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The Russia-Ukraine War and the Hidden Agenda of the United States

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Abstract

During the Biden Presidency, NATO exhibited in stark form two trends that have long portrayed its policies: open-door policies towards the East, and subordination to the American administration. Despite signs of American indifference towards the alliance during Trump's term, however, Biden decided to reverse Trump's policy and return to reviving this alliance, indeed, NATO remains important to the Biden administration, as long as the alliance is committed to implementing American interests, in other words, it values in so far as its conformity with the US foreign policy targets. Within NATO's open-door policies, including the joining of Ukraine to the alliance, the long-festering skirmishes in the Donbas region Eastern of Ukraine had been unresolved for eight years. by January 2022, these were by no means small problems. But they were more readily manageable than the 24 February developments, given the U.S rejects to discuss the Russian security demands. In essence, it seems the U.S seeks to leave a lasting state of confrontation between Russia and Ukraine, regardless of the high costs on the Ukrainian people, as well as pressure on European partners in NATO to cut or reduce any relationship with the Russian federation. However, this paper argues that the US has huge interests in the Russia-Ukraine crisis, therefore, Washington plays a pivotal role through push the continuation of the war in Ukraine on many tracks.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, US Hidden Agenda, NATO, Donbas Region

1. Introduction

To begin with, on February 7, 2010, Yanukovich took the presidency. Won 48.95 percent of the vote—a narrow lead over Timoshenko's 45.47 percent, international observers determined that the poll had been fair, here, when Ukraine abandoned its goal of joining NATO in June 2010, the relations with Russia further improved, while the Europe Union (EU) leaders had expressed concern. *According to Britannica web.* later, Mr. Yanukovich announced in November 2013, He halted preparations for signing an association agreement with the EU, Ukraine cannot sacrifice trade with Russia, which opposes the agreement (BBC,2013). However, the president's decision sparked mass protests, Thousands of demonstrations that gave way to rioting in January 2014. The EU leaders stepped up the pressure on Ukraine's government, as Kyiv witnessed one of the most violent days in its history. the EU agreed on sanctions against the Yanukovich government. and the US government announced further punitive actions (Oltermann & Lewis, 2014).

As opposition forces occupied police stations and government offices in western Ukraine, government control weakened. Russia backed Yanukovich in the crisis, while the US and EU supported the protesters. By February 2014, anti-government protests toppled the government and forced Yanukovich out of Kyiv (Fisher,2014). Relying on the Council on Foreign Relations Web, Ukraine has carved out its own path as a sovereign state over the past two decades, while also seeking more ties with Western institutions, such as the EU and NATO. A majority of Ukrainian speakers in the west of the country favor closer ties with Europe, while a majority of Russian speakers in the east favor closer ties with Russia.

2. The Conflict in Eastern Ukraine (Donbas Region)

Midst the 2014 Ukrainian revolution, which overthrew previous Ukrainian President Yanukovich's Russian-friendly rule, Russia retaliated by annexing Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and supporting an insurgency in Donbas (Hutchinson& Reevell,2022). Hence, the military confrontation in Eastern Ukraine began in 2014. It had already killed around 14,000 people between then and early 2022. Ukrainian government forces fought Russian-backed separatists for control of Donetsk and Luhansk, often known as Donbas, for eight years. Ukraine's intense clashes in 2014-2015 resulted in the loss of one-third of the region's land, the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics maintained their independence, according to International Crisis Group.

As part of creating conditions for sustainable peace in the region, in September 2014, Russia, Ukraine, and the fighters on Donbas reached an agreement in Minsk, Belarus, known as the Minsk (I) accord. The arrangement immediately fell apart, with both parties breaking it. In spite of that, the potential of creating peace was never broken, Delegates from Russia, Ukraine, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the leaders of the Donbas area signed a new deal, known as the Minsk Agreement (II), in February 2015, Based on Reuters web (2022). However, the map shows the areas of confrontation in the Donbas (Luhansk and Donetsk), between the Ukrainian army and the fighters in the Donbas.

