the operation in Donbass, the Kiev authorities were offered opportunities to avoid hostilities, via different channels, to simply withdraw their troops from Donbass as an alternative to bloodshed.)

From <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67996>>

Posted by: English Outsider | Jun 2 2023 18:00 utc | [24](#)

Compliments on the thoughtful post, and excellent sources. Glad to be hearing from my compatriot Patrick Armstrong, in particular, who received a 'visit' from Canadian security at the outbreak of hostilities.

I must say though that this emphasis on the preventability of the war (and I appreciated that this is not quite your point) either sets the issue on its head or misses the point. We are not dealing with a political architecture in the West in which peace is the desired state against which diplomatic and policy decisions are to be weighed. The desired end-state is Western Oligarchic Domination. Peace is not a means to that end; forcing on Russia a war it cannot refuse, conversely, is.

The question of whether Russia had 'other options' is at least closer to the point. Which I think is this: Even if Russia had other proximate options, virtually all but surrender (and even here, who knows?) would have led to war by another avenue.

Cartago delenda est. Carthage must be destroyed. From Rome to the 1000-year Reich (halfway there!), to the Wolfowitz doctrine, to the even more megalomaniacal "Full Spectrum Dominance," this is the trajectory of Western imperial conduct.

Full Spectrum Dominance has been defined not just as superior power in all domains, but a preponderance of power so great that the very thought of resistance does not even occur. This is an objective that the Westoid imperium is actually within site of attaining internally, even as it ever more visibly slips away geopolitically.

Posted by: Paul Damascene | Jun 2 2023 18:41 utc | [32](#)

English Outsider @24

Posted by: Paul Damascene | Jun 2 2023 18:41 utc | [32](#)

Did Russia have other options?

Like b, I wrote here that I regretted the Russian action in Ukraine thinking that there must have been another way.

Russia has stated repeatedly that it had no choice. That is persuasive based on what is publicly known about the history of the conflict and the overall context.

Still, all this time I keep wondering - were there effectively other options.

Just recently, other options, were mentioned by 14 former US military, intelligence, and civilian national security officials who publicly called for an end to the war.

In an open letter published on 16 May in The New York Times entitled 'The U.S. Should Be a Force for Peace in the World' they wrote:
Our attempt at understanding the Russian perspective on their war does not endorse the invasion and occupation,
nor does it imply the Russians had no other option but this war.
Yet, just as Russia had other options, so too did the U.S. and NATO leading up to this moment.

https://original.antiwar.com/eisenhower_media_network/2023/05/16/the-us-should-be-a-force-for-peace-in-the-world/

If there were other options, what are they, and why are they not named.

Posted by: JB | Jun 2 2023 19:42 utc | [44](#)

English Outsider | Jun 2 2023 18:00 utc | 24

Thanks for this excellent and clear post - it is a summation of the events leading to the war, supported by unblemished sources. I agree fully that the western mantra of unprovoked and unjust war waged by Russia is a big lie.

Worth to keep on file for future reference.

Posted by: fanto | Jun 2 2023 20:20 utc | 54

Posted by: English Outsider | Jun 2 2023 18:00 utc | 24

Correct. However, it understates the case. Putin had no choice because, in addition to the threatened attack on the LDNR, 1) Ukraine was talking about getting nuclear weapons, and 2) Russia's treaty proposals were dismissed by the West, which meant Ukraine would enter NATO (despite the West's denials) or alternatively was and would be treated as a member of NATO and that Aegis Ashore installations would eventually appear in Ukraine, and 3) even if they didn't, they remained a threat in Poland and Romania.

In other words, Donbass and the Ukraine threat to Donbass was not the cause of the invasion. Ukraine's NATO status and NATO itself were the cause. **The Donbass threat was related to the TIMING of the invasion, not its cause.**

That is irrespective of what Putin said in his speech before the invasion.

Very few people even on the pro-Russia side seem to comprehend this which makes all their predictions about the outcome of the war mostly useless.

