

UKRAINE CONFLICT

PART-1 USA and NATO's Stance

First of all, if we can understand ***the cause behind the Ukraine crisis***, it will be better for us to analyze Russia's possible course of action more easily. For this, it is necessary to analyze Russia's wishes, demands and red lines. In fact, it would be a reasonable approach to accept these desires, demands and red lines of Russia as their ***political goals*** in a possible war (As we know, wars are made to achieve ***political ends***.)

MOSCOW'S WISHES, DEMANDS & RED LINES	
RED LINE	Putin strongly emphasizes that Ukraine's desire to join NATO is a red line for Moscow, and also expresses his concern about the plans of some NATO members to establish military training centers in Ukraine. Russia claims that even if Ukraine does not join the NATO alliance, this project will provide NATO countries with a military base on Ukrainian territories.
WISHES & DEMANDS	The Kremlin wants Ukraine to comply with the terms of the 2015 Peace Agreement. And it criticizes the West and USA for failing to promote Ukraine's harmonization.
	Moscow has been harshly critical of the United States and its NATO allies for supplying Ukraine with weapons and holding joint exercises, saying it has encouraged Ukraine's hawkish wing to forcibly retake rebel-held areas.
	Putin claims that Ukraine unfairly took historical Russian land during the Soviet era.
	Russia wants NATO to exclude moving eastward and the deployment of its weapons systems that threaten the Russians near its territory. Russia demands credible and long-term security and legal guarantees about this concern.

I understand that the main source of the Ukraine crisis stems from the ***expansionist*** and ***containment policy*** of NATO and the USA in eastern Europe. After the collapse of Soviet Russia in the 1990s, NATO has succeeded in attracting the former eastern bloc countries with the ***"Partnership for Peace"*** project, and many countries even became NATO members step by step. And cooperation has been made with the former eastern bloc countries at many levels, from mutual trade agreements in the field of economy to military exercises and even cultural and educational fields. The root cause of the conflict just begins here. Because Russia

perceives those bilateral collaborations and the joining of Eastern European countries to NATO over time as a policy of isolating and watches with concern that it is surrounded by Western countries. On the other hand, the fact that Ukraine, which it considers very close to itself in terms of history-culture-rooted civilization unity-race, increases its cooperation with Western countries in areas such as economic, military and diplomatic, worries Russia. This situation fuels the concerns of loneliness and isolation in the Eurasian region of Russia. For this reason, I believe that the Ukraine crisis was deliberately created by Russia. I consider that Russia's main purpose through Ukraine conflict is to warn NATO members and USA and make them step back in relationships with Eurasian countries and to intimidate regional countries such as Ukraine, which are eager to get closer to NATO.

However, NATO and the USA seem quite determined not to back down on their initiatives in the region. They want to solve Russia's security demands formally as a "***serious diplomatic path forward***" to de-escalating threats against Ukraine.

I interpret Russia's military build-up as an indication that it is ready to increase the stakes in order to persuade NATO to respect ***Moscow's red lines*** and stop sending troops and weapons to Ukraine. The Kremlin wants what it says: an end to NATO expansion, a rollback of previous expansion, a removal of American nuclear weapons from Europe, and a Russian sphere of influence. However, Putin even may accept less. The Kremlin's primary goal is a guarantee that Belarus, Ukraine, and Georgia will never belong to a military or economic bloc other than the ones Moscow controls and that Russia will be the ultimate arbitrator of the foreign and security policy of all three states. In essence, this conflict is about whether 30 years after the demise of the Soviet Union, its former ethnic republics can live as independent, sovereign states or if they still must acknowledge Moscow as their de facto sovereign. The allies (USA, NATO and EU) all warn Russia that it will face further crippling sanctions if it invades its neighbor. But Russia is already used to operating under sanctions.

Russia wants ***legal assurances*** that Ukraine will not be allowed to join the U.S. and European military alliance (NATO). The Kremlin also wants to see NATO roll back military infrastructure and personnel from parts of Eastern Europe, and in the former Soviet countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. NATO and U.S. officials have also refused those demands.

As a result, the West and USA insist that the problem be resolved through ***diplomatic means***, never thinks of taking a step back, and believes that a reasonable solution can be found through negotiations. On the other hand, Russia also takes a ***firm stance*** on its demands and its red line.

PART-2 Possible Scenarios? USA and NATO guess?

Both parties have continued insisting on their stance up to now. And unfortunately, **a positive result has not been reached yet** in the international public opinion regarding the resolution of the crisis. Although there have been many talks and negotiations between the parties to date, Russia continues insisting on its demands and red lines and does not seem that it will take a step back.

