

“Ukraine WILL Join NATO,” Vows Anthony Blinken

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): From the very start of the war in Ukraine, when the United States decided not just to get involved, but to take primary responsibility for arming the Ukrainians and funding, our question, the primary question has always been the same. In what conceivable way does the war in Ukraine or its outcome, namely the question of who governs various provinces in eastern Ukraine? In what conceivable way does that affect the lives of American citizens, either positively or negatively? Financing the war obviously negatively affects Americans' lives. It means there's less money available for Americans and their lives at home. It's more debt for the United States that the United States has to assume there's greater risk of escalation. So what's the benefit to American citizens from being so heavily involved in this war? And of course, the other question has always been, why is it that Russia decided to attack Ukraine? Did they just attack out of the blue? Did Vladimir Putin just overnight after hearing for 20 years that American presidents, starting with Bill Clinton to George Bush and Barack Obama and Donald Trump, hearing over and over that he's a very rational, trustworthy, strategic leader, did he just turn overnight into a psychopath or Hitler figure who just suddenly decided he wanted to march throughout all of Western Europe by attacking one country after the next, even attack NATO country? So was that a question as well, or was there some actual reason that the Russians felt threatened by what was happening in Ukraine? Things like the 2014 change in government, where the elected president of Ukraine was removed from office prior to the constitutionally ending of his mandate, with the support of the United States government to replace him with a much more pro-Western, pro-NATO, pro-US government. Was it the constant providing of lethal arms by the United States and by NATO to Ukraine right over the border of Russia? Was it the insistence that one day NATO would expand up to the Russian border, to include Ukraine? The most sensitive part of the Russian border. NATO had already expanded up to the Russian border, but now to expand up to the part of the Russian border, that basically for both world wars in the 20th century, played a critical role in how Russia was attacked. Whatever those answers are, and we've examined them a lot, we heard from more supporters: Oh well, the idea that Ukraine is going to join NATO is just a figment of the Russian imagination. There's no reason they would have to worry about that. There's absolutely no possibility that would

happen. That was a made up fabrication and a pretext for the invasion, we were told. Even though the Russians asked, as a means of resolving the conflict diplomatically, that the United States and NATO agree that Ukraine would never join, NATO would instead be a neutral country, a buffer country between Russia and the West. We were told that this was all a figment of the Russians imagination. And yet today, Antony Blinken, the American Secretary of State, who has obviously been an ardent supporter of the US financing and arming of the war in Ukraine from the start, was that a summit of NATO foreign ministers and he stood up and stood next to the Ukrainian foreign minister, and this is what he said.

Antony Blinken (AB): The determination of every country represented here at NATO, remains rock solid. We'll do everything we can. Allies will do everything that they can to ensure that Ukraine has what it needs to continue to deal with Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and aggression that gets worse, with every passing day. Ukraine will become a member of NATO. Our purpose at the summit...

Glenn Greenwald (GG): "Ukraine will become a member of NATO"; not that we're making preparations for the possibility that one day Ukraine might join NATO. It's an inevitability. It is happening. He very affirmatively and declaratively decreed that Ukraine will be a NATO member. He didn't give a timetable, but he certainly made clear that it is not something being considered, but something that has been decided. And he went on to say this.

AB: Our purpose at the summit is to help build a bridge to that membership and to create a clear pathway for Ukraine moving forward.

Dmytro Kuleba (DK): Of course, we believe that Ukraine deserves to be a member of NATO and that this should happen sooner rather than later.

Glenn Greenwald (GG): Now, of course, every country for the most part, would love to be part of NATO, because if you're part of NATO, it means that all NATO members, including the United States, are duty bound to treat any attack on your country as an attack on their own, and are required by Article 5 of the NATO treaty to treat that attack the way they would treat any attack on their own soil, meaning that they would be required to go to war against whoever fought against or whoever attacked or was responsible for attacking Ukraine. After 9/11, the Article 5 obligation was invoked, and that was why NATO members felt obliged to go to Afghanistan and fight alongside the United States against the Taliban, which had been accused of harbouring al-Qaida and permitting the 9/11 attack to be planned that launched from Afghanistan. Even though the vast majority of those involved were Saudis, it was Afghanistan that was initially blamed and Article 5 was invoked and as a result, the members of NATO were legally bound by their domestic laws and by treaty convention to go to war with the United States. So that would mean that if Ukraine joined the United States, every American citizen of fighting age would be liable to be forced in order to go fight in Ukraine, to fight and die in order to defend Ukraine. If there is a border dispute between Russia and the Ukrainians in the future over who should govern Crimea or parts of eastern Ukraine, it means that the Americans would be obliged not just to pay for the war and to arm it, as we're

doing now, but to deploy combat troops to Ukraine or against whatever country Ukraine is fighting in order to go fight and die in it.

