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Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace, Justice, and Ecology.


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**What’s at stake:** The crisis of US ENCIRCLEMENT OF CHINA AND RUSSIA challenges peacemakers to construct a compelling alternative to the New Cold War, as much of the world slides towards violence, wars, class struggle, climate crisis, and religious fundamentalism. See OMNI’s newsletters/blogs on US Imperialism Westward Pacific/E. Asia, on Iran, and related subjects.

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Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has accused the West of breaking promises made after the fall of the Iron Curtain, saying that NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe violated commitments made during the negotiations over German reunification. Newly discovered documents from Western archives support the Russian position.

No one in Russia can vent his anger over NATO's eastward expansion quite as vehemently as Viktor Baranez. The popular columnist with the tabloid Komsomolskaya Pravda ("Komsomol Truth"), which has a readership of millions, is fond of railing against the "insidious and reckless" Western military alliance. Russia, Baranez writes, must finally stop treating NATO as a partner.

Baranez, a retired colonel who was the Defense Ministry's spokesman under former Russian President Boris Yeltsin, asks why Russia should even consider joint maneuvers after being deceived by the West. NATO, he writes, "has pushed its way right up to our national borders with its guns." He also argues that, in doing so, NATO has broken all the promises it made during the process of German reunification.

There is widespread agreement among all political parties in Moscow, from the Patriots of Russia to the Communists to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's United Russia party, that the West broke its word and short-changed Russia when it was weak.

In an interview with SPIEGEL at his residence outside Moscow in early November, President Dmitry Medvedev complained that when the Berlin Wall came down, it had "not been possible to redefine Russia's place in Europe." What did Russia get? "None of the things that we were assured, namely that NATO would not expand endlessly eastwards and our interests would be continuously taken into consideration," Medvedev said.

Different Versions

The question of what Moscow was in fact promised in 1990 has sparked a historical dispute with far-reaching consequences for Russia's future relationship with the West. But what exactly is the truth?

The various players involved have different versions of events. Of course there was a promise not to expand NATO "as much as a thumb's width further to the East," Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet president at the time, says in Moscow today. However, Gorbachev's former foreign
minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, speaking in the Georgian capital Tbilisi, says that there were no such assurances from the West. Even the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the Eastern military alliance, "was beyond our imagination," he says.

For years former US Secretary of State James Baker, Shevardnadze's American counterpart in 1990, has denied that there was any agreement between the two sides. But Jack Matlock, the US ambassador in Moscow at the time, has said in the past that Moscow was given a "clear commitment." Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the German foreign minister in 1990, says this was precisely not the case.

After speaking with many of those involved and examining previously classified British and German documents in detail, SPIEGEL has concluded that there was no doubt that the West did everything it could to give the Soviets the impression that NATO membership was out of the question for countries like Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia.

On Feb. 10, 1990, between 4 and 6:30 p.m., Genscher spoke with Shevardnadze. According to the German record of the conversation, which was only recently declassified, Genscher said: "We are aware that NATO membership for a unified Germany raises complicated questions. For us, however, one thing is certain: NATO will not expand to the east." And because the conversion revolved mainly around East Germany, Genscher added explicitly: "As far as the non-expansion of NATO is concerned, this also applies in general."

Shevardnadze replied that he believed "everything the minister (Genscher) said."

Not a Word

The year 1990 was one of major negotiations. Washington, Moscow, London, Bonn, Paris, Warsaw, East Berlin and many others were at odds over German unity, comprehensive European disarmament and a new charter of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Soviets insisted that everything be documented in writing, even when all that was at issue was the fate of Soviet military cemeteries in East Germany. However, the numerous agreements and treaties of the day contained not a single word about NATO expansion in Eastern Europe.

For this reason, the West argues, Moscow has no cause for complaint today. After all, the West did not sign anything regarding NATO expansion to the east. But is that tough stance fair?

