



The Profoundly Stupid Narrative That Nuclear Brinkmanship Is Safety And De-Escalation Is Danger

Description

Of all the face-meltingly stupid narratives that have been circulated about the US proxy war in Ukraine, the dumbest so far has got to be the increasingly common claim that aggressively escalating nuclear brinkmanship is safety and de-escalation is danger.

We see a prime example of this self-evidently idiotic narrative in a new Business Insider article titled "Putin's nuclear threats are pushing people like Trump and Elon Musk to press for a Ukraine peace deal. A nuclear expert warns that's 'dangerous.'"

"An understandable desire to avoid a nuclear war could actually make the world more dangerous if it means rushing to implement a 'peace' in Ukraine that serves Russian interests," writes [reliable empire apologist](#) Charles Davis. "Such a move, which some influential figures have called for, risks setting a precedent that atomic blackmail is the way to win wars and take territory troops can't otherwise hold, a model that could be copycatted by even the weakest nuclear-armed states, and may only succeed at delaying another war."

Not every day that a headline can fully capture the depravity of US media and political culture: pic.twitter.com/oMRhBmWFfU

— Aaron Maté (@aaronjmate) [October 16, 2022](#)

Davis' sole source for his article is the UN Institute for Disarmament Research's Pavel Podvig, who [is very openly biased](#) against Russia.

"The West supports Ukraine with weapons and financial and moral and political support. Giving that up and saying that, 'Well, you know, we are too afraid of nuclear threats and so we just want to make a deal' — that would certainly set a precedent that would not be very positive," says Podvig. "If you yield to this nuclear threat once, then what would prevent Russia in the future — or others — to do the same thing again?"

Like other empire apologists currently pushing the ridiculous “de-escalation actually causes escalation” line, Davis and Podvig argue as though nuclear weapons just showed up on the scene a few days ago, as if there haven’t been generations of western policies toward Moscow which have indeed involved backing down and making compromises at times because doing so was seen as preferable to risking a nuclear attack. We survived the Cuban Missile Crisis because Kennedy secretly acquiesced to Khrushchev’s demands that the US remove the Jupiter missiles it had placed in Turkey and Italy, which was what provoked Moscow to move nukes to Cuba in the first place.

Throughout the cold war the Soviet Union insisted on a [sphere of influence](#) that US strategists granted a wide berth to, exactly because it was a nuclear superpower. Even as recently as the Obama administration [the US president maintained](#) that “Ukraine, which is a non-NATO country, is going to be vulnerable to military domination by Russia no matter what we do.”

Nevertheless we’re seeing this new “escalation is safety and de-escalation is danger” narrative pushed with increasing forcefulness by imperial spinmeisters, because it would take a lot of force indeed to get people to accept something so self-evidently backwards and nonsensical.

All of you who are saying that we have to give in to nuclear blackmail are making nuclear war more likely. Please stop. When you give in to it, you empower dictators to do it again, encourage worldwide nuclear proliferation, and make nuclear war much, much more likely.

— Timothy Snyder (@TimothyDSnyder) [October 14, 2022](#)

“All of you who are saying that we have to give in to nuclear blackmail are making nuclear war more likely. Please stop,” [tweeted](#) Yale University’s Timothy Snyder recently. “When you give in to it, you empower dictators to do it again, encourage worldwide nuclear proliferation, and make nuclear war much, much more likely.”

Snyder, who [has been photographed](#) grinning happily with Ukraine’s President Zelensky, does not actually believe that people tweeting in support of de-escalation and detente will cause a nuclear war. He uses the newfangled buzzword “nuclear blackmail” to discredit calls for de-escalation and detente because he wants those who support de-escalation and detente to be silent. He says “please stop” solely because he wants peace advocacy to stop.

“Nuclear war comes because we’ve done too little not too much,” [tweeted](#) Alexander Vindman, a [key player](#) in advancing the Trump-Ukraine scandal, further pushing the narrative that greater escalation is where the safety is.

In response to a tweet by France’s President Macron saying “We do not want a World War,” a [senior policy advisor](#) for the US government’s Helsinki Commission named Paul Massaro [tweeted](#), “Precisely this sort of weak, terrified language leads Russia to escalate.”

Imagine being so warped and twisted that you see that as a sane response to the most normal statement anyone can possibly make.

Meanwhile you’ve got idiots like Republican congressman Adam Kinzinger [acting like they’re being brave tough guys](#) by welcoming continual nuclear escalation while calling anyone who advocates de-

escalation cowards:

Must be a tough existence being so afraid. The [#Ukrainians](#) started as the underdog but still fought and now will win. Ole snowflake [@DavidSacks](#) is trembling as he blames America for the invasion. [#nafo](#) <https://t.co/1LN15hNzeJ>

— Adam Kinzinger #fella (@AdamKinzinger) [October 16, 2022](#)

The Nation's Katrina vanden Heuvel somehow pulled off the heroic feat of getting an article advocating de-escalation published in the Washington Post with a piece titled "[The Cuban missile crisis was 60 years ago, but it's urgently relevant today](#)." Reminding us how close we came to total annihilation and how we only survived getting so recklessly close to nuclear war by "plain dumb luck," she argues that humanity cannot risk going to the brink like that again.

"Humanity cannot afford to spin the cylinder again in this game of Russian roulette; we must unload the gun. Our only path forward is de-escalation," vanden Heuvel writes.

Indeed it is. It's absolutely insane that humanity is risking its own extinction over these games of empire-building and planetary domination when we've got so many other existential hurdles we need to focus on clearing.



This is all completely unnecessary. There's nothing inscribed upon the fabric of reality saying states need to be waving armageddon weapons at each other. There's no valid reason not to lay aside these games of global conquest and collaborate together toward a healthy coexistence on this planet.

We could have such a beautiful world. All the energy we pour into competition and conquest could go toward innovation that benefits us all, making sure everyone has enough, eliminating human suffering and the need for human toil. We're trading heaven on earth for elite ego games.

There's no valid reason we can't move from models of competition and domination to models of collaboration and care. Collaboration with each other; care for each other. Collaboration with our ecosystem; care for our ecosystem. We're throwing it away in exchange for senseless misery and peril.

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