After this stage, the crisis seems as if it evolved into a **“prestige struggle”** between the two sides. In fact, the reasons for Russia's insistence and unwillingness to resolve the conflict diplomatically are:

- To show the international public that Russia is as strong as it used to be,
- To put an end to the West's expansionist policy and its strategy of containment,
- To send threatening messages to other former eastern bloc countries in this way,
- At the same time to consolidate Putin's stance and position in domestic politics.

So what happens next? How does the crisis evolve? What are Russia's possible scenarios? And which of these scenarios is Russia most likely to implement? I believe a full-scale invasion of Ukraine is the least likely of the possible outcomes, and lean toward further annexation or a “limited operation.” Then reviewing and analyzing all possible scenarios will give us an idea of what might happen in the near future.

Scenario-1 : Annexing the Donbas

Annexing the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics - unrecognized states proclaimed by pro-Russian separatists in East Ukraine's Donbas region in 2014 - has been a constant of Russia's political agenda.

Though Russian forces are widely believed to have been present in the Donbas since the earliest days of the spring 2014 uprising, Russia has always denied its involvement in the region. Moscow maintains that the war in Donbas is an internal Ukrainian conflict, and that it has no troops deployed in the territory. For the Donbas People's Republics, which have always stated their desire to join Russia over independence, official recognition could well be a prelude to Crimea-style annexation by Russia.

However, annexing the Donbas would mark a sea-change in Russian strategy toward Ukraine, which has counted on the territory's eventual reincorporation into Ukraine.

Scenario-2 : Limited Operation

A second possible scenario is a limited operation. Falling short of a full-scale invasion, this option would see Russia refrain from occupying territory and instead focus on dealing a short, sharp defeat to the Ukrainian army.

A plausible scenario, assuming a lack of US and European resolve, is that Moscow helps the separatists consolidate gains in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions to create a political entity that functions more like a viable state. This would involve the capture of major communication and transit nodes (such as the city and port of Mariupol) and the Luhansk power plant, all of which are under Ukrainian government control. While this could be done in a piecemeal manner, such a move would also require the complete abandonment of any notion of a cease-fire.

Scenario-3 : Full Invasion

Though Russia has deployed around 175,000 troops along the length of the Ukrainian border, an all-out offensive - which would likely involve storming large cities including Kharkiv, Kyiv and Odesa - would likely come at **enormous cost** to the Russian army.

I believe a full-scale invasion of Ukraine is the least likely of the possible scenarios. A complete invasion of Ukraine will also increase rumors that it harms and kills civilians, Russia's injustice will be exposed by the international public, and incur the harshest possible sanctions from the rest of the world.

Scenario-4 : Unconventional War

One way for Moscow to pressure Ukraine without the downsides of open combat would be through unconventional methods, including escalated **cyber and psychological warfare**.

Some sources argue that Russian troop numbers on the border had not reached the required level for an all-out offensive, and that in the immediate term escalated cyberwarfare from Moscow was more likely. So a full-scale invasion to capture most or all of Ukraine in the near future seems unlikely. Instead, it seems a reasonable scenario in which Russia escalates disinformation and cyberwarfare to soften up Ukraine before an eventual attack. However, the extent to which such "hybrid" warfare tactics could achieve Moscow's goal of bringing Ukraine back into its fold is unclear.

With Russia's goals of forcing fundamental political change on Kyiv likely requiring either a deal with Washington or some level of military conquest of Ukraine, hybrid warfare may only get Moscow so far.

Scenario-5 : The Non-Kinetic Scenario

Russia uses the military buildup to try to extract concessions from the West on NATO enlargement. Russia's strategic goal here is to keep Ukraine distanced from organizations like NATO and the European Union. Russia would also benefit from the long-term integration of Ukraine into Moscow-backed groups like the Collective Security Treaty Organization or the Eurasian Economic Union.

The most effective way for Russia to achieve this goal is by keeping the conflict in eastern Ukraine **“frozen”**-meaning that the major fighting stops, but localized fighting remains without a conclusive end to the conflict. That means using the troops on the border as political leverage, not as actual invaders.

PART-3 How will USA and NATO react to the scenarios?

What decision will NATO take regarding Ukraine conflict? Is Ukraine a NATO country? So how can NATO enforce “Article-5” for Ukraine? Of course, none of this is possible. Let's take a quick look at recent history. At the NATO Summit in 2008, the USA put pressure on European countries for both Georgia and Ukraine to become NATO members. And this proposal was accepted as the NATO Summit decision. At the 2008 NATO Summit, other European countries, especially Germany, actually resisted the USA in taking this decision. Because Europe was then and still dependent on Russian natural gas. At that time, Putin gave up all diplomatic language and reacted very harshly to NATO. As a matter of fact, when Russia invaded Georgia in 2008, NATO could do nothing but remain a spectator to the events.