Posted by: [Richard Steven Hack](#) | Jun 2 2023 21:41 utc | 65

JB | Jun 2 2023 19:42 utc | 44--

The other options:

#1, UNSCR 2202, otherwise known as Minsk-2. We know that was set up to fail from the getgo. Blinken lies like a million fleas on a dog when he says the Outlaw US Empire, NATO, et al champion the UN Charter. All NATO violated it wantonly.

#2, Russia December 2021 security proposals, which doubled as an accusation of NATO OSCE members of violating three separate OSCE Treaties that aimed at establishing the concept of Indivisible Security, which is also the basis for the UN Charter. Other treaties were also violated by this same cabal. The individual OSCE NATO member nations have yet to provide a response or to admit they broke a large number of treaties. Since it was quite clear that none of those addressed understood what was being discussed, Lavrov on 1 February 2022 sent [this letter](#) to the Heads of Foreign / External Affairs Ministers / Secretaries of the US, Canada and several European countries in a last minute attempt for reason to win over delusion.

#3, The infamous and many promises made in 1989, 1990, 1991, not to advance NATO "one inch" to the East. The reason for the promise in the first place? To assure Russia that a united Germany wouldn't again become a threat. The promise resulted in the dissolution of the Warsaw "Pact" forces and withdrawal of Russian forces to Russia from Eastern Europe.

If the promises made at #3 had been kept, numbers 2 & 1 would never have arisen. All the above is publicly available history **anyone** can obtain.

I documented the events that led to the promised (in December) "military technical operation" in articles posted to my VK Wall. The first move was Putin's Decree on 15 November 2021 "ON PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT TO THE POPULATION OF CERTAIN AREAS OF DONETSK AND LUHANSK REGIONS OF UKRAINE" that set the table for Russia to conduct its own R2P mission that I discussed [here](#).

On 9 December 2021, the annual meeting of the Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights where [testimony was given by Kirill Vyshinsky](#) that Genocidal conditions were actively present within the area of the two self-proclaimed Donbass Republics. It must be recalled that Russian citizenship was offered to the people residing there and the vast majority took advantage; thus, Genocide was being waged against citizens of Russia. Putin agreed that genocidal conditions exist, while a proper response must be well thought out.

Very intense meetings occurred beginning on 1 February with Hungary's Orban. They were interrupted by Putin's trip to China for meetings with Xi and the opening of the Olympiad where they produced the outstanding 4 February Joint Declaration the West has mostly ignored. On 15 February, Scholtz and Putin held talks which was followed by a [presser](#). One of Putin's replies to the German Chancellor, a retort to the BigLie that genocide was occurring within Yugoslavia and that was the reason for NATO's Aggressive War:

"Let me just add that, **according to our estimates, what is happening in Donbass today is genocide.**" [My Emphasis]

There's more documentation I have I could provide, but they don't add anything more to the three points above. Most important is there was **never** any attempt by the Outlaw US Empire to stop the UkieNazis from their crimes; indeed, the USA abetted those crimes. Since the OSS helped Nazis infiltrate into Eastern Europe and directly aided the Nazi OUN with monies and weapons, the USA has wanted to wage war on USSR/Russia to eliminate it--that's what the entire Anti-Communist Crusade was all about. And really, that's just the surface of a very deep swamp. Bottom line: Russia was well within its **legal rights** to defend its citizens, and is also acting within its rights to finish the elimination of Nazism that was agreed to during WW2. The historical facts and Truth are on Russia's side, which is why the Outlaw US Empire can only spout lies.

Posted by: [karlofti](#) | Jun 2 2023 23:06 utc | [77](#)

In other words, Donbass and the Ukraine threat to Donbass was not the cause of the invasion. Ukraine's NATO status and NATO itself were the cause. The Donbass threat was related to the TIMING of the invasion, not its cause.

That is irrespective of what Putin said in his speech before the invasion.

Very few people even on the pro-Russia side seem to comprehend this which makes all their predictions about the outcome of the war mostly useless.