At the beginning of 1990, the Soviet Union was still a world power with troops stationed at the Elbe River, and Hans Modrow, the former Dresden district chairman of the East German Communist Party, the SED, was in charge in East Berlin. But the collapse of the East German state was foreseeable.

Bonn's allies in Paris, London and Washington were concerned about the question of whether a unified Germany could be a member of NATO or, as had already happened in the past, would pursue a seesaw policy between east and west.

Genscher wanted to put an end to this uncertainty, and he said as much in a major speech to the West on Jan. 31, 1990 in Tutzing, a town in Bavaria. This was the reason, he said, why a unified Germany should be a member of NATO.

Moving with Caution

But how could the Soviet leadership be persuaded to support this solution? "I wanted to help them over the hurdle," Genscher told SPIEGEL. To that end, the German foreign minister
promised, in his speech in Tutzing, that there would not be "an expansion of NATO territory to the east, in other words, closer to the borders of the Soviet Union." East Germany was not to be brought into the military structures of NATO, and the door into the alliance was to remain closed to the countries of Eastern Europe.

Genscher remembered what had happened during the 1956 Hungarian revolution. Some of the insurgents had announced their intention to join the Western alliance, giving Moscow the excuse to intervene militarily. In 1990, Genscher was trying to send a signal to Gorbachev that he need not fear such a development in the Soviet bloc. The West, Genscher indicated, intended to cooperate with the Soviet Union in bringing about change, not act as its adversary.

The plan that was proclaimed in Tutzing had not been coordinated with the chancellor or West German allies, and Genscher spent the next few days vying for their support.

As Genscher's chief of staff Frank Elbe later wrote, the German foreign minister had "moved with the caution of a giant insect that uses its many feelers to investigate its surroundings, prepared to recoil when it encounters resistance."

US Secretary of State James Baker, a pragmatic Texan, apparently "warmed to the proposal immediately," says Elbe today. On Feb. 2, the two diplomats sat down in front of the fireplace in Baker's study in Washington, took off their jackets, put their feet up and discussed world events. They quickly agreed that there was to be no NATO expansion to the East. "It was completely clear," Elbe comments.

**Calming Russian Fears**

A short time later, then-British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd joined the German-American consensus. As a previously unknown document from the German Foreign Ministry shows, Genscher was uncharacteristically open with his relatively pro-German British counterpart when they met in Bonn on Feb. 6, 1990. Hungary was about to hold its first free elections, and Genscher declared that the Soviet Union needed "the certainty that Hungary will not become part of the Western alliance if there is a change of government." The Kremlin, Genscher said, would have to be given assurances to that effect. Hurd agreed.

But were such assurances intended to be valid indefinitely? Apparently not. When the two colleagues discussed Poland, Genscher said, according to the British records, that if Poland ever left the Warsaw Pact, Moscow would need the certainty that Warsaw would "not join NATO the next day." However, Genscher did not seem to rule out accession at a later date.

It stood to reason that Genscher would present his ideas in Moscow next. He was the longest-serving Western foreign minister, his relationship with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze was unusually strong, and it was his initiative. But Baker wanted to address the issue himself during his next trip to Moscow.

**'One Cannot Depend on American Politicians'**

What the US secretary of state said on Feb. 9, 1990 in the magnificent St. Catherine's Hall at the Kremlin is beyond dispute. There would be, in Baker's words, "no extension of NATO's jurisdiction for forces of NATO one inch to the east," provided the Soviets agreed to the NATO membership of a unified Germany. Moscow would think about it, Gorbachev said, but added: "any extension of the zone of NATO is unacceptable." [MORE](http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/nato-s-eastward-expansion-did-the-west-break-its-promise-to-moscow-a-663315.html)

*Translated from the German by Christopher Sultan*

http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/20/a_new_cold_war_ukraine_violence
This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form.