DONBAS REGION IN UKRAINE

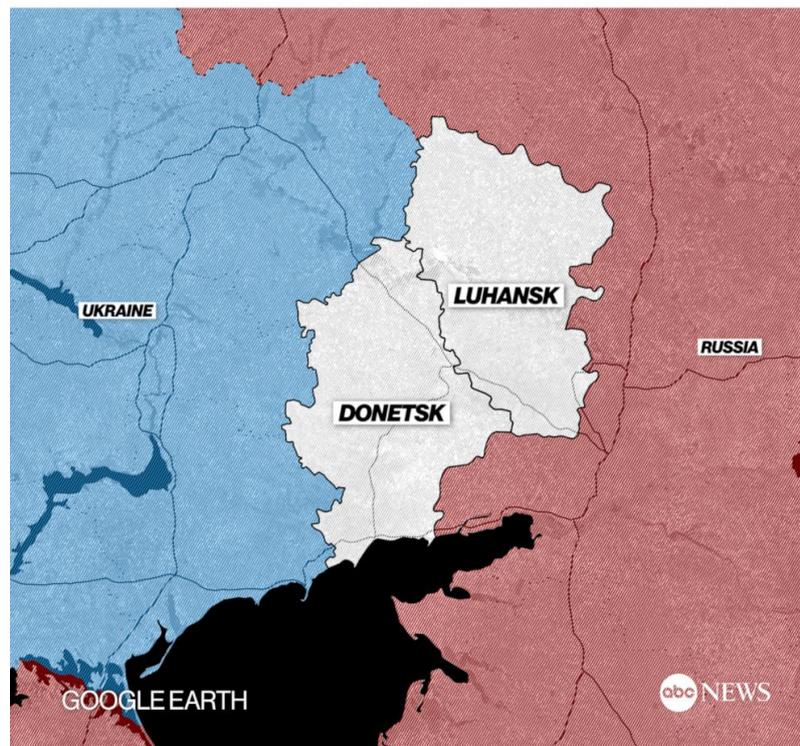


Figure 1: Donbas Region in Ukraine

Source: ABC news web

Among other things, in line with Ukrainian law, the Minsk agreement asks for the start of discourse on temporary self-government for the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as recognition of their special status by a resolution of parliament. This agreement, however, led definitely brought about a cease-fire, but seven years later, Kyiv's new government claims that meeting all of its conditions is unpleasant and politically impossible (Gongadze,2022). Thus, the situation took a turn for the worse in early July 2021, when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy ordered an attack to finally destroy the Donbas separatists. Whereas, to defend Russians in Donbas, Russia began sending troops and military equipment to the border with Ukraine, With the escalation of the crisis, Zelenskyy announced he would subjugate the Donbas region by military force and he insisted on his country's application to join NATO alliances. Henceforth, The Russian administration firmly rejected this.

at the same time, Russia's foreign ministry released a series of official demands in mid-Dec. 2021, requesting that the US and NATO suspend all military activities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, pledge to oppose further NATO expansion against Russia, and prevent Ukraine from joining NATO in the future. Regrettably, not only the US and NATO partners sent out bad signals. but also, the US supplies Ukraine with extra military weapons and another defensive armament (Council on Foreign Relations,2022). While President Putin has stated that NATO is a threat to Russia's national security and that adding Ukraine and Georgia will further exacerbate that worry, however, following a virtual meeting with allied foreign ministers, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg stated that NATO's open-door policy is unbreakable (Mahshie,2022).

Despite the fact that Russian and American officials met in Geneva on January 9-10, followed by sessions of the NATO-Russia Council on January 12 and the OSCE on January 13, to hear Moscow's concerns about NATO's open-door policy, regrettably, they did not reach to the solution, because NATO US-led refuses to discuss Russian security guarantees. Basically, Russia seeks assurances that NATO will cease its eastward expansion, rule out Ukraine's membership, and reduce military deployments in other former Soviet republics, as well as Central and Eastern Europe, based on the former agreements between parties.

There is no other choice. Moscow's demands had basically been ignored, on February 21, Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a proclamation recognizing the self-proclaimed “Donetsk People's Republic” (DPR) and “Luhansk People's Republic” (LPR) as independent states, as well as the signing agreements on mutual cooperation between Russia and the two separatist regions. However, following that, on February 24, the Russian President launched a Special Military Operation in Donbas to halt the genocide against the millions of people who have lived in the region since 2014.

“I am referring to the expansion of the NATO to the east, moving its military infrastructure closer to Russian borders. It is well known that for 30 years we have persistently and patiently tried to reach an agreement with the leading NATO countries on the principles of equal and inviolable security in Europe. In response to our proposals, we constantly faced either cynical deception and lies, or attempts to pressure and blackmail, while NATO, despite all our protests and concerns, continued to steadily expand. The war machine is moving and, I repeat, it is coming close to our borders.”

President Putin. 24Feb,2022

3. America's Agenda

To understand the US policy, Kimmage (2022) explains that, the cold war doctrine of containment is relevant to current U.S. foreign policy. Kimmage says, containment was explicitly a doctrine created for the nuclear age, in which we are still living. a recommitment containment can contribute to U.S. Russia's policy, added, the primary meaning of containment was the ambition to contain the Soviet Union, the well-known meaning of the word applied against Putin's Russia now.