Now, as I said earlier, the idea that NATO membership for Ukraine would almost inevitably prompt an attack by Russia is something that has been known and stated at the highest levels of the US government for a long time, for decades. It was really back in the Bush administration when you had people like Condoleezza Rice – and guess who was the US ambassador to NATO then? None other than Victoria Nuland. When NATO expansion to include Ukraine began to be affirmatively discussed in a way that deeply alarmed the Russians. And at the time William Burns, who is currently the director of the CIA for Joe Biden, was in the intelligence community. He was working in the Bush administration, and he wrote a cable, a memo that ultimately ended up being published by Wikileaks, which is how we know about it, where he warned that few things are more provocative and more likely to lead to war involving Russia than promising NATO membership to Ukraine. Here is what he wrote in February of 2008. At the top, you see: *Nyet Means Nyet: Russia's NATO enlargement Redlines*. Quote: "Ukrainian and Georgia's NATO aspirations not only touch a raw nerve in Russia, they engender serious concerns about the consequences for stability in the region. Not only does Russia perceive encirclement and efforts to undermine Russia's influence in the region, but it also fears unpredictable and uncontrolled consequences which would seriously affect Russian security interests. Experts tell us that Russia is particularly worried that the strong divisions in Ukraine over NATO membership, which much of the ethnic-Russian community against membership, could lead to a major split involving violence or, at worst, civil war. Consequences of a premature MAP offer, especially to Ukraine. Ukrainian entry into NATO is the brightest of all redlines for the Russian elite (not just for Putin)". Let me just read that again. This is something that the current director of the CIA under Joe Biden, so he was the director of the CIA when the Russian invasion happened. He was the director of the CIA, when Kamala Harris went to that region and started speaking openly about not just heavy military assistance of the United States to Ukraine, but NATO membership several months before the invasion. He was the director of the CIA. This is what he said back in 2008. Quote, "Consequences of a premature MAP offer to Ukraine is the brightest of all redlines for the Russian elite (not just Putin). The brightest of all redlines; meaning there is nothing that you could do to provoke the Russians more, to make them feel more insecure and more threatened and more eager to go to war, more obliged to go to war than offering NATO membership to Ukraine. This is something that has been known forever". He went on: "In my more than two and a half years of conversations with key Russian players, from knuckle-draggers and the dark recesses of the Kremlin to Putin's sharpest liberal critics, I have yet to find anyone who views Ukraine in NATO as anything other than a direct challenge to Russian interests".

So what he's saying is I spent two and a half years talking to Russians and he pretty much talked to everybody, what he called knuckle-draggers and the dark recesses of the Kremlin, and even Putin's sharpest liberal critics – so it's not just Putin and his supporters who think this – he's saying that every faction in Russian political life understands and agrees, that Ukrainian membership in NATO is nothing other than a direct challenge to Russian interests.

This is how the Russians have perceived threatened membership of NATO for Ukraine, going back to at least 2008, when the Bush administration began talking about including Ukraine and NATO. NATO began expanding under the Clinton administration, moving east toward Russia in a way that Gorbachev was promised when he agreed to the reunification of Germany when the Soviet Union fell, would never happen. Obviously, NATO expanding eastward up to the Russian border was a major concern of the Russians, the major concern. NATO had been their devoted enemy for decades during the Cold War, and the last thing they wanted was NATO coming up to their border. And the promise that was extracted, and many people have said this, who were there first hand, in exchange for the Russians agreeing to the reunification of NATO of Germany, was that NATO would not expand even one inch eastward beyond what was then unified Germany, including East Germany, which had been part of the Warsaw Pact. And if you know even the most basic facts of 20th century history, you understand why there was nothing more threatening at the time than a unified Germany, a reunified Germany. There was a reason why Germany, after World War Two was no longer unified and was split into East and West. A reunified Germany is Russia's worst nightmare. They lost tens of millions of their citizens in the 20th century as a result of war with Germany. And so the idea of unifying Germany was extremely alarming to them, but they agreed to it in exchange for this commitment, that the West immediately began to violate by expanding NATO east, more east, more east, including up to the Russian border. This began with Bill Clinton, but then it was the Bush administration that really explicitly talked for the first time about including Ukraine in it. And this was Bill Burns's warning.

He went on: "At this stage, a MAP offer would be seen not as a tactical step along a long road to membership, but as throwing down the strategic gauntlet. Today's Russia will respond. Russian-Ukrainian relations will go into a deep freeze, with Moscow likely to contemplate economic measures ranging from an immediate increase in gas prices to world market levels, to clamp down on Ukrainian workers coming to Russia. It will create fertile soil for Russian meddling in Crimea and eastern Ukraine". So I just want to highlight this, because this shows that Washington, at the highest levels of the US government have is known for at least the last 15 years that any kind of – and what he's saying here is it's not just putting Ukraine in NATO, it's just talking about it seriously, putting them on the path to NATO membership, as Blinken did today in the most definitive and unambiguous way yet. Just that alone, he said, would almost ensure that Russia would start meddling in Crimea and of course, Russia has subsequently annexed Crimea and eastern Ukraine, where the Russians were arming Russian ethnic citizens of Ukraine since 2014 in a low scale civil war against Kiev. And now, of course, ended up invading and now currently occupying a substantial portion of eastern Ukraine. So the Americans knew that what their behaviour was going to lead to was an invasion, or at least serious risk of war with Russia and Ukraine and they did it, I want to say, despite that, but potentially because of it. They did it knowing what the results would be.

He went on, quote: "There would be much chest-thumping about repositioning military assets closer to the Ukrainian border and threats of nuclear retargeting. The NATO-Russia Council could go on life support or expire altogether. In Georgia, the combination of Kosovo Independence and a MAP offer would likely lead to recognition of Abkhazia, however

counterproductive that might be to Russia's own long term interest in the Caucasus. The prospect of subsequent Russian-Georgia armed conflict would be high". And that's exactly what happened. That means a, I mean, colloquially it means a MAP to Ukrainian membership, but it really just the actual acronym bureaucratically is a membership action plan, and what he predicted with regard to Georgia ended up happening. The Russians did invade Georgia and did declare, as Abkhazia and South Ossetia to be independent provinces and then ultimately part of Russia. They issued Russian passports to the Russian speaking people in those provinces who made clear that they were more loyal to the government of Moscow than to Georgia. And then he warned that the exact same thing would happen with the Russians entering Crimea and eastern Ukraine. So none of this came as a surprise. Imagine now what the Russians are already thinking and what they're thinking now, now that Blinken stood up next to the Ukrainian foreign minister and declared unambiguously and inevitably that Ukraine will be part of NATO. And think about the obligations that imposes on every American or every American family, in terms of having to go fight and die for Ukraine.

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