[For the introductory comments by Goodman and Gonzales about violence in Ukraine go to http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/20/a_new_cold_war_ukraine_violence ]

To talk more about the latest in Ukraine, we're joined by Stephen Cohen, professor emeritus of Russian studies and politics at New York University and Princeton University. His most recent book, Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives: From Stalinism to the New Cold War, is now out in paperback. His latest piece in The Nation is called "Distorting Russia: How the American Media Misrepresent Putin, Sochi and Ukraine."

So, talk about the latest, Professor Cohen.

STEVEN COHEN: Where do you want me to begin? I mean, we are watching history being made, but history of the worst kind. That's what I'm telling my grandchildren: Watch this. What's happening there, let's take the big picture, then we can go to the small picture. The big picture is, people are dying in the streets every day. The number 50 is certainly too few. They're still finding bodies. Ukraine is splitting apart down the middle, because Ukraine is not one country, contrary to what the American media, which speaks about the Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Historically, ethnically, religiously, culturally, politically, economically, it's two countries. One half wants to stay close to Russia; the other wants to go West. We now have reliable reports that the anti-government forces in the streets—and there are some very nasty people among them—are seizing weapons in western Ukrainian military bases. So we have clearly the possibility of a civil war.

And the longer-term outcome may be—and I want to emphasize this, because nobody in the United States seems to want to pay attention to it—the outcome may be the construction, the emergence of a new Cold War divide between West and East, not this time, as it was for our generation, in faraway Berlin, but right on the borders of
Russia, right through the heart of Slavic civilization. And if that happens, if that’s the new Cold War divide, it’s permanent instability and permanent potential for real war for decades to come. That’s what’s at stake.

One last point, also something that nobody in this country wants to talk about: The Western authorities, who bear some responsibility for what’s happened, and who therefore also have blood on their hands, are taking no responsibility. They’re uttering utterly banal statements, which, because of their vacuous nature, are encouraging and rationalizing the people in Ukraine who are throwing Molotov cocktails, now have weapons, are shooting at police. We wouldn’t permit that in any Western capital, no matter how righteous the cause, but it’s being condoned by the European Union and Washington as events unfold.

JUAN GONZÁLEZ: And when you say the Western countries who bear some responsibility, in what sense do they bear responsibility? I mean, clearly, there’s been an effort by the United States and Europe ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union to pull the former Soviet states into their economic sphere, but is that what you’re talking about?

STEPHEN COHEN: I mean that. I mean that Moscow—began with the expansion of NATO in the 1990s under Clinton. Bush then further expanded NATO all the way to Russia’s borders. Then came the funding of what are euphemistically called NGOs, but they are political action groups, funded by the West, operating inside Russia. Then came the decision to build missile defense installations along Russia’s borders, allegedly against Iran, a country which has neither nuclear weapons nor any missiles to deliver them with. Then comes American military outpost in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, which led to the war of 2008, and now the West is at the gates of Ukraine. So, that’s the picture as Moscow sees it. And it’s rational. It’s reasonable. It’s hard to deny.

But as for the immediate crisis, let’s ask ourselves this: Who precipitated this crisis? The American media says it was Putin and the very bad, though democratically elected, president of Ukraine, Yanukovych. But it was the European Union, backed by Washington, that said in November to the democratically elected president of a profoundly divided country, Ukraine, "You must choose between Europe and Russia." That was an ultimatum to Yanukovych. Remember—wasn’t reported here—at that
moment, what did the much-despised Putin say? He said, "Why? Why does Ukraine have to choose? We are prepared to help Ukraine avoid economic collapse, along with you, the West. Let's make it a tripartite package to Ukraine." And it was rejected in Washington and in Brussels. That precipitated the protests in the streets. MORE http://www.democracynow.org/2014/2/20/a_new_cold_war_ukraine_violence

Russian Vows Response to NATO Buildup. NADG (June 30, 2016). Russia's defense minister, Sergei Shoigu, said its military “will respond in kind to NATO’s buildup near Russian borders.” On land “2,000 new weapons units this year” and Russia’s Baltic Fleet “has received new ships and other weapons.”

