

Scott Ritter: ‘You Say the Russians Are Wrong?’

Nov. 29—Former Marine officer and UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter responded to a disagreement posed by Cole Harrison, Executive Director of Massachusetts Peace Action on Nov. 19. This was part of the concluding question and answer period at an event where Ritter spoke on why he had published a new book on the history of arms control. The event, “Scott Ritter on Ukraine, Russia, NATO and Disarmament,” was held at the Community Church of Boston on Copley Square. The full meeting can be viewed [here](#). The dialogue below, edited for EIR, starts soon after the first 1.5 hours.

Moderator: So next, let’s go to Cole. Cole Harrison, the Executive Director of Massachusetts Peace Action.

Cole Harrison: Thanks, Scott, great talk. I think you’re absolutely right that the U.S. expanded NATO all the way up to Russia and has been squeezing Russia all this time, absolutely right. Thank you. I think your analysis of the Ukraine war is wrong, though.

Ukraine does not lose its sovereignty just because it has some Nazis within it. It does not lose its sovereignty because it has different ethnic groups within it that are at odds. Many countries have



Harrison Facebook page
Cole Harrison, Executive Director, Massachusetts Peace Action.

Nazis; many countries have ethnic groups that are at odds. They don’t lose their sovereignty; even if there’s a coup in that country, they don’t lose their sovereignty. Ukraine is still a member state of the United Nations; it’s a founding member of the United Nations and Russia had no right to invade it. The Russian-speaking people in Ukraine do have a problem and have had a problem. But you don’t solve it by trying to negate the sovereignty of another country.

But my question for you is, how are we going to get out of this thing? What are the interests on each side? What are the interests in the U.S., NATO, Russia, Ukraine? How are we going to end this war? Because Ukraine is being laid waste, and as you have pointed out, there’s every risk of a wider war by escalating. We just saw this incident with the missile that fell in

Poland the other day. Fortunately, people investigated and didn’t go to war over it, but they easily could have. And so how do we get out of this?



Schiller Institute
Scott Ritter, former Marine officer, former UN weapons inspector.

Ritter: Well, let me just start with responding. I respect your analysis, but here’s the problem I have with it. What about Kosovo, 1999? Okay, let’s just stop right now, because what Russia articulated—their reason for going to war was articulated under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. So stop pre-

tending Russia broke the law; they didn't.

Russia exhausted every venue possible to prevent this war. They wanted the Minsk Accords to be implemented. They looked the Germans and the French in the eye in November and said, "Please pressure the Ukrainians." They said "No." [Russia] went to Joe Biden June 19, 2021, in Geneva, begged him, "Please pressure the Ukrainians to implement Minsk." He said "No." We now know why.

Petro Poroshenko, the President of Ukraine, stood up and said, "It's a sham; I'm using this to buy time to build a NATO-trained army so that I can invade the Donbass and get rid of these pesky Russians here." And when I say get rid of, kill them. Kill them. This is the same President that bragged about how Ukrainian children were going to go to kindergarten, but the Russian children in the Donbass were going to cower in their basements while they get blown away by the Ukrainian artillery. I have a problem saying that these guys have a right to anything.

But when they start to threaten an invasion and they amass 60-100,000 NATO-trained forces—we were training them from 2015 at a naval base run by the United States in western Ukraine. Every 55 days we cranked out a battalion of 500-600 Ukrainian soldiers trained and equipped by the NATO standards and sent them east to kill Russians. And the Russians knew about it. And yet they still tried to have a diplomatic off-ramp. Russia finally couldn't put up with it.

Now here's the problem. How does Russia invade Ukraine? They can't, under international law, not permitted. So, Lugansk and Donetsk held a referendum. They declared independence. Russia recognized that independence, and then Russia entered into a collective security agreement with them. So now you have three nations working together in collective security. And



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Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine (2013-2019): "I'm saying this to buy time to build a NATO-trained army so that I can invade the Donbass and get rid of these pesky Russians here."

now the Ukrainian threat to invade Lugansk and Donetsk is now a threat against all three. Russia cited Article 51 [of the UN Charter]: pre-emptive collective self-defense. And people go, "Well, that's just a little too cute, Scott." No, it's exactly what NATO and the United States did to justify intervening in Serbia. The Russians did the exact same legal argument. So Russia didn't do anything wrong. ...

Playbook: Conventional