Posted by: Richard Steven Hack | Jun 2 2023 21:41 utc | [66](#)

Agree. There is often a regrettable shortsightedness which sees the "war" as being just Russia in Ukraine. This leads to views that Russia is going too slow, and should just step up the pace and finish the "war".

Clearly Russia has seen its war as being against the entire West, with Ukraine just being the first theatre of that war, and one in which civilian populations (in Ukraine) should be protected to the extent possible.

If negotiations in March/April last year had led to resolution of the kinetic "war" with Ukraine, then the broader war with the West would have moved to the next stage. Negotiations were killed by the West and thus the "war" with Ukraine will move on to its inevitable end, the total defeat of Ukraine.

But that will only signal the end of the first stage in Russia's war with the West. I see it as impossible for Russia to simply fortify the western Ukraine border and allow the West to re-arm and re-build the threat to Russia. Reaching the Polish border will signify the start of the next phase in Russia's war with the West. Look out Poland, Romania and Finland. NATO Article 5 could be tested then, if not earlier if those countries (particularly Poland) are stupid enough to ramp up their participation in the Ukraine theatre even further.

The only stable solution in the long run is where there is a comprehensive overall agreement on demilitarisation in central Europe. I don't know whether such a comprehensive agreement would be consistent with the NATO Agreement as it currently stands. We will find out.

Posted by: Marduk | Jun 3 2023 0:25 utc | [87](#)

Posted by: Marduk | Jun 3 2023 0:25 utc | 95

Some points:

"If negotiations in March/April last year had led to resolution of the kinetic "war" with Ukraine, then the broader war with the West would have moved to the next stage."

The problem with that, of course, is that there was zero chance that the negotiations would have resulted in any agreement acceptable to Russia given its requirement to take Ukraine off the board not just re NATO but the need to counter those installations in Poland and Romania. In other words, Russia would only have agreed to end the conflict if Ukraine agreed to do what Belarus is doing: integrate the Ukrainian military with the Russian military and put Russian strategic weapons in western Ukraine.

Obviously that would be a total non-starter for both the West and the existing Ukraine regime. So no matter what, the regime would have to go - and I don't see any "negotiations" that would have enabled that. Ergo, a negotiated end to the conflict simply was not possible.

Plus, as I've mentioned before, people assume the Turkey negotiations produced an "agreement". If one goes back and reads the articles from that time, there was no agreement, certainly not one that Russia would have accepted. Ukraine produced a proposal that basically would have put things back to where they were prior to the war, possibly "allowing" Russia to retain Crimea. As I've noted, this is no longer acceptable to Russia, so would not have been accepted, and indeed was not accepted.

"Negotiations were killed by the West and thus the "war" with Ukraine will move on to its inevitable end, the total defeat of Ukraine."

Even if negotiations had not been killed by the West, no negotiated result would have occurred due to the issues I mention above.

"I see it as impossible for Russia to simply fortify the western Ukraine border and allow the West to re-arm and re-build the threat to Russia. Reaching the Polish border will signify the start of the next phase in Russia's war with the West."

I agree that further steps will probably need to be taken. But any diplomatic or economic efforts will depend on Russia fortifying its entire western border, from Ukraine up through Belarus up through Russia's border with Finland. It has to build an "Iron Curtain" between Russia and the West. Only then can further moves of any kind be contemplated.

"The only stable solution in the long run is where there is a comprehensive overall agreement on demilitarisation in central Europe. I don't know whether such a comprehensive agreement would be consistent with the NATO Agreement as it currently stands. We will find out."

The basis for any long-term solution are the Russian 2021 treaty proposals. Of course, it's next to impossible for the West to agree to them. So until the ruling elites are removed from Western governments, one way or the other by whomever, there will be no solution but either a Cold War 2.0 or WWII.

Posted by: [Richard Steven Hack](#) | Jun 3 2023 0:52 utc | [97](#)

Posted by: English Outsider | Jun 2 2023 18:00 utc | 24

I fully agree with you about Roberts overall view. Nevertheless I was very happy about his article because the mainstream (and nearly everyone I know) keeps on talking about Russia's imperial motives, and Roberts' piece clearly shows that is not true, that Russia acted for defensive reasons.