“Putin Warns Finland Not to Join NATO.” NADG (July 2, 2016). "If Finland enters NATO…they become part of the military infrastructure of NATO, which will in an instant find itself on the borders of Russia.”

Misunderstanding Russia and Russians by Ann Wright
https://consortiumnews.com/2016/07/05/misunderstanding-russia-and-russians/

July 5, 2016.

Western media has demonized Russia and President Putin with unrelenting propaganda that has dazed and confused many Russians, a condition that retired U.S. Col. Ann Wright encountered on a recent visit.

I’ve just ended two weeks visiting cities in four regions of Russia. The questions that were asked over and over were: “Why does America hate us? Why do you demonize us?” Most would add a caveat — “I like American people and I think YOU like us individually but why does the American government hate our government?”

This article is a composite of the comments made and questions asked to our 20-person delegation and to me as an individual. I do not attempt to defend the views but offer them as an insight into the thinking of many of the persons with whom we came into contact in meetings and on the streets.

None of the questions, comments or views tell the full story, but I hope they give a feel for the
desire of the ordinary Russian that his or her country and its citizens are respected as a
sovereign nation with a long history and that it is not demonized as an outlaw state or an “evil”
nation. Russia has its flaws and room for improvement in many areas, just as every nation
does, including for sure, the United States.

New Russia Looks Like You  [Comments about the US by Russian citizens recorded by
Wright during her travels there. –D]

The United States worked hard to make the Soviet Union collapse, and it did. You wanted to
remake Russia like the United States – a democratic, capitalist country in which your
companies could make money – and you have done that.

After 25 years, we are a new nation much different from the Soviet Union. The Russian
Federation has created laws that have allowed a large private business class to emerge. Our
cities now look like your cities. We have Burger King, McDonalds, Subway, Starbucks and
malls filled with a huge number of totally Russian business ventures for the middle class.

We have chain stores with merchandise and food, similar to Wal-Mart and Target. We have
exclusive stores with top-of-the-line clothing and cosmetics for the richer. We drive new (and
older) cars now just like you do. We have massive rush hour traffic jams in our cities, just like
you do. We have extensive, safe, inexpensive metros in all of our major cities, just like you
have. When you fly across our country, it looks just like yours, with forests, farm fields, rivers
and lakes — only bigger, many time zones bigger.

Most people on buses and in the metro are looking at our mobile phones with internet, just
like you do. We have a smart youth population that is computer literate and most of whom
speak several languages.

You sent your experts on privatization, international banking, stock exchanges. You urged us
to sell off our huge state industries to the private sector at ridiculously low prices, creating the
multi-billionaire oligarchs that in many ways mirror the oligarchs of the United States. And you
made money in Russia from this privatization. Some of the oligarchs are in prison for violating
our laws.

You sent us experts on elections. For over 25 years we have held elections. And we have
elected some politicians you don’t like and some that we as individuals may not like. We have
political dynasties, just like you do. We don’t have a perfect government, nor perfect
government officials — which is also what we observe in the U.S. government and its officials.
We have graft and corruption in and outside of government, just as you do. Some of our
politicians are in jail for violating our laws, just like some of your politicians are in jail for
violating your laws.

And we have the poor just like you do. We have villages, towns and small cities that are
struggling with migration to the big cities with people moving in hopes of finding jobs, just like you do.

Our middle class travels throughout the world, just like you do. In fact, as a Pacific nation just like the U.S., we bring so much tourism money with us on our trips that your Pacific island territories of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas have negotiated with the U.S. Federal government to allow Russian tourists to enter both of those U.S. territories for 45 days without the time-consuming and expensive U.S. visa.

We have a strong science and space program and are a key partner in the International Space Station. We sent the first satellite into space and the first humans into space. Our rockets still take astronauts to the space station while your NASA program has been curtailed.