In this regard, based on this strategy, the White House (2021), announced that “the bonds between the US and Ukraine are stronger than ever. Our shared values and commitment to a Europe that is whole, free, democratic, and at peace provide the basis for our strategic partnership. We are working together to address shared global challenges”. Nevertheless, when the operations in Ukraine started, Biden was quick to assure the American society

that they would not have to fight Russia, as one observer commented sardonically, “America is about to fight Russia until the last Ukrainian soldier.”

However, in developing the US response to Russia’s operation in Donbas, Colby (2022) wrote. The US must face and adapt to this reality. America has to take a far more pragmatic and strategic approach to the international situation, rather than ignoring or wishing away the unpleasant truths. Above all, our reaction must be strategic—it must be tailored to the challenges we confront in light of our resources and willingness to take risks. In this case, the U.S Department of State claimed that since January 2021, the danger Russia poses, including to our NATO allies, is now very clear. therefore, the US has invested more than 4 billion USD in security assistance to demonstrate its enduring and steadfast commitment to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. This includes more than 3.4 billion USD since Russia’s launched its war against Ukraine on February 24, the Department statement revealed that, since 2014, the US has contributed more than 6.1 billion USD in security aid for training and equipment to assist Ukraine in maintaining its territorial integrity, safeguarding its borders, and strengthening NATO interoperability.

Not only that, but also, another statement was released by the US Department of Defence on 21 April 2022, As Russian forces started the second onslaught in eastern Ukraine, President Biden ordered a Presidential Drawdown of security aid worth up to 800 million USD to support vital Ukrainian requirements for today's struggle. however, this is the sixth withdrawal of materiel from DoD stocks for Ukraine since August 2021, increasing the US commitment to moreover 4 billion USD in security assistance to Ukraine since the Biden Administration began. However, rather than seeking to resolve the conflict, Wendy Sherman, the deputy secretary of state, renewed a challenge, saying “we will not slam the door shut on NATO’s open-door policy” (US department of state, Jan 12, 2022).

Whereas, President Biden is adamant that Moscow will not be able to derail Ukraine's desire to join NATO, at the same time he announced that he has no immediate plans to help bring Ukraine into the alliance. In another word, the Position of the US administration obviously revealed that Mr. Biden has insisted that he needed to be a Proxy war with Russia on the Ukrainian territory. It follows that Ukraine is not a vital interest of the US and its European allies, this position is confirmed what the analysts say, Mr. Biden wants to fight Russia through Ukraine's military. As can be seen, the U.S. prepares its citizens for a war that could last for the years, President Biden and NATO allies are trying to support a proxy war in Ukraine against Russia- but not so much that Russia will revenge militarily against them, According to John Mearsheimer- *the influential University of Chicago political scientist most associated with the vital interest's approach*, “Ukraine is not a vital strategic interest for the US. It is a vital strategic interest for the Russians, they have made that perfectly clear, and not just Putin.” This means that the US has hidden objectives and agendas.

For further explanations to understand the US hidden agenda, you have to go back to the Cold War to explain the US's strong interest in the dispute, according to Craig Albert - an associate professor of political science and the head of Augusta University's Intelligence and Security Studies, who spoke to ABC News on February 25, 2022. In 1949, the US aided in the formation of NATO, to resist the Soviet menace in Europe. Since the Soviet collapse in 1991, NATO has expanded several times, Albert adds, Ukraine is a former Soviet republic that is bordered by Russia in the East. Therefore, if Ukraine becomes a member of NATO, it would have NATO backing and protection -that means simply the NATO forces will be at the gates of the Moscow.

However, from the author's viewpoint, the US prefers war to hold on, for many objectives:

Firstly, the US strategy aims to make the war costly enough that Putin will look for some kind of exit for forces, the US wants to see Russia's military capabilities weakened, by arming Ukraine, with anti-tanks (including Javelins), anti-aircraft missiles, and training its troops, Drones, missile defence system (S300) ...etc, for more Russia military suffered extraordinary losses in troops and equipment. the US believes, through greater weapons support, Ukraine is confident that it will, at the very least, halt Russia's onslaught in the east, and be in a strong position when negotiations on the conditions of the war's termination begin.

Secondly, The White House seeks to push the Kremlin into Ukraine quagmires similar to Soviet failure in Afghanistan, which could last several months or more, they are aiming to weaken Russia’s ability as a superpower,

including the destruction of the Russian military arsenal, the demolition of the Russian economy, and thus the destabilization on the Russian territory... etc, thus, a war that Moscow has seen as an occasion to boast its force, became instead a bloody and embarrassing display of weakness - one that threatens the stability of its deeply entrenched regime. For that, America hopes that there will be a revolution inside Russia to overthrow President Putin.