However, Russia emphasized that NATO's future initiatives towards Eastern Europe would be a red line for Russia when Romania and Bulgaria became NATO members in 2014,

Can Ukraine become a NATO member? No. USA President Biden stated in one of his statements that Ukraine has deficiencies in many areas such as democracy, corruption, economy and human rights, and that it is not possible for Ukraine to be accepted into NATO membership without correcting them.

As a result, it does not seem possible for NATO to accept Ukraine as a member. Because Russia has an insistent and determined stance on this issue. And if Ukraine, which were also under the umbrella of NATO, were invaded by Russia, both USA and NATO would have to enter into a hot conflict with Russia under NATO's “Article-5”. Hence I believe that NATO never have the political and military determination to take such a risk.

Should a Russian invasion of Ukraine occur, it must come at such a high cost to the Kremlin as to deter others from contemplating a similar course of action. Invading Ukraine must be

seen as a costly and tragic error both inside and outside of Russia. But what should and can the United States and its European allies do to achieve those aims? What levers do the United States and its allies have to impose costs on the Kremlin? How should the United States help Ukraine? This part outlines **the economic, military, diplomatic, and domestic resilience tools** available to the United States should Russia invade Ukraine. In general, while USA military options are relatively limited, there are significant steps the United States and NATO can take economically to impose costs on Russia.

Strategic Measures by The United States and NATO		
ECONOMIC TOOLS	Target and uproot oligarch wealth and influence	Aggressively target high-profile oligarchs for sanctions, asset seizures, legal investigations and prosecutions, and visa bans.
		Establish a standing U.S.-U.K. joint counter-kleptocracy working group.
		Target the enablers of kleptocracy.
		Devote more resources to investigating Russian money laundering, financial crimes, and political corruption.
	Put in place strict export controls that stop U.S.-based technology from going to Russia	Ban exports to Russia of high-tech items on the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Entity list to prevent Russia from acquiring goods that contain U.S.-origin parts and components, including intellectual property.
	Wage a continuous economic sanctions campaign against Russia	Sanction Russian financial institutions and cut them off from the U.S. financial system.
		Make imposing costs on Russia’s economy a standing national security priority.
		Cut off Russia’s access to Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) transactions and sovereign debt markets.
		Make clear that sanctions are about Putin and articulate a path for Russia to integrate into Europe and even NATO.
		Engage in a crash effort to deleverage from Russian economic exposure.
Support Ukraine’s economy.		

	<i>Press Europe to engage in a wartime-like mobilization to decarbonize and reduce its dependence on Russian gas</i>	Push Germany to cancel the Nord Stream 2 pipeline or sanction it.
		The United States should push the EU to create a second NextGenerationEU program focused on rapid decarbonization.
		Sanction Russia's oil and gas exports gradually as European dependence is reduced.
		Impose carbon taxes on Russia's heavy-polluting industries.
MILITARY TOOLS	<i>Prepare to support Ukrainian resistance in a protracted conflict</i>	Establish a security assistance emergency fund to build stockpiles of equipment for security assistance emergencies such as in Ukraine.
		Acknowledge the reality that U.S. military force is not an option.
	<i>Bolster NATO and European security</i>	Push to establish a NATO bank to finance major investments in capabilities such as modernizing eastern-flank forces by replacing Russian/Soviet equipment.
		Strongly back EU defense efforts and push the European Union to finance defense investments and exempt additional defense spending from EU fiscal debt rules.
		Engage Sweden and Finland over NATO expansion.
		Deploy additional U.S. forces and military assets to Europe.
DIPLOMATIC TOOLS	<i>Engage in a diplomatic offensive to isolate and compete with Russia internationally</i>	Press Middle Eastern partners to keep Russia at arm's length.
		Pivot long-standing Russian partners in the Indo-Pacific region toward the West.
		Develop a roadmap to integrate the Balkans into NATO and the European Union.
		Prepare to deal with Russia as a global spoiler.
	<i>Maintain diplomatic dialogue and seek to reestablish strategic stability</i>	The United States must be willing to engage with Russia diplomatically to de-escalate tensions as it did during the Cold War.
	<i>Collaboration with Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO's)</i>	Coordinate with NGO's and the International Criminal Court to document all war crimes inflicted on the Ukrainian people and to demand redress once the war is over. What happened to the Syrian people should not happen again.

