



As 60 Years Ago, the Threat of Nuclear War Is Steadily Growing

Dec 21—The pace of intensifying U.S.-Russia tension over Ukraine increased over this past weekend, so that what seemed within hope of stabilization two weeks ago when Presidents Biden and Putin video-conferenced, now looks more and more like a countdown toward war in Europe involving the nuclear superpowers.

A senior White House official, quite possibly National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, told CNN on Dec. 19, Sunday, that there is only a “four-week window” to prevent Russia from invading Ukraine. “What we have been doing is very calculated,” the official said. “But we only have about a four-week window from now.” The official said U.S. planned sanctions “would be overwhelming, immediate and inflict significant costs on the Russian economy and their financial system.”

The next day, Dec. 20, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov told journalists that the Biden Administration had not responded to President Putin’s on Dec. 15 proposed treaties on arms control, according to the EurAsian Times news site. They included the assurance that Ukraine would not join NATO and that further forward deployments of U.S. and NATO forces and missile systems toward Russia’s borders would stop. “No, they [the Americans] have not responded yet,” said Ryabkov; “we are waiting, we will see what they answer. So far, we have seen only all sorts of public statements.” Among those public statements was a NATO general’s plan for U.S. troops’ forward deployment to Bulgaria and Romania, to NATO bases at the Black Sea.

And both Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko and Arms Control Negotiator Konstantin Gavrilov ominously referred to “Russia’s military-technical and military means” as the only alternative to a negotiation on Russia’s treaty proposals. Ukraine’s own government continued, in the person of Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba talking to the Washington Post Dec. 19, to demand more “military means” and troops from the United States and the U.K., and to demand that the United States spell out publicly the “overwhelming and immediate” damage that the U.S. Treasury is preparing to do to the Russian economy and financial system, and do it with London whether the continental European allies agree or not.

In October 1962 it was the U.S. southern border that was

being approached, closely, by Soviet soldiers and missiles in Cuba, which threatened a devastating first strike. Today, it is the relentless march of NATO closer and closer to Russia’s borders. Sixty years ago President John F. Kennedy said, “Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island.” And, he said, that this, “in an area well-known to have a special and historical relationship to the U.S., is a deliberately provocative and unjustified change in the status quo which cannot be accepted by this country.” [emphasis added]

Moreover, in 1962 U.S. military chiefs were demanding an invasion of Cuba to destroy missile and other forces, and President Kennedy was holding them back, with difficulty.

Had Kennedy and Khrushchev not reached a negotiated resolution to the Cuban Missiles Crisis, what was likely to have happened? Hundreds of millions of people around the world were terrified of an imminent nuclear war.

How were President Kennedy’s demands—that the Soviet Union remove, and never again try to place nuclear-capable missiles and aircraft virtually on the U.S. border, and “in an area [with] a special and historical relationship to the U.S.”—different from President Putin’s agreement proposed on Dec. 7 to President Biden, that the United States ensure that Ukraine would not join NATO and thereby have U.S. and NATO forces and missiles of various types placed right on Russia’s border? And “in an area with a special and historical relationship” to Russia, in fact for centuries part of it.

Here is the difference: Kennedy and Khrushchev both wanted a solution, and not one in which the other President and nation were humiliated, or crushed by “overwhelming, immediate” national damage!

That is what must be negotiated between Presidents Biden and Putin now, putting to the side the war-hawks—some of whom are clinically insane, to publicly propose a nuclear first strike on Russia as Sen. Roger Wicker did on Dec. 7. But it must and can happen if citizens now stand up to demand it, and remain optimistic that these two nations can block the ominous path of escalation and superpower war. Let them spend their efforts instead in providing food, healthcare and reconstruction to Afghanistan.

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