**Dangerous NATO Military Exercises**

You have your allies and we have our allies. You told us during the dissolution of the Soviet Union that you would not enlist countries from the Eastern block into NATO, yet you have done that. Now you are placing missile batteries along our border and you are conducting major military exercises with strange names such as Anaconda, the strangling snake, along our borders.

You say that Russia could possibly invade neighboring countries and you have big dangerous military exercises in countries on our borders with these countries. We did not build up our Russian military forces along those borders until you continued to have ever increasingly large military “exercises” there. You install missile “defenses” in countries on our borders, initially saying they are to protect against Iranian missiles and now you say Russia is the aggressor and your missiles are aimed at us.

For our own national security, we must respond, yet you vilify us for a response that you would have if Russia would have military maneuvers along the Alaskan coast or the Hawaii islands or with Mexico on your southern border or with Canada on your northern border.

**Syrian Conflict**

We have allies in the Middle East including Syria. For decades, we have had military ties to Syria and the only Soviet/Russian port in the Mediterranean is in Syria. Why is it unexpected that we help defend our ally, when the stated policy of your country is for “regime change” of our ally — and you have spent hundreds of millions of dollars for Syrian regime change?

With this said, we Russia saved the U.S. from an enormous political and military blunder in 2013 when the U.S. was determined to attack the Syrian government for “crossing the red line” when a horrific chemical attack that tragically killed hundreds was erroneously blamed on the Assad government. We provided you documentation that the chemical attack did not
come from the Assad government and we brokered a deal with the Syrian government in which they turned over their chemical weapons arsenal to the international community for destruction.

Ultimately, Russia arranged for the chemicals to be destroyed and you provided an especially designed U.S. ship that carried out the destruction. Without Russian intervention, a direct U.S. attack on the Syrian government for the mistaken allegation of use of chemical weapons would have resulted in even greater chaos, destruction and destabilization in Syria.

Russia has offered to host talks with the Assad government about power sharing with opposition elements. We, like you, do not want to see the takeover of Syria by a radical group such as ISIS that will use the land of Syria to continue its mission to destabilize the region. Your policies and financing of regime change in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya and Syria have created instability and chaos that is reaching all over the world.

**Coup in Ukraine**

You say that Crimea was annexed by Russia and we say Crimea “reunited” with Russia. We believe that the U.S. sponsored a coup of the elected Ukrainian government that had chosen to accept a loan from Russia rather than from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund.

We believe that coup and the resulting government was illegally brought to power through your multi-million dollar “regime change” program. We know that your Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Victoria Nuland described in a phone call, which our intelligence services recorded, that “Yats is the guy,” referring to Arseniy Yatsenyuk, who became prime minister after the pro-West/NATO coup.

In response to that U.S.-sponsored violent government take-over of the elected government of the Ukraine – rather than allow a new presidential election within a year – ethnic Russians in the Ukraine, particularly those in the eastern provinces and in Crimea were very afraid of the anti-Russian violence that had been unleashed by neo-fascist forces that were in the militia arm of the takeover.

With the takeover of the Ukrainian government, the people of Crimea – many of them ethnic Russians – voted by 96 percent with more than 80 percent of voters casting ballots to unite with the Russian Federation instead of staying with Ukraine. Of course, some citizens of Crimea disagreed and left to live in Ukraine.

We wonder whether citizens of the United States realize that the Southern Fleet of the Russian military was located in the Black Sea ports in the Crimea and in light of the violent take over of Ukraine that our government felt it was vital to ensure access to those ports.
On the basis of Russian national security, the Russian Duma (Parliament) voted to accept the results of the referendum and annexed Crimea as a republic of the Russian Federation and gave federal city status to the important seaport of Sevastopol.

**Sanctions and Double Standards**

While the U.S. and European governments accepted and cheered for the violent overthrow of the elected government of the Ukraine, both the U.S. and European nations were very vengeful against the non-violent referendum of people of Crimea and have slammed Crimea with all sorts of sanctions that have reduced international tourism, the main industry of the Crimea, to almost nothing.