Many intellectuals (i.e. Chomsky) seem to think the way Roberts does, the latest example being the NYT advert.

That is why Ray McGovern asks: [Did Putin Have 'Other Options' on Ukraine? This is John Mearsheimer's answer:](#)

"No, I don't think he had any options. I do believe that Putin was deeply committed to finding a negotiated settlement to the problem. As I said to you in my formal comments, he was deeply committed to the Minsk agreement because what he wanted to do was to shut down the conflict in the Donbas so he would not have to invade. And, with regard to NATO expansion, EU expansion, and the efforts to make Ukraine a Western bulwark on Russia's border, he went to great lengths to explain to the West why that was unacceptable. And on December 17, 2021, he sent a letter to Biden and to NATO saying that you have to do x y and z, so we can find a solution to this problem. And we refused to go along. And I think that Putin was left in a position where he felt he had no choice, because, to answer your question, there was no other way to deal with the problem. So I think that he, with great reluctance, invaded Ukraine."

Posted by: [Ulrike](#) | Jun 3 2023 6:34 utc | [137](#)

Ulrike # 6:34 utc | 151

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Thank you and in addition to the actual current circumstance, there is a vast disparity in the historical circumstance. The UK & EU elite have consistently desired to plunder Russia but not vice versa. This is a multi century desire for plunder and it is not easily excused. I guess Russia seemed to think they would find something better to do than covet their neighbors lands after the prosperous post WW2 decades and I guess most of us thought so too.

But then the USA emerged as a persistent and unrelenting force for absolute evil in its foreign policy warmongering, nation conquering, endless plunder and so goaded and then drove the ancient agenda forward with those eager participants. Thus the EU docility in the Nord Stream pipelines sabotage.

That single, sinister act was the collective FU to Russia and the people of the world who had trust in diplomacy.

There is no way in the world that the EU elite did not know the energy and cost consequences. They believed their sanctions would work a treat as their neoliberal economists had assured them. They had convinced themselves that it was now or never and then delusions of conquer and plunder erased their minds.

The new Russian border will be entirely to the Poland border in the west of what was once The Ukraine and the western creditors can reinvent shell money for their debt.

Posted by: uncle tungsten | Jun 3 2023 7:58 utc | [144](#)

karlofi | Jun 2 2023 23:06 utc | 77

Dr. George W Oprisko | Jun 2 2023 23:35 utc | 80

I thank you both for responding to what I think remains a question to be kept open and explored - did Russia realistically have other options.

I am aware of what both of you have pointed out, but why do the US former security officials who penned that call for peace think that Russia had other options, yet they don't tell us what these options were. **Nor does anyone else, except a lonely voice saying that Russia should have brought the matter to the UN Security Council.**

Well, Russia did bring Ukraine to the SC numerous times. As did Ukraine Russia. I am looking into exactly that aspect now.

The question is - did Russia exhaust ALL possibilities, and was military intervention the last, and only resort.

It seems to me that the answer is - yes. But I am not certain, and would like to be. I think it is important, for the present and the future.

Posted by: JB | Jun 3 2023 11:31 utc | [179](#)

Re Russian war aims and the comments made by Richard Steven Hack, I must say I tend to agree with his analysis and views. Rationally - and I think the Kremlin is by and large rational - they must have realised that the war option in Feb 2022 was a crossing the Rubicon moment. If they could have secured a peace deal in April 2022 (banjaxed by BoJo on DC orders), then they would have taken it. If no peace deal was in sight then they would have realised that the "war" [SMO if you prefer] would need to be won. No half measures.

I believe that the Kremlin got a few things wrong in their original calculations - UAF strength, NATO resolve and malevolence, their own power and their own military capabilities at the time. The war has dragged on and I think the Kremlin has recognised their initial calculations - and basically fixed the mistakes. Now you could make the same arguments about the West BUT I think group think has taken hold and the western establishment is in for its own wake up call.