Thirdly, driven by the competition and global leadership, the US has another objective: to weaken Russia's ability to project power by isolating it diplomatically, at least the US allies expelled hundreds of Russian diplomats, by this foreign policy, the US wants a breakdown of all of the diplomatic channels of communication between Europe and Russia. In particular the channel between Germany, France, and Russia. In order to stifle the diplomatic effort that German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron have sought since the beginning of the crisis, and most importantly, to ensure the closure of the new energy channel between Russia and Germany called "Nord Stream2." Thus, the Russians become isolated, or at least, what the US called an outcast state.

Fourthly, the extreme sanctions the US and its allies have imposed against Russia's economy include an American prohibition on Russian energy imports, wealthy individuals, and Russian fossil fuels, the closure of foreign companies and financial institutions operating in Russia, withdrawal of financial investments, a boycott of Russian companies. Etc. However, the US is still pressing its European allies to boycott Russian oil and gas, which is a major resource for the Russian treasury. These punitive measures are the most restrictive ever imposed against a major economic power. Approaching all-out war against the Russian economy and financial system. Be that as it may, the US will make it impossible to conduct normal business in Russia, in other words, the US wants to crush Russia's economy.

Fifthly, the US demanded China, India, and Brazil (the biggest economies in the world) cut their relationship with Russia, in this strategy, the US official revealed that there is direct communication to Beijing that there will definitely be consequences for far-reaching sanctions evasion efforts or, any weapons support to Russia, such statements are directed at other poor economic countries, in order to terrorise them, all of those efforts are to tightening the noose around Russia federation.

Sixth, it should be mentioned that during the Ukraine war, US arms sales increased, however, the US defence contractors find more benefits in Ukraine, US arms manufacturers are cashing directly from the thousands of military equipment, like (missiles, drones, Tanks, individual weapons... etc). They also do stand to profit trillions of US dollars over the long run by supplying Eastern NATO wing countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland... eager to boost their defences against Russia, however, because the NATO states rush to arm, the bill for US companies will be more obese. Such military equipment sales, aim to improve the US economy, while it tends to break down.

However, Cordesman (2022) argues that the war in Ukraine appears to be setting the stage for a long-term conflict between Russia and the US, as well as NATO's European allies. He added, even if Russia does not aggressively threaten the Baltic nations, intimidate another European country, or completely implement its more frightening nuclear threat, the possibilities for any sort of Russian collaboration with the rest of Europe and the US are minimal at best. And that is what the US exactly wants.

4. Discussion

Since the end of the cold war, the American concern nested sustained in the minds of Americans, after 1991 was to encircle and bring down Russia after their success in bringing down the Soviet Union, which is the main strategic objective. The Americans insisted on establishing final bases for American hegemony over the world, including the Russian Federation, which had just emerged from that crisis of collapse. Although the main competitor to the US was and still is China, but, the worry about Russia did not leave the American memory. The Russian empire's obsession with all its stages and developments constituted the US core strategy to contain and crush Russia.

As we mentioned above, the US gets unlimited interests from the war in Ukraine, therefore, Washington adds too much oil to the fire in Ukraine to rage war for a longer time. As well, Washington played a vital role to undermine any attempt to hold negotiations between Kyiv and Moscow to stop the war. However, from our perspective, Putin's statement that "Russia had no option but to begin the operation" is correct. Indeed, the purpose of Russia's

special military operation is to protect civilians in the Donbas region controlled by Moscow-backed revolutionary, as well as to ensure Russia's own national security.

For Now, the map of the military operations, In addition to the liberation of the Donbas region within the administrative borders recognized before the year 2014, Russian troops will continue in their push toward the East of the Dnieper River, as well as, rush from the south to free all the cities, Including Mariupol city on the north coast of the Sea of Azov, Kherson city in the Donbas region, and we believe the second goal of operation will be to Odesa the most important port city in the Black sea. Within this situation, military strategists believe that Russia's local support, direct logistics, and the terrain in the Eastern region support its larger, better-armed military, essentially allowing Russia to finally win the war. Henceforth, President Putin will tell President Biden the game is over. Figure 2 shows a map of Russian operations.



Data as of April 21, 2022 at 3 p.m. ET

Notes: "Assessed" means the Institute for the Study of War has received reliable and independently verifiable information to demonstrate Russian control or advances in those areas. Russian advances are areas where Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks, but they do not control them. "Claimed" areas are where sources have said control or counteroffensives are occurring, but ISW cannot corroborate nor demonstrate them to be false.

Sources: The Institute for the Study of War with AEI's Critical Threats Project; LandScan HD for Ukraine, Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Graphic: Renée Rigdon, CNN

Figure 2: area of the Russian military operations

Source: CNN web, 23 April 2022.

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