In the past in Crimea, we received over 260 cruise ships filled with international passengers from Turkey, Greece, Italy, France, Spain and other parts of Europe. Now, because of the sanctions we have virtually no European tourists. You are the first group of Americans we have seen in over a year. Now, our business is with other citizens from Russia.

The U.S. and the European Union have put sanctions on Russia again. The Russian ruble has been devalued almost 50 percent, some from the downturn of worldwide price of oil, but some from the sanctions the international community has placed on Russia from the Crimea “reunification.”

We believe you want the sanctions to hurt us so we will overthrow our elected government, just like you put sanctions on Iraq for the Iraqis to overthrow Saddam Hussein or on North Korea or on Iran for the people of those countries to overthrow their governments.

Sanctions have the opposite effect than what you want. While we know sanctions do hurt the ordinary person and if left on a population for a long time can kill through malnutrition and lack of medicines, sanctions have made us stronger.

Now, we may not get your cheeses and wines, but we are developing or redeveloping our own industries and have become more self-reliant. We now see how the globalization trade mantra of the United States can and will be used against countries that decide not to go along with the U.S. on its worldwide political and military agenda. If a country decides not to go along with the United States, its people will be cut off from the global markets that the trade agreements have made you dependent upon.

We wonder why the double standard? Why haven’t the member states of the United Nations put sanctions on the U.S. since you have invaded and occupied countries and killed hundreds of thousands in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen and Syria.

Why is the U.S. not held accountable for kidnapping, extraordinary rendition, torture and imprisonment of almost 800 persons that have been held in the gulag called Guantanamo?
Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

We want the elimination of nuclear weapons. Unlike you, we have never used a nuclear weapon on people. Even though we consider nuclear weapons as a defensive weapon, they should be eliminated because one political or military mistake will have devastating consequences for the entire planet.

We know the terrible costs of war. Our great-grandparents remind us of the 27 million Soviet citizens killed during World War II, our grandparents tell us of the Soviet war in Afghanistan in the 1980s and the difficulties arising from the Cold War.

We don’t understand why the West continues to vilify and demonize us when we are so much like you. We too are concerned about threats to our national security and our government responds in many ways like yours. We do not want another Cold War, a war in which everyone gets frost bitten, or worse, a war that will kill hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people.

We want a peaceful future. We Russians are proud of our lengthy history and heritage. We want a bright future for ourselves and our families… and for yours. We want to live in a peaceful world. We want to live in peace.

Ann Wright served 29 years in the US Army/Army Reserves and retired as a Colonel. She also served 16 years as a US diplomat in US Embassies in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia, Afghanistan and Mongolia. She resigned from the U.S. government in March 2003 in opposition to President Bush’s war on Iraq. She is the co-author of Dissent: Voices of Conscience.


Originally appeared at Anti Media

War games and nuclear policy perpetuated by the Obama administration are “fueling growing tensions” with Russia and putting the world at risk of a nuclear war, according to an official nonpartisan organization consisting of 1,407 mayors and other leaders of cities with 30,000 or more inhabitants.

In a unanimous decision at their 84th annual conference, the United States Conference of
Mayors (USCM) passed a **resolution** condemning President Barack Obama’s decision to set the U.S. on track to spend **$1 trillion over the next 30 years** to “maintain and modernize its nuclear bombs and warheads, production facilities, delivery systems, and command and control.”

“The Obama administration has […] reduced the US nuclear stockpile less than any post-Cold War presidency,” the resolution, passed in Indianapolis on June 27, reads.

The resolution is supportive of the 1970 international nuclear agreement known as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but the USCM chastised the Obama administration’s drift from NPT principles by contrasting it with another international agreement to which the administration has held steadfast.

Referencing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) joint-military exercise in Eastern Europe, **known as Anaconda 2016**, the USCM said:

> “The largest NATO war games in decades, involving 14,000 US troops, and activation of US missile defenses in Eastern Europe are fueling growing tensions between nuclear-armed giants.”

