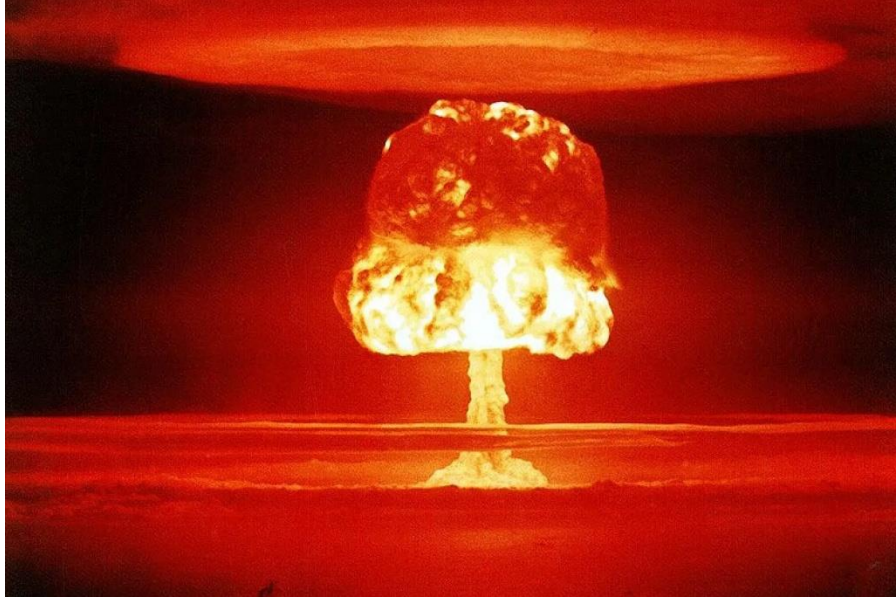


On the Brink of a Nuclear War?

14 de julio de 2023

Por José T. Guerra



Not long ago I was talking with an old friend and among the various things we talked about we touched on the subject of the war in the Ukraine. When I asked him what he thought about this conflict, he repeated to me more or less what the media here in the United States and in many other parts of the world say about what is happening in Ukraine. After telling him how I saw things, based on alternative media that we can find on the Internet, he was surprised and told me that it was the first time he had heard this other side of what is happening in Ukraine, things that the news here omits. It seemed to me that, like this friend, many people only know the official version of the governments of the United States and Ukraine, which are disseminated day after day through their powerful media.

It is for this reason that I have decided to write this article to try to present what seems to me to be the reality of this dangerous conflict, which if it continues as it is, with its trail of destruction, desolation and death in that country of which many had not even heard until now, and that without serious attempts to achieve peace, it could lead to a terrible nuclear conflagration with devastating consequences for all humanity.

First of all, I'll start by stating that President Biden's statement, at the start of this Russian military operation in Ukraine in February of last year, that Russia was the

aggressor and that his attack on Ukraine was unprovoked, is not true. To say that one day Vladimir Putin decided to send his troops to Ukraine, just like that, for no reason, does not correspond to what was really happening in that region of the planet. As many are unaware of the history of those countries, they have stood in solidarity with Ukraine and its president, by placing Ukrainian flags on their Facebook and other social media profiles as a show of support without realizing that they are supporting vile anti-Russian propaganda, promoted by the Western media which has turned the former actor/comedian now President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, a hero and a victim of the brutal and criminal war of Russia against Ukraine.

What these media do not tell is that this conflict did not begin exactly in February of last year, but many years ago. Maybe we can go back in history a bit. Although Ukraine had been an integral part of the Soviet Union, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, it declared itself an independent republic. Not taking into account that a large proportion of its population, especially in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, was of Russian descent whose primary language was Russian, the new governments of Ukraine began to impose the Ukrainian language as the official language and to seek to suppress the Russian language and everything that was Russian. For a while the two languages and the two cultures were maintained, and the governments were somewhat tolerant until in 2014 there was a coup d'état promoted by ultranationalists with the support of the US and other European governments overthrowing President Viktor Yanukovich who had been legitimately elected and who sought better relations with Russia.