My personal opinion - not having access to Kremlin secrets - is that Ukraine will be dismembered between the west and the Russia. The west will move into western Ukraine (including Odessa) in the next few months as "peace keepers" [maybe triggered by a FF]. The Ukraine east of those areas occupied by NATO will revert to Russia - possibly a rump demilitarised zone centred on Kiev - but I don't know why the Russians would agree to a rump state. This may be a deal broked by China. Or someone else. You would think WW3 is a bad option, but in many wargames run by NATO pre-2022 re this exact situation, it always ended up in MAD - without exception.

Anyway - Ukraine as a nation, one which is allowed to lean westwards, and certainly and within its 2014 borders is toast. It will be partitioned. That is my prediction. But I would not make any investments made on this as the future is uncertain and as I get older I find I spout more BS than is good for a person....

Let us hope wise heads prevail.

Posted by: marcjf | Jun 3 2023 12:04 utc | [186](#)

@ marcjf, §186:

No way will the Russians allow the West to take Odessa, a quintessentially Russian city.

Galicia and Bessarabia (up to the Dniester) is the most the West will get - and they'll be conditional on Poland and Rumania leaving NATO and demilitarizing (no foreign troops on their territories). "The Ukraine" will be reduced to the six oblasts around Kiev and renamed "Chornarus" (cf. "Belarus").

Posted by: John Marks | Jun 3 2023 12:53 utc | [200](#)

Posted by: Peter Williams | Jun 3 2023 9:44 utc | 166

People keep saying that as if that somehow overrides Russia's security concerns, which, I repeat, can only be addressed by locking down Ukraine right to the Polish border - and not the Galicia border, either.

You simply don't give away territory to your enemies who will use it to cause more trouble for you. Not when you need to put your air defense systems right next to their strategic missiles.

This war isn't being fought over some ethnic bullshit, no matter how much ethnic bullshit there is. It's being fought to counter NATO. The removal of the Kiev regime is merely a necessary precondition for achieving the real goal. Russia couldn't care less what some disgruntled Ukrainians in western Ukraine think about it. And Russia is more than capable of handling any trouble those idiots might try to create.

People seem to forget a little place called Chechnya. A lot of people there didn't like Russians, either. Now they're fighting for Russia in Ukraine. It's unlikely western Ukrainians ever will, but who cares? As long as they keep their mouths shut, they'll stay out of prison or avoid being deported to Poland.

Russia is going to lock down every inch of Ukrainian territory - and probably Transnistria, too. There will be an iron wall stretching from the Black Sea to the Arctic, sealing off the West from Russia. Anyone crosses that line, they lose the right to exist as a state.

Posted by: [Richard Steven Hack](#) | Jun 3 2023 13:00 utc | [201](#)

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Posted by: Richard Steven Hack | Jun 3 2023 13:00 utc | 201

That looks like where things are headed.

The Russians have planned for success to achieve their goals, making adjustments based on their encounters with NATO and Z. They are unlikely to back down.

One wonders what arrogant Blinken, Icky Vicky et. al. are doing to save face. The Pentagon was never enamored with the DoS escapades. Preparing for war is good, dying in it is not. In the US we should be seeing cracks in the façade by now but I am not following it. Twitter is not a good hint.

Posted by: [Acco Hengst](#) | Jun 3 2023 14:05 utc | [213](#)

@marcjf 186

-is there any "legit" documentation of what RU High Command did intend militarily Febr. 2022?

(e.g. who says they did want to "take" Kiev? Where did that info come fom? AFU? CIA? Kremlin? MI-6? Because as The Saker pointed out, "taking" a 3 mio. city makes no sense. But still that fairy-tale is by now a "truism" almost any place.)

-where would you get the public reports on the outcomes of WWII simulations?

Thanks

p.s. I am trying to ignore the MIC propaganda and mindset but I did look into this CSIS panel from April - see link from The Duran as posted earlier here - and it did not improve my mood today (these people are simply S.I.C.K.)

Global Security Forum 2023: Transatlantic Defense AM Sessions
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Bl_QX9HMh8

Posted by: AG | Jun 3 2023 20:29 utc | [246](#)