

# NATO's Expansion to the East: Slouching Toward Nuclear Armageddon, World War III

By [Carla Stea](#)

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*"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;*

*Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.*

*The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere*

*The ceremony of innocence is drowned;*

*The best lack all conviction, while the worst*

*Are full of passionate intensity."*

—William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming"

*"We do have an inveterate antipathy for communism—or paranoia as I like to put it.*

*My own belief is that this form of psychological ailment—in this case a national madness—leads the victim to actually create the thing which is feared the most.*

*It strikes me that this is precisely what the U.S. has been doing. Creating—and if not creating, energetically supporting -fascist, totalitarian regimes in the name of fighting totalitarianism. Greece, South Vietnam, a good deal of Latin America. For me, the best example of all is the U.S. Army." —Written by Former U.S. Vice -President Al Gore Jr. , in a letter to his father, Senator Albert Gore Sr. (whose opposition to the Vietnam war cost him his Senate seat.)*

In 1997, 50 United States arms control experts, many of whom had years, and sometimes decades of experience working in the Soviet Union and Russia, intimately involved in negotiations with Russian leaders and experts in nuclear weapon technology, and in many cases profoundly knowledgeable about Russian culture, history, and the environment and experiences shaping Russian thinking and attitudes, signed a petition to President Clinton fiercely objecting to the expansion of NATO. This petition is just below.

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June 26, 1997

Dear Mr. President,

We, the undersigned, believe that the current U.S.-led effort to expand NATO, the focus of the recent Helsinki and Paris Summits, is a policy error of historic proportions. We believe that NATO expansion will decrease allied security and unsettle European stability for the following reasons:

In Russia, NATO expansion, which continues to be opposed across the entire political spectrum, will strengthen the nondemocratic opposition, undercut those who favor reform and cooperation with the West, bring the Russians to question the entire post-Cold War settlement, and galvanize resistance in the Duma to the START II and III treaties; In Europe, NATO expansion will draw a new line of division between the "ins" and the "outs," foster instability, and ultimately diminish the sense of security of those countries which are not included;

In NATO, expansion, which the Alliance has indicated is open-ended, will inevitably degrade NATO's ability to carry out its primary mission and will involve U.S. security guarantees to countries with serious border and national minority problems, and unevenly developed systems of democratic government;

In the U.S., NATO expansion will trigger an extended debate over its indeterminate, but certainly high, cost and will call into question the U.S. commitment to the Alliance, traditionally and rightly regarded as a centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy.

Because of these serious objections, and in the absence of any reason for rapid decision, we strongly urge that the NATO expansion process be suspended while alternative actions are pursued. These include:

- opening the economic and political doors of the European Union to Central and Eastern Europe;
- developing an enhanced Partnership for Peace program;
- supporting a cooperative NATO-Russian relationship; and
- continuing the arms reduction and transparency process, particularly with respect to nuclear weapons and materials, the major threat to U.S. security, and with respect to conventional military forces in Europe.

Russia does not now pose a threat to its western neighbors and the nations of Central and Eastern Europe are not in danger. For this reason, and the others cited above, we believe that NATO expansion is neither necessary nor desirable and that this ill-conceived policy can and should be put on hold.

Sincerely,

|                    |                     |                   |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| George Bunn        | Townsend Hoopes     | Sam Nunn          |
| Robert Bowie       | Gordon Humphrey     | Herbert S. Okun   |
| Bill Bradley       | Fred Ikle           | W.K.H. Panofsky   |
| David Calleo       | Bennett Johnston    | Christian Patte   |
| Richard T. Davies  | Carl Kaysen         | Richard Pipes     |
| Jonathan Dean      | Spurgeon Keeny      | Robert E. Pursley |
| Paul Doty          | James Leonard       | George Rathjens   |
| Susan Eisenhower   | Edward Luttwak      | Stanley Resor     |
| David M. Evans     | Michael Mandelbaum  | John Rhinelanders |
| David Fischer      | Jack F. Matlock Jr. | John J. Shanahan  |
| Raymond Garthoff   | C. William Maynes   | Marshall Shulman  |
| Morton H. Halperin | Richard McCormack   | John Steinbruner  |
| Owen Harries       | David McGiffert     | Stansfield Turner |
| Gary Hart          | Robert McNamara     | Richard Viets     |
| Arthur Hartman     | Jack Mendelsohn     | Paul Warnke       |
| Mark Hatfield      | Philip Merrill      | James D. Watkins  |
| John P. Holdren    | Paul H. Nitze       |                   |