Another factor that must be taken into account is the role played by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in this conflict. NATO is a military organization of several European countries and the United States that was formed at the time of the Cold War to counter the power and advances of the Soviet Union. Once the Soviet Union was dissolved, NATO should have been dissolved as well. With the sponsorship of the United States as a senior member and other member countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and France, NATO began to expand into Eastern Europe, accepting into its membership former satellite countries of the Soviet Union and even countries that had been a part of it. All this has been done despite having promised Mikhail Gorbachev that "there would be no extension of NATO's jurisdiction for forces of NATO one inch to the east." NATO has been fomenting unnecessary "Russo phobia" over the years by making Europeans believe that Russia, as a continuation of the Soviet Union, is going to invade them and that they must therefore arm themselves to face its threat. Russia, for its part, has considered this NATO advance towards its borders as a threat to its national

security. It is something like how the United States would react if Mexico, Canada or Cuba made an alliance with Russia or China and put military bases near its borders. NATO then has been courting Ukraine which borders Russia for years to become a member and this is something Russia has said it will not tolerate. Russia maintains that it is best for Ukraine to remain neutral, but the US-led NATO has belligerently said it will accept any country that wishes to become a member and will accept no impositions from anyone.

After the coup in 2014, several important events took place. One was the referendum in the Crimean peninsula in which the majority of the population voted to secede from Ukraine and join Russia, something the United States and the European countries have not accepted. Crimea has an interesting history. It is a region of great strategic value for whoever owns it. In 1954 Nikita Khrushchev, leader of the Soviet Union, granted it to Ukraine in an act that many describe as capricious. That, however, was not a problem since Ukraine was then part of the Soviet Union. The majority of the Crimean population is made up of Tatars and Russians, and that is something that was not taken into account when the Soviet Union broke up: that many Russians remained outside its borders in countries that later their governments adopted an anti-Russian view and were discriminated against by the growing Russo phobia promoted from the West.

And speaking of "Russo phobia", it is unfortunate how, due to the present conflict with Russia, in Europe and other parts of the world, not only the Russian language but many other things of the Russian culture such as music, arts, crafts and even his cooking have been banned. Authors like Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Alexander Pushkin and others have been removed from courses of study at various universities. Even the music of composers such as Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky and others has been removed from classical music concerts. Can you imagine if in World War II when Nazi Germany was invading countries and causing death and destruction the music of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Schumann and others had been banned, just because they were German? It is really very sad all this that is happening. Not to mention the suppression that has been made of the Russian media and other news sources that tell the other side of what is happening in Ukraine.

The role of the United States is perhaps the most important factor that cannot be left out of mention. Not only is it the largest supplier of weapons to Ukraine in the current conflict, but for many years it has been preparing that country for a confrontation with Russia. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the leaders of the United States declared in 1992, in what was called the "Wolfowitz Doctrine," that "America's political and military

mission in the post-cold-war era will be to ensure that no rival superpower is allowed to emerge in Western Europe, Asia or the territory of the former Soviet Union". In this way, the new world order would only allow the existence of a single super power, which would be the United States. While in Russia in the 90s, after Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin ruled as a puppet, the United States had no problem. It was at that time that capitalism entered Russia and the era of the famous Russian oligarchs began, those who are now mentioned with displeasure by the Western press as if the United States were not also full of oligarchs, except that here they are called billionaires.

When Vladimir Putin came to power in Russia and began to show signs of independence and that he would not submit to the United States or to the Western countries, the United States became concerned. Although Russia was no longer a communist super power, and neither was Putin, many continued to refer to Russia as a communist country since that epithet has quite a negative connotation in capitalist countries. With the arrival of Putin, Russia began to modernize and raise its standard of living, as well as to develop economically, politically, and militarily. Immediately, he began to be attacked and branded as an authoritarian and even a dictator. In other words, they began to use against him the same tactic that the United States uses against any government that does not submit to it. Through NATO and using all the media force they began to talk of preparing to defend themselves from an alleged and imminent attack by Putin against Europe.