Noting **94 percent** of the more than 15,000 nuclear weapons in the world are held by the U.S. or Russia — and that most of those are “orders of magnitude more powerful than the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs” — the USCM pushed for a nuclear weapons spending reduction “to the minimum necessary,” arguing in favor of more financial focus on “deteriorating” and “crumbling” infrastructure within the U.S., instead.

> “[F]ederal funds are desperately needed in our communities to build affordable housing, create jobs with livable wages, improve public transit, and develop sustainable energy sources,” the resolution said.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki were repeatedly mentioned in the USCM document, including in the opening clause, which stated asserted the 1945 atomic bombings “indiscriminately incinerated tens of thousands of ordinary people, and by the end of 1945 more than 210,000 people – mainly civilians, were dead, and the surviving hibakusha, their children and grandchildren continue to suffer from physical, psychological and sociological effects.”

Though the resolution offered praise to President Obama for his May visit to Hiroshima, as well as congratulations on the success of international negotiations with Iran over its civilian nuclear program, the UCSM resolved to demand more multilateral talks and an end to nuclear weapons manufacturing.

However, the organization does not expect change to come until at least January 20, 2017, when a new president replaces Obama. Their resolution, titled, Calling on the Next U.S.
President to Pursue Diplomacy with Other Nuclear-Armed States; Participate in Negotiations for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons; Cut Nuclear Weapons Spending and Redirection Funds to Meet the Needs of Cities, issued a more urgent call for more U.S. cities to join the long-standing Mayors for Peace campaign, another movement against nuclear weapons.

Mayors for Peace is an international organization founded by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1991. They currently have 5,500 member cities, and their goal is to reach 10,000 by 2020. The organization “calls upon cities to stand together for nuclear abolition and world peace.”

Below are the USCM’s resolution’s 23 sponsors and co-sponsors, all mayors, from 23 cities in 14 states, as well as the District of Columbia, according to the Western States Legal Foundation:

Little Rock, Arkansas — Mark Stodola et al.

The United States and NATO Are Preparing for a Major War With Russia By Michael T. Klare. JULY 7, 2016.
Massive military exercises and a troop buildup on NATO’s eastern flank reflect a dangerous new strategy.
https://www.thenation.com/article/the-united-states-and-nato-are-preparing-for-a-major-war-with-russia/

For the first time in a quarter-century, the prospect of war—real war, war between the major powers—will be on the agenda of Western leaders when they meet at the NATO Summit in Warsaw, Poland, on July 8 and 9. Dominating the agenda in Warsaw (aside, of course, from the “Brexit” vote in the UK) will be discussion of plans to reinforce NATO’s “eastern flank”—the arc of former Soviet partners stretching from the Baltic states to the Black Sea that are now allied with the West but fear military assault by Moscow. Until recently, the prospect of such an attack was given little credence in strategic circles, but now many in NATO believe a major war is possible and that robust defensive measures are required. In what is likely to be its most significant move, the Warsaw summit is expected to give formal approval to a plan to deploy four multinational battalions along the eastern flank—one each in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Although not deemed sufficient to stop a determined Russian assault, the four battalions would act as a “tripwire,” thrusting soldiers from numerous NATO countries into the line of fire and so ensuring a full-scale, alliance-wide response. This, it is claimed, will deter Russia from undertaking such a move in the first place or ensure its defeat should it be foolhardy enough to start a war.
The United States, of course, is deeply involved in these initiatives. Not only will it supply many of the troops for the four multinational battalions, but it is also taking many steps of its own to bolster NATO’s eastern flank. Spending on the Pentagon’s “European Reassurance Initiative” will quadruple, climbing from $789 million in 2016 to $3.4 billion in 2017. Much of this additional funding will go to the deployment, on a rotating basis, of an additional armored-brigade combat team in northern Europe.