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The names on this petition should have convinced the President of the imperative of heeding this warning. Nevertheless, President Clinton ignored this alarm by his chief experts and advisers, and NATO was expanded by three countries during his presidency. This was, not incidentally, in violation of former Secretary of State James Baker's guarantee to Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev that "Nato will not expand one inch east of Germany."

In subsequent years, 12 new members were added to NATO, despite Russia's fervent opposition, as each eastward expansion of NATO stealthily encroached upon territories closer to Russia's border. In unison with his American colleagues, (those 50 American arms control experts fiercely opposing President Clinton's expansion of NATO) it is crucial to paraphrase the op-ed article published in the Washington Post in 1997, written by Russia's late Ambassador to the United States, Yuliy Vorontsov:

"One thing upon which all Russians are united: opposition to NATO expansion. For centuries, all bloody invasions of Russia have come from the West:

Poland invaded Russia hundreds of years ago;

then Sweden invaded Russia, finally expelled by Peter the Great during the battle of Poltava;

France, led by Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812,

and nazi Germany invaded Russia in Operation Barbarossa during World War II:

27 million Soviet citizens, the majority Russians, died during the Great Patriotic War, ultimately defeating nazi Germany.

NATO is a Western military force: it is not bringing schools or hospitals, it is placing violent military bases on Russia's borders. Inevitably, Russia is legitimately alarmed by military encroachment on its borders from the West. This planned expansion of NATO will have disastrous consequences."

Even Boris Yeltsin, Washington's darling, opposed the first stage of NATO expansion in 1998, which brought Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary into NATO, the first in a deadly series of provocations.

How obtuse or psychotic were the planners of NATO expansion?

At the Munich Security Conference in 2007 Putin stated:

"Today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hyper use of force - military force—in international relations, force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts. And, of course, this is extremely dangerous. It results in the fact that no one feels safe. I want to emphasize this—no one feels safe!"

He had witnessed NATO's violent slaughter in the Balkans and Iraq: the depleted uranium weapons NATO used in bombing Belgrade caused the spread of cancer throughout the population. Putin continued:

"NATO has put its frontline forces on our borders..which represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact?" "Why is it necessary to put military infrastructure on our borders?"

Image: Gates at the LBJ Library in 2016 (From the Public Domain)



Former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates stated that

"trying to bring Georgia and Ukraine into NATO was a case of recklessly ignoring what the Russians considered their own vital national interests."

Once again, Washington recklessly ignored the advice of its own experts; on February 1, 2008, U.S. Ambassador William J. Burns cabled from Moscow "08MOSCOW265\_a: NYET MEANS NYET: RUSSIA'S NATO ENLARGEMENT REDLINES" Ambassador Burns' remarkable cable continues:

"strategic policy considerations also underlie (Russia's) strong opposition to NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia. In Ukraine, these include fears that the issue could potentially split the country in two, leading to violence or even, some claim, civil war, which would force Russia to decide whether to intervene. Additionally the Government of Russia and experts continue to claim that Ukrainian NATO membership would have a major impact on Russia's defense industry, Russian-Ukrainian family connections, and bilateral relations generally. In Georgia, the Government of Russia fears continued instability and 'provocative acts' in the separatist regions."

Ambassador Burns' astoundingly astute and prescient memorandum to Washington continues:

"Experts tell us that Russia is particularly worried that the strong divisions in Ukraine over NATO membership, with much of the ethnic-Russian community against membership, could lead to a major split, involving violence or at worst, civil war. In that eventuality, Russia would have to decide whether to intervene; a decision Russia does not want to have to face."

