



Washington Egged on by Its Neoconservatives Has Concluded that Putin Has No Stomach for War beyond a Limited Police Action

Description

USA/RUSSIA: The Kremlin's demonstrated inability to take proactive and decisive action has convinced Washington there is nothing to fear from Putin and that Russia can be defeated in Ukraine.

Indeed, the UK media takes for granted that Ukraine will defeat Russia. Here is the latest headline: "The West Needs a Plan for when Ukraine wins." <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/02/22/west-needs-plan-when-ukraine-wins/>

Biden's recent trip was to shore up the Eastern flank of NATO in anticipation of renewed action against Russia. If the Biden regime favored a peaceful settlement, Biden would not have bothered to meet in Warsaw with the leaders of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Bulgaria. There would be no need for Biden to go to Kiev to show American support for Zelensky.

I am often interviewed by Russian journalists—never by American ones whose task it is to protect the official narratives. The Russian journalists are ever hopeful for signs that the US favors a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Ukraine. I was just interviewed about Biden's trip. Did he go to Kiev to work out a peace plan with Zelensky?

How can anyone possibly think Washington favors a peace plan other than Russia's withdrawal from Donbass and Crimea and payment of reparations to Ukraine? Washington would favor this plan because it would be likely to bring down Putin, which is Washington's intent.

Such a withdrawal is one of the Kremlin's two choices. As such a withdrawal would likely mean the fall of the Putin government, *the Kremlin only has one choice: to use the force necessary to quickly bring the conflict to an end before it spirals out of control.*

It is astounding that after a year of experience the Kremlin has not figured out that by letting the war drag on and on the Kremlin has given Washington and NATO every opportunity to widen it further with provocation after provocation: sanctions, financial aid, military aid, intelligence, training, targeting information, attack on Crimea bridge, blown up Nord Stream pipelines, tanks, long-range missiles,

sooner or later jet fighters.

Now Putin is faced with a possible Ukrainian attack on Transnistria where a few thousand Russian troops, with no reinforcements in sight, are standing guard over a stockpile of Soviet-era weapons and ammunition suitable for Ukrainian use. Will the Russian forces be caught between Ukrainians on their east and Moldavians and Romanians on their West and suffer a defeat that further emboldens the West? <https://southfront.org/war-clouds-over-transnistria/>

If the Kremlin can't find the intelligence to get this conflict over with quickly, the Kremlin will be backed into a corner where nuclear weapons are the only option. Not only do some neoconservatives believe Washington can win a nuclear war, but also the West is getting bogus information that Russia's nuclear weapons don't work and that there is no danger in attacking Russia. See:

<https://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/general/2167289/all-bark-no-bite-russias-nuclear-weapons-dont-work-anymore-kremlin-defector-claims.html>

Even if Russia's nukes do work, Russia won't use them the Dutch prime minister says:

https://news.yahoo.com/russia-won-t-nuclear-weapons-231300600.html?guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly9zZWFiY2guYnJhdmUuY29tLw&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAql9SSf65DBqhChFEDmsxN0FoJWYHL7xM6TPgRS_-9BWPd_zSD-HiSv1ACGq7gxiYXjAahJTG4djdG10eEyeQcWTIfhSmwIE7tO4lqt46t8Edvv1az0u_GAxS-sLFH9J3IRC4Xuu1alG8P-BQy6&guccounter=2

This kind of disinformation becomes believable because Putin's unwillingness to use sufficient force to quickly achieve his aims has created the impression that the Russian military is incapable and after one year has failed to prevail over a third world army. What appears to some as Russian military incompetence and to others as Putin's lack of resolution encourages more provocative actions by the West. In the West the belief is that Russia's defeat is only matter of providing the weapons to Ukraine.

It is an unreal feeling to experience Russian journalists looking for a peaceful settlement when Biden's Undersecretary of State and many military officers are saying that Crimea is a legitimate target for Ukrainian missile attacks. Several days ago Secretary of State Blinken said a Ukrainian attempt to retake Crimea would be a "red line" for Putin and could result in more forceful Russian action, but that the decision is up to Kiev. Of course the decision is not up to Kiev. Zelensky would not dare make such a decision unless Washington gave the go-ahead. Blinken's statement indicates that Washington has given the go ahead, which suggests that longer range missiles are on the way to Ukraine.

To put it frankly, Putin, the Kremlin, and the Russian military are being discredited by Putin's failure to commit sufficient resources to quickly win the conflict. Indeed, in the eyes of the West the Russian military is being humiliated by Putin's policy, and this must have bad effects on Russian military morale.

Today, February 24, 2023, is the anniversary of Russia's entry into Donbass, which was intended only to free Donbass of Ukraine military and neo-Nazi militias. It was not an invasion of Ukraine. But by under-committing military resources and imposing crippling rules of war, Putin guaranteed that Washington would use the generous time Putin provided to greatly widen the war. Now Putin is faced with the likelihood of missile attacks on the Russian naval base in Crimea. Why is this unimaginable when Washington had no hesitancy in blowing up the Nord Stream pipelines? What will be the next target for attack? Moscow?

When the expected Russian winter offensive did not materialize, those who reported a large buildup of Russian troops and weapons on Ukraine's border said that Russians were a symbolic people and were delaying the attack for the anniversary date. The date has arrived.

If the attack does not occur, the neoconservatives will become even more confident. Provocations will worsen as they accelerate. Putin will find Russia backed into a corner where nuclear weapons are his only option.

Putin doesn't realize it, but his inability to act decisively in Ukraine is dooming the world to nuclear war.

by Paul Craig Roberts

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4. Politics-Geopolitics-Gov.-Events

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