



## Five Reasons To Be Increasingly Worried About the War in Ukraine

### Description

[JEA](#): We all know that Vladimir Putin is not going to allow NATO to threaten his country via Ukraine. No serious president in any country would. So, should people be concerned about the ongoing war? Or shall we say NATO's war?

***The New York Times* [reported](#) on May 1 that “the Biden administration” – the same one that ignored Putin’s warnings about Russia’s red line regarding NATO expansion to Ukraine – “increasingly casts aside fears expressed by some early in the war that too much American assistance to Ukraine risked a direct conflict with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.”**

As direct assistance to Ukraine by the US, UK and its other allies intensifies dramatically, there are several reasons to be increasingly concerned.

### The Long War

The US signaled early that this war was not to be a fast war to defend Ukraine from the Russian invasion. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has repeatedly [declared](#) that this war over “core principles” is “bigger than Ukraine.”

Since then, several signs have pointed to an evolving policy of dragging diplomacy to allow for a long war. Blinken has [announced](#) that the war could last for the rest of this year. National security adviser Jake Sullivan used the formulation “for months or even longer.” More dramatically still, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley “measured [it] in years.”

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg [said](#) on April 28 that “NATO allies are preparing to provide support over a long period of time.” And, as if on script, on the same day, [President Biden asked Congress](#) “for \$33 billion to bolster Ukraine’s fight against Russia, signaling a burgeoning and long-haul American commitment.”

To ensure that long period, the US and its allies seem to be [obstructing diplomatic solutions](#). In an April 21 [interview](#), Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu accused that “There are countries within NATO who want the war to continue.” Turkey hosted perhaps the most promising negotiations between

Russia and Ukraine.

The talks seemed to offer the possibility of a breakthrough, and Cavusoglu says that Turkey did not think the war would last long after the talks. But the promise arrived at by Ukraine and Russia seems to have been diverted by the US and its allies who have different interests.

“But following the NATO foreign ministers’ meeting, it was the impression that...there are those within the NATO member states that want the war to continue, let the war continue and Russia get weaker,” Cavusoglu said.

### **Russia Knows**

Russia is now aware that a negotiated settlement is fading on the horizon. The hopelessness came right at the beginning when Zelensky’s early signal that he might be willing to negotiate was answered by the US and UE decision to flood Ukraine with arms. It began even earlier when the West failed to support Zelensky in his promise to sign the Minks agreement and then failed to pressure him to return to that promised path.

US lack of participation in and interference in diplomacy has strengthened that awareness as has US intransigence in refusing to speak to Russia. Blinken hasn’t spoken to his Russian counterpart since the war began, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell walked out of a G20 meeting when the Russian representative started speaking and Russia’s ambassador to the US says that neither the White House nor the State Department will speak to him.

Anatol Lieven, who is a senior research fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, told me that he “doesn’t know if Russia has concluded that the USA will be able to block a settlement. But “Moscow certainly thinks that the US government will try to do so.”

### **Increasing Russian Warnings**

It is now clear that the US calculation that they could ignore Russia’s warning about crossing the red line of keeping the door to NATO membership open to Ukraine was a catastrophic miscalculation. Nonetheless, the US seems to be making the same calculation now that the war has started.

Warnings are, once again, pouring out of Moscow. In mid-April, Russia sent “a formal diplomatic note” [warning](#) the US that “U.S. and NATO shipments of the “most sensitive” weapons systems to Ukraine were “adding fuel” to the conflict there and could bring “unpredictable consequences.”

Even more worrisome, Russia seems now to have reached the point of concluding that the US is fighting, not a war to defend Ukraine, but a proxy war against Russia. Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov recently [said](#) that “NATO, in essence, is engaged in a war with Russia through a proxy and is arming that proxy. War means war.”

On April 28, Putin [warned](#) that “If someone intends to intervene in the ongoing events from the outside, and create strategic threats for Russia that are unacceptable to us, they should know that our retaliatory strikes will be lightning-fast.” He added that “We have all the tools for this. . . . we will use them if necessary. And I want everyone to know that.”

## Increasing Intervention

Ukraine is increasingly becoming a proxy for the full military might of the US and NATO. The US is providing the weapons, providing the training and aiming the guns. It is fighting a war that holds on to being a proxy war only in that it is not providing the bodies. As John Mearsheimer recently said, the US is “as close as you can get” to direct involvement.

That direct involvement is becoming increasingly threatening. In a first since the war began, troops from a NATO country are on the ground in Ukraine. Officers in the Ukrainian armed forces have confirmed that [British special forces were in Ukraine](#) “to instruct new and returning military recruits to use NLAWs, British-supplied anti-tank missiles.” Troops from a NATO member in Ukraine may push the meaning of “proxy.”

In a similarly provocative move, press secretary John Kirby announced that the US is training Ukrainian troops on US military installations in Germany. At an April 29 press briefing, Kirby [said](#), “Today, I can announce that the United States has commenced training with the Ukrainian Armed Forces on key systems at US military installations in Germany.” That is US soldiers training Ukrainian soldiers on US bases.

As for the weapons the US and UK are training the Ukraine army to use, British Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces, James Heappey, [said](#) at the end of April that it would be acceptable for Ukrainian forces to use British weapons to attack military targets on Russian soil. So, the UK is training Ukrainian soldiers to use UK weapons to kill Russians. At the same time, British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss [declared](#) that the “time has now passed” for supplying Ukraine only with defensive weapons.

In addition to intensifying weapons and training, the US is also accelerating the intelligence it is providing Ukraine. That’s providing the weapons, training on how to use the weapons and providing the intelligence to aim the weapons.

The US is providing Ukraine forces detailed, near real-time intelligence that they are using against Russian forces. That US intelligence made it possible for Ukraine to [shoot down a Russian transport plane](#) carrying hundreds of Russian troops.

The “massive and unprecedented intelligence-sharing operation with a non-NATO partner” may, once again, seriously challenge the word “proxy.” A “former senior intelligence official familiar with the situation” told NBC that “There has been a lot of real-time intelligence shared in terms of things that could be used for specific targeting of Russian forces.”

## Expanded Goals

It is not just that the war has grown longer and more direct, it has grown bigger and more ambitious. British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss [said](#) on April 28, the same day that NATO and the US announced the long war, that Russian forces must be pushed out of “the whole of Ukraine.”

As the BBC pointed out, that means not just pushing back the Russian invasion – the originally stated purpose of supporting Ukraine – but perhaps even pushing Russia out of Crimea. That is an attack on Russia and what Putin would consider the destruction of the Russian state. That could lead to unthinkable Russian responses.

Like the UK, the US has recently made its clearest statements on the evolving and expanding goal of the war. Following the meeting that he and Antony Blinken had with Zelensky, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin [defined America's war goals](#) as wanting to see “Russia weakened to the degree that it can't do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine”. This statement is the clearest yet from a high ranking US official that the goal of the war exceeds defending Ukraine and includes weakening Russia.

That the US and its allies are involving themselves more and more directly in a war with expandingly aggressive goals and an increasingly moving time line with little hope for negotiations while yet again ignoring Putin's warnings is creating an increasingly dangerous and worrisome situation that could, once again, be avoided.

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