



Jacques Baud Discusses Putin's Demilitarisation and Denazification of Ukraine

Description

Jacques Baud joined Aaron Maté, host of Pushback, to analyse the Russia-Ukraine conflict. He argued that the US and its allies are exploiting Ukraine in a longstanding campaign to bleed its Russian neighbour.

Jacques Baud has served in a number of senior security and advisory positions at NATO, the UN, and with the Swiss military. He is also a former strategic intelligence officer with the Swiss Strategic Intelligence Service.

"The war in fact hasn't started on 24 February this year. It started already in 2014. But I think that the Russians always hoped that this conflict could be solved on a political level," Baud explained.

There was a trigger that led to the decision to launch an offensive in the Donbas. The trigger came in two phases. First was the decision and the law adopted by Volodymyr Zelenskyy in March 2021 to reconquer Crimea by force. And then came the real trigger – the intensification of the artillery shelling of the Donbas starting on the 16 February.

"This increase in the shelling was observed, in fact, by the [Border] Observer Mission of the OSCE [Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe], and they recorded this increase of violation, and it's a massive violation. I mean, we are talking about something that is about 30 times more than what it used to be, because the last eight years you had a lot of violations from both sides, by the way. But suddenly on the 16th of February you had a massive increase of violation on the Ukrainian side." Baud said.

So, for the Russians, Vladimir Putin in particular, that was the sign that the operation – the Ukrainian operation – was about to start. On the 21st of February, at the request of the Russian parliament, the Duma – after adopting decrees to recognise the independence of the two self-proclaimed Republics of the Donbas – Putin signed a friendship and assistance agreement with those two Republics. That would allow the Republics to ask for military help in case of attack, Baud explained.

The Russians' main offensive was on the south because the objective stated by Vladimir Putin was demilitarisation and denazification.

Putin's denazification is not about the 2.5% of the extreme right in Kiev. Denazification is about those groups that were recruited from 2014 by the Ukrainians in order to pacify or control, to fight in the Donbas. "These people were extremists, fanatics, and these people were dangerous," Baud said.

The effort against Kiev is a so-called secondary effort. "First of all, to put some pressure on the political leadership in Kiev because the name of the game is to bring the Ukrainians to the negotiations ... The second objective ... was to bind or to pin down the rest of the Ukrainian armoured forces so that they could not reinforce the main forces which are in the Donbas area," Baud said.

Zelenskyy was elected with the idea of achieving peace in the Donbas. "But I think the West – and I would say the Americans and the British – didn't want this peace to occur ... I think, there was a lot of pressure on Zelenskyy so that he wouldn't even talk to the representatives of the two breakaway Republics." Baud said, "we have several indications that Zelenskyy was not completely, or is not completely, in control of what's going on in Ukraine."

"As soon as Zelenskyy indicated that he might be willing to start negotiations ... Within hours ... the European Union came with a decision providing for half a billion arms to Ukraine, meaning that the Americans, certainly, but I think the West as a whole, made every possible effort to prevent a political solution to the conflict, and I think the Russians are aware of that ... So, the Russians certainly want to negotiate, but they don't trust the Western countries – I mean the West at large – to facilitate that negotiation."

The Rand Corporation is a Pentagon-type think tank. It conducted a study in 2019 looking at all the different ways in which the US could overextend and unbalance Russia, and the top option was to send weapons to Ukraine to fuel a conflict there that could draw Russia in. "I think that this is a complete design for weakening Russia, and that's exactly what we see unfolding right now," Baud said.

When asked what he thought about the mass civilian killings by Russia inside the town of Bucha, killings of Ukrainian forces, and the attack on the train station in Kramatorsk Baud responded:

"The indication we have on both incidents to me indicates that the Russians were not responsible for that. But ... if we're honest, we don't know what happened. The indications we have, everything, all the elements we have tends to point at Ukrainian responsibilities, but we don't know ... What disturbs me is that Western leaders started to make decisions without knowing what's going on and what happened. And that's something that disturbs me quite deeply."

The Grayzone: US, EU sacrificing Ukraine to 'weaken Russia': fmr. NATO adviser, 12 April 2022 (40 mins)

By Rhoda Wilson

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Date Created

04/19/2022