



## Decision Time Has Come for Russia in Ukraine

### Description

UKRAINE/RUSSIA: I suspect the Kremlin has concluded that the limited intervention in Ukraine was a mistake. I don't mean that the Kremlin will fail in its effort to drive all Ukrainian military units out of Donbass. The mistake the Kremlin made was in thinking that the military intervention could be limited.

The US and NATO are now involved in the conflict. Ukraine is being supplied with heavy weapons and with training in their use. Washington has now arranged to send missiles capable of hitting Russian territory. Clearly, there is nothing limited about the conflict.

The dilemma for Russia is that by confining its military operations to the Donbass region in east Ukraine, Western weapons are accumulating in west Ukraine where it is possible to raise an army to replace the one the Russians are destroying in Donbass. Whereas the Kremlin will succeed in liberating Donbass, it will fail in its goal to demilitarize Ukraine and turn Ukraine into a neutral state unless the intervention is expanded to all of Ukraine.

Additionally, the conflict has also expanded by the request of neutral Finland and Sweden to join NATO. The addition of Finland to NATO would greatly expand the presence of NATO on Russia's borders, which the intervention in Ukraine intended to prevent.

The Kremlin warned that countries that intervene in the conflict would be treated as combatants, but has failed to take any action. The Russian threat is so disregarded that even militarily insignificant Denmark openly sends weapons to Ukraine. The consequence will be more intervention by the US and NATO.

A dangerous situation has been created by the Kremlin's declaration of red lines that it does not enforce. Delayed and limited Russian responses to Washington's provocations are the reason for the present conflict, and delayed and limited responses are the reason the present conflict is likely to spin out of control.

It was obvious that the Kremlin needed a quick and total conquest of Ukraine to prevent the expansion of the war by Western intervention and to intimidate non-NATO Europe from abandoning neutrality. Instead, the limited Russian action has given Washington months to widen the conflict and to keep the

conflict going after Ukraine's defeat in Donbass. Western propaganda has even succeeded in convincing the Western populations that Ukraine is winning the war.

The Kremlin, it seems, is unable to comprehend that there is no peaceful or diplomatic solution. It was the Kremlin's false hope for the delusional Minsk Agreement that gave Washington 8 years in which to train and equip a Ukrainian force to retake the Donbass republics. The entire conflict could have been avoided if the Kremlin had accepted the request of Donbass to be reunited with Russia like Crimea. This strategic error by the Kremlin followed a larger and earlier error when the Kremlin stood aside and permitted Washington's overthrow of the Ukrainian government and installation of a puppet regime hostile to Russia.

I admire the Kremlin's restraint and disinclination to resort to violence. The question is whether this behavior encourages Washington to move more aggressively with the Wolfowitz doctrine against countries that are obstacles to Washington's hegemony.

Russia can again sit on her hands, as she did during the previous 8 years, while Washington raises and trains yet another Ukrainian army, or she can deliver a quick knockout blow to Ukraine, replace the government, and hunt down and terminate all Nazi and CIA elements, or she can call it quits. Otherwise, the chances are high that increasing Western intervention will spin the conflict out of control.

The Kremlin sees this itself and warns of the prospect of nuclear war, but does not take the necessary action to foreclose this prospect.

by Paul Craig Roberts

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