DOMESTIC RESILIENCE	<i>Prepare for Russia's response</i>	Address the failures in the FBI and bolster FBI counterintelligence efforts.
		Establish a new interagency active measures working group at the White House to track, monitor, expose, and counter Russian influence efforts.
		Set up diplomatic and intelligence channels to share information and exchange lessons learned with allies and partners about Russian interference.
		Take legislative action to increase resilience to Russian interference.
		Prepare for cyberattacks.
		Offer humanitarian support to help Ukraine deal with refugees and internally displaced persons. This assistance may also need to be extended to NATO allies on Ukraine's borders for refugees fleeing westward.

Even as the US has threatened strong economic, military, diplomatic measures against Russia if it engages in fresh aggression against Ukraine, I believe that Washington's ability to influence Moscow's decisions using sanctions is ***limited***.

It should not be forgotten that Russia is neither the Tsarist nor the USSR, nor is it a country that does not hesitate to use military force now, and while using it, it is a country that reinforces its diplomacy very skillfully. We have seen these recently in the 2008 invasion of Georgia and the 2014 invasion of Crimea. And while all this was happening, we could not witness that the West took a solid stance against Russia. I do not think that the USA and Russia will enter into a hot conflict. Because in such a case, the country you attack means that the hot money is cut off. Even if Russia invades Ukraine, ***I don't think the USA would dare to have a hot conflict.***

Can US sanctions sway Putin's thinking? Since 2014, the US has imposed multiple sanctions on Russia to punish it for its annexation of Crimea and its support for rebel groups waging a war in Eastern Ukraine. These steps have bled the Russian economy by about \$ 50 billion annually. USA and NATO have targeted targeted oligarchs and organisations close to Russian President Vladimir Putin. But they have so far failed to deter Putin from "continuing to stir up trouble over Ukraine. It's unclear just how much any of that will influence Putin's thinking. The boldest measures could also backfire on Europe, because of the continent's dependence on Russian energy. And even if the US were to go ahead and impose these fresh sanctions, it would be some time before Russia's elite starts feeling the bite. My opinion is that these steps won't affect Putin enough in the short-term tactical sense. However, sanctions could crush the

Russian economy in the long term. If Putin invades Ukraine, he will be staking Russia's future on his actions in the present.

PART-4 Conclusion

The main reason for Russia to cause such a crisis is to prevent the expansionist and containment policies of the West and the USA. Both Russia and the Western wing have not made any concessions from their *political stances* so far. *The possible consequences* of this crisis are:

- Russia sends messages and warnings to other eastern bloc countries to be cautious and cautious in their relations with the West.
- It is possible to see that this crisis is turning the world into a bipolar world order as before. The world may again evolve into Cold War. Should the Cold War begin, the US and Russia will have a chance to maximize their profits from arms sales.
- Russia will never want to lose its mega-ideal of reaching warm seas via the Black Sea. Therefore, I do not think that it will compromise its presence in the Crimea.
- With the Ukraine problem, which has turned into a crisis, Putin will have the opportunity to strengthen his position in domestic politics with the prestige and success he will gain in the international arena.
- If Russia is seen as getting away with dismembering a democratic neighbor, Peoples Republic of China (PRC) might feel emboldened to do the same to Taiwan, and it could entice other states to deploy force against less powerful neighbors or rivals.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine would be a shocking act of aggression to which the United States and its European allies must respond. The options available are imperfect, as neither would prove decisive on its own. Instead, the United States and Europe must take action on many fronts—economic, military, diplomatic, and domestic—to impose severe costs on the Putin regime. This will require a concerted campaign that will last years and require constant adjustments and recalibration, extensive engagement from senior policymakers, and continuous diplomatic engagement and coordination. It would be a slog, but adopting the options above would hopefully impose real costs on the Kremlin over time. If adopted, these options would weaken Russia's influence abroad and its strength domestically; enable Ukraine to defend itself and maintain its status as a sovereign democratic state; reduce Russia's corrupt influence in the West; strengthen European security; and accelerate Europe's decarbonization efforts. Taking these steps would thus turn Russia's invasion of Ukraine into a strategic defeat for the Kremlin, setting an example that no other country would want to follow.

The normalization of relations can only be achieved if Russia recognizes Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. In this framework, the sanctions imposed on Russia by the EU, NATO and USA can be relaxed and instability ends. Possible NATO intervention in the region is Russia's red line. Ukraine's membership in NATO is going to bring the tension to the level of war. Our hope is that in the next period, final agreements will be made within the framework of diplomacy in the region, and a ceasefire process will begin as soon as possible on the way to normalization in the short term.