In Ukraine the US leaders and politicians began to intervene in many areas of their government. It is truly amazing how the US government since 1991 has invested millions of dollars in "pro-democracy" programs in Ukraine and exerted a powerful influence on its government and politics. Through characters like Victoria Nuland, who has served since the Obama era in the area of political affairs in Europe and Eurasia, the United States has been very much involved in everything that happens in Ukraine. When the "Maidan uprising", as it has been called but which was more of a coup against the legitimately elected president, took place in 2014, Ms. Nuland was there assisting the coup plotters and has been ever since a strong supporter of providing arms to Ukraine in their war against Russia. Even the current president of the United States, Joe Biden, bragged about having intervened Ukraine's internal affairs when he was vice president by demanding that a prosecutor in Ukraine be removed in exchange for financial aid for that country. All these facts are on the internet for anyone who wants to investigate.

Following the coup in 2014, not only Crimea separated from Ukraine by a referendum and joined Russia, but several provinces in the Donbas region such as Lugansk and

Donetsk, with a Russian majority, declared independence. This was the start of a civil war where the Ukrainian government called the separatists "terrorists" and the separatists, for their part, sought support from Russia. Thus, it has been that since 2014 thousands have died, many of whom have been civilians, due to attacks by the Ukrainian army against the insurgents. The United States for its part supported the new Ukrainian nationalist government with weapons and training of its military. As a result of all these events, representatives of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany met in Minsk, Belarus, in September 2014, to agree to the cessation of hostilities. Among the resolutions it was agreed to grant these rebellious provinces a certain degree of autonomy, while remaining part of Ukraine.

As the civil war continued, they met again in Minsk in February 2015 to review and update the first agreement. This did not help either and the clashes continued as the Ukrainian army continued to indiscriminately attack and kill thousands of Donbas residents. Finally, seeing that Ukraine did not comply with the Minsk agreements and to protect the Russian population, President Putin decided to accept the rebellious provinces as independent republics and allies of Russia, and as such he was forced to send his army to protect them from the attacks of the Ukrainian army. This was the beginning of the present war situation which has caused a lot of destruction and death to both Ukrainians and Russians, especially in the affected areas.

From recent statements made by several of the signatories of the Minsk agreements, it has been known that there were no good intentions on their part and that they rather used those agreements to buy time and arm Ukraine in a possible war with Russia. US politicians said that weapons should be sent to Ukraine because it was better to fight Russia there in Ukraine than here and they have even said that they will continue to supply arms for Ukraine to fight "until the last Ukrainian."

The mainstream media here in the United States continually report that Ukraine is winning the war but the reality seems to be different. Hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers die every day and many of the weapons that have been provided to them have been destroyed by the Russian army. President Zelensky keeps going around the world asking for weapons and has even requested the use of banned weapons such as cluster bombs. Even with the help of the arms and ammunition that many European countries have sent, Ukraine is not winning the war and rather has been losing territory and countless soldiers and equipment every day. That, of course, is not reported by the media here. Here they only talk that Ukraine is winning or that they are going to beat Russia and the politicians say that a Russian victory will not be acceptable in any way.

It is clear to me that this war would have been avoided if the Ukrainian leaders had fully complied with the Minsk agreements. Had this been the case, Russia would not have had to carry out this military operation with its unfortunate consequences. And although in April 2022 there was an attempt to make peace, both the United States and the United Kingdom opposed it. It was not in the interest of their companies' producing weapons of war to stop this conflict because war means profits of billions of dollars.

It is also clear that this proxy war is a US effort to weaken Russia and maintain its control and hegemony in the world. Moreover, I wonder if Joe Biden's obsession with helping Ukraine by all possible means is perhaps motivated by his desire to hide possible shady dealings that he, his son Hunter as well as other U.S. politicians have done in Ukraine.

jsguerra@hotmail.com