Burns' extraordinary understanding of the situation confirms, indisputably, that Russia neither sought nor deliberately initiated their military involvement in Ukraine, as Russia has repeatedly stated. But Washington was inexorably determined to not only provoke Russia, but to make inevitable their entry into the civil war in Ukraine that Russia had feared. It is incomprehensible that Washington ignored the amazingly realistic warning of Ambassador Burns, one of its top diplomats. One can only conclude that Washington's lust for hegemony, and the inevitable suicidal "logic" of capitalism, were an uncontrollable and deadly impulse that has escalated into a series of geopolitical maneuvers, leading inevitably to a global nuclear war.

When Ukraine's democratically elected President Victor Yanukovich attempted to resolve this potentially fatal contradiction, and was on the verge of succeeding, the former US Ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt and the pathological neocon Victoria Nuland, were exposed in a leaked phone call while planning their coup attempt against Ukraine's democratically elected President, and planning their puppet government infiltrated by nazis, a leaked phone call immortalized by Nuland's vulgar "Fuck the EU." Their lethal destabilization of Ukraine, a pattern for which Washington is notorious throughout the world, (as US Vice-President Al Gore so eloquently confirmed decades earlier, as quoted at the beginning of this article) and which the late Zbigniew Brzezinski advocated as early as 1997, in "The Grand Chessboard," (his equivalent of Mein Kampf,) led precisely to the civil war which Russia had feared, and which US Ambassador Burns had reported so assiduously to Washington.

Any suggestion that Russia had deliberately chosen to "invade" Ukraine is the most obscene form of propaganda, as Robert Gates understood. Russia was relentlessly and criminally provoked to intervene in Ukraine's horrific civil war, in February 2022, and the provocation was intentional, as so stupidly revealed by the member of the US Congress who described sending weapons to Ukraine as an "investment," sacrificing human beings, Ukrainian lives,

as cannon fodder, now numbering more than 500,000 dead and millions wounded, for the purpose of weakening Russia, without sacrificing a single American soldier. This is psychopathic, obviously, but consistent with the inexorable intent for world domination encapsulated in Washington's doctrine of "full spectrum dominance."

NATO's crude and criminal dance, its stealthy escalation of provocations of Russia, sending increasingly lethal weapons to Ukraine, (and Zelensky no longer legally President, but continuing to bait the West, while functioning as a dictator, since his term as President ended May 20, and he remains in power in violation of any claim to be a "Democracy,") has culminated last week in NATO's necrophiliac chief, Stoltenberg, stating in "The Economist" that "nato allies supplying weapons to Ukraine should end their prohibitions on using them to strike targets in Russia. The article states: NATO's boss wants to free Ukraine to strike hard inside Russia."

Stoltenberg is extremely dangerous. He is evidently unaware that this would threaten the existence of the Russian State, leaving Russia no alternative but to consider the nuclear option. Russia's history is an unrivalled example of defense of human dignity, and Russia defeated Poland, Sweden, Napoleon and nazi Germany, undoubtedly inspired by the passionate conviction that "it is better to die as rebels under fire than to live as slaves on their knees." Their resourcefulness, intellectually, culturally, and spiritually is almost unrivalled, historically. For psychopathic Western leaders such as Cameron, Nuland, and now Macron, and others to escalate this war to the point where the extermination of humanity becomes inevitable qualifies them as genocidal war criminals, ready to slaughter all humanity in their insane determination to destroy Russia. And Russia is not alone; Its current "no limits" partnership with China should demand reconsideration of NATO actions, were these Western leaders sane.

And those members of NATO who are capable of realizing the fatal consequences of NATO's current course, such as the Prime Minister of Slovakia, Robert Fico, who was inevitably the victim of an assassination attempt for refusing to go along with the insane march to World War III, and perhaps Iran's helicopter crash which killed Iran's President and Foreign Minister was not an accident, but was intended to terrorize and weaken the strengthened partnership of Russia, China, Iran and the DPRK, and, of course, the BRICS.

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[Michel Chossudovsky](#) is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), which hosts the critically acclaimed website [www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca). He is a contributor to the Encyclopedia Britannica. His writings have been translated into more than 20 languages.

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*–Ellen Brown, author of ‘Web of Debt’ and president of the Public Banking Institute*

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