

PEACE IN UKRAINE FAQ

What could a negotiated settlement look like?

The outlines of a peace agreement already exist. They include

- A comprehensive ceasefire.
- Withdrawal of Russian forces.
- A Ukrainian commitment to international neutrality.
- An agreement or referendum on the future of the Donbas region, whose civil war since 2014 led to the Russian invasion.

The U.S. can support peace by:

- Agreeing to lift sanctions if Russia keeps its side of a peace agreement.
- Committing humanitarian assistance to Ukraine instead of more weapons.
- Ruling out further escalation of the war, such as a “no fly zone.”
- Agreeing to end NATO expansion and committing to renewed diplomacy with Russia.

A new [report](#) from Just World Educational goes into much great detail.

What is the history of NATO expansion?

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a collective military alliance formed in 1949 by the United States, Canada and several Western European nations to thwart the expansion of the Soviet Union.

To counter NATO, in 1955 the Soviet Union formed the Warsaw Pact, a political and military alliance between the Soviet Union and several Eastern European nations. Following the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Warsaw Pact disbanded. NATO should have disbanded as well, but instead, it expanded.

In 1990, in talks leading to the reunification of East and West Germany, Secretary of State James Baker assured Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that NATO would not expand “one inch eastward.” But by 1991, there were 15 countries in NATO and under the Clinton administration, NATO continued to expand eastward and now numbers 30 countries.

What is the Russian objection to NATO expansion?

Russian President Putin has stated repeatedly for two decades that this expansion threatens the national security of the Russian Federation. Two NATO members, Latvia and Estonia, border Russia, while other NATO members, such as Poland, Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Lithuania, are close neighbors.

In fact, the current CIA director William J. Burns spoke about Russian security concerns in 2008. He explained that during his time as the U.S. ambassador to Russia he had spoken to Russians from all different political backgrounds and found that NATO expansion was a common security concern that no Russian president could allow to go unaddressed.

What countries are members of NATO?

The members are the original 12 founding members of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as Greece, Spain, Turkey, Montenegro, North Macedonia and the former Warsaw Pact countries: Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Albania, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Romania, Poland and Slovakia.

Is there really a threat of nuclear war?

Yes, the threat is real and a recent U.S. poll shows that almost 70% of Americans are concerned that the Ukraine war could lead to nuclear war. Russia has put its nuclear weapons on “high alert.” Three European countries—France, Germany and the United Kingdom—possess their own nuclear weapons, and five other NATO members—Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey—house U.S. nuclear weapons.

We’ve come within minutes of accidental nuclear apocalypse many times. U.S. Presidents who, like Vladimir Putin, have made specific public or secret nuclear threats to other nations include Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon, Bush I, Clinton, and Trump. Meanwhile Obama, Trump, and others have said “All options are on the table.” Russia and the U.S. have 90% of the world’s nukes, missiles pre-armed, and first-use policies. Nuclear winter does not respect political boundaries. The entire world should not only be terrified about the possibility of a nuclear confrontation, but should be demanding that the nuclear countries rid themselves of these weapons, as is now international law according to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Why should environmentalists care about this war?

Environmentalists should care about this war, and all wars, because war swallows the funding and attention needed to protect the Earth. Militaries and wars are huge contributors to the destruction of the climate and Earth. They block cooperation between

governments. They create suffering through disruption of current fuel sources. They justify increased fossil fuel production – releasing reserves, shipping fuels to Europe. They distract attention for scientists' reports on the existential threat to the planet. This war in Ukraine risks nuclear and climate disaster. Ending it is the only sensible path.

What is the role right-wing groups played in events in Ukraine in 2014?

In February 2014, the U.S. and NATO encouraged and supported the overthrow of the elected, but allegedly corrupt, Russia-leaning government of Ukraine.

In February 2014, fascist militias joined with ordinary Ukrainian citizens in a violent overthrow of their central government in Kyiv.

In May 2014, fascist mobs killed many ethnic Russians in other parts of Ukraine.

In response, ethnic Russians began a separatist rebellion, especially in eastern provinces where there is a majority of ethnic Russians.

The Ukrainian military has allowed fascist militias such as the neo-Nazi Azov battalion to join them in ongoing operations against the rebellion.

This does not mean that Ukrainian President Zelensky heads a fascist government. In a 2019 election, the Azov battalion got only 2 percent of the vote, much less than other right-wing political parties have received in elections in other European countries.

By asserting that the Ukrainian President Zelensky heads a fascist government that must be destroyed, Russian officials sound like former U.S. officials such as Secretary of State Colin Powell, who perpetrated the lie that the Iraqi government had weapons of mass destruction and therefore must be destroyed.

What is the recent history of Crimea that is important to know?

In March 2014, 83 percent of the voters in Crimea turned out to vote and 97 percent voted for integration into the Russian Federation and out of Ukraine. The vast majority are ethnic Russians.

The Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea has been condemned by most of the international community, which has applied strong sanctions against Russia and special sanctions against Crimea that destroyed its international tourism industry.

What can Russian diplomats do now?

They can resign. The author, former diplomat Ann Wright, resigned in the wake of the U.S. invasion of Iraq because she thought the decisions being made by elected politicians were not in the best interests of the U.S, or the people of Iraq, or the world.

For those Russian diplomats, a decision to resign from the Russian diplomatic corps would result in much more severe consequences and most certainly would be much more dangerous than what Ann Wright faced in her resignation in opposition to the U.S. war on Iraq.

And, if they resign, their voices of conscience, their voices of dissent, will probably be the most important legacy of their lives.

How have the U.S. and NATO been involved with Ukraine since 2014 and how has Putin responded?

In 2016 NATO engaged in an increasing number of military war games conducted on the Russian border including a [very large war maneuver with the ominous name of "Anaconda."](#) the large snake that kills by wrapping around suffocating its prey, an analogy not lost on the Russian government.

New US/NATO [bases were constructed in Poland](#) and [missile batteries were located in Romania](#).

President Putin continued to warn the US and NATO that Ukraine being annexed into the NATO sphere would be a threat to the national security of the Russian Federation.

In late 2021 with the U.S. and NATO again stated the "door was never closed to [Ukraine's] entry into NATO" whereupon the Russian Federation responded with a build-up of 125,000 military forces around Ukraine.

President Putin and long-standing Russian Federation Foreign Minister Lavrov kept telling the world that this was a large-scale training exercise, similar to military exercises that NATO and the US had conducted along its borders.

How should we view the Russian anti-war movement?

All anti-war activists should support Russians protesting the war. These protesters are facing severe repression for standing up for anti-war values and support from the international community goes a long way in showing these activists that they are not alone.

The anti-war movement in Russia exists independently of US/NATO interests. In fact, many Russians protesting the war are concerned about NATO expansion, but they understand that security concerns are never an excuse for war. Anti-war activists around the world should follow their lead by taking to the streets in protest of the war, demanding Putin end his attacks on

Ukraine, and that the US and NATO countries do not intervene in the conflict, but instead pursue a peaceful resolution which takes Ukrainian and Russian security concerns seriously.