As a further indication of US and NATO determination to prepare for a possible war with Russia, the alliance recently conducted the largest war games in Eastern Europe since the end of the Cold War. Known as Anakonda 2016, the exercise involved some 31,000 troops (about half of them Americans) and thousands of combat vehicles from 24 nations in simulated battle maneuvers across the breadth of Poland. A parallel naval exercise, BALTOPS 16, simulated “high-end maritime warfighting” in the Baltic Sea, including in waters near Kaliningrad, a heavily defended Russian enclave wedged between Poland and Lithuania.

All of this—the aggressive exercises, the NATO buildup, the added US troop deployments—reflects a new and dangerous strategic outlook in Washington. Whereas previously the strategic focus had been on terrorism and counterinsurgency, it has now shifted to conventional warfare among the major powers. “Today’s security environment is dramatically different than the one we’ve been engaged in for the last 25 years,” observed Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter on February 2, when unveiling the Pentagon’s $583 billion budget for fiscal year 2017. Until recently, he explained, American forces had largely been primed to defeat insurgent and irregular forces, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan. Now, however, the Pentagon was being readied for “a return to great-power competition,” including the possibility of all-out combat with “high-end enemies” like Russia and China.

By preparing for war, Washington and NATO are setting in motion forces that could achieve precisely that outcome. The budgetary and force-deployment implications of this are enormous in their own right, but so is this embrace of “great-power competition” as a guiding star for US strategy. During the Cold War, it was widely assumed that the principal task of the US military was to prepare for all-out combat with the Soviet Union, and that such preparation must envision the likelihood of nuclear escalation. Since then, American forces have seen much horrible fighting in the Middle East and Afghanistan, but none of that has involved combat with another major power, and none entailed the risk of nuclear escalation—for which we should all be thankful. Now, however, Secretary Carter and his aides are seriously thinking about—and planning for—conflicts that would involve another major power and could escalate to the nuclear realm.

MORE https://www.thenation.com/article/the-united-states-and-nato-are-preparing-for-a-major-war-with-russia/
Putin predicts nuclear war [more accurate title: Russians have a right to be alarmed at U.S. anti-ballistic-missile capability.]


from RUSSIA INSIDER (bad headline on article)

Art Hobson
July 13, 2016

Hi Coralie and Dick -

It certainly is a misleading headline; Putin didn’t “lose it,” and in fact spoke vigorously but rationally about the threat that faces him. The most important part of this article is the video news clip of Putin’s lecture to journalists. I agree with Putin: The Russians have a right to be alarmed at U.S. anti-ballistic-missile capability. I haven’t kept up with this ABM issue recently, but here are two related articles of mine from 2008, the first about our general relations with Russia since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, and the second about how our ABM capability threatens Russia.

http://physics.uark.edu/hobson/NWAT/08and09/08.08.30.html
http://physics.uark.edu/hobson/NWAT/08and09/08.10.11.html

Of course, “Russia Insider” comes from Moscow, but it offers an important view into Russia, one that Americans need to understand.

Thanks Coralie. If you find more info about this question, please send it to me. I am very concerned that Hillary (who I will vote for) will get us into war with Russia. If she begins to move in this direction, I’ll be looking for an anti-war demonstration to join.

Peace – Art

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http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2015/03/russiaukraine-newsletter-5.html

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MH17, KAL007, IA655： KNOWING THE PRESENT AND FUTURE BY UNDERSTANDING THE PAST

Trauger, MH17 No Re-run of KAL007 But Resembles US Downing Iran Air 655.

PEACEFUL ALTERNATIVES TO WAR


*Bloomberg News*, Ask for United Nations Peacekeeping Forces

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**END RUSSIA NEWSLETTER #6, SEPTEMBER 1, 2016**

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Dick Bennett

**Newsletters**: http://omnicenter.org/dick-bennetts-peace-justice-and-ecology-newsletters/

**Blog**: http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

For research purposes, specific subjects can be located in the following alphabetized index, and searched on the blog using the search box. The search box is located in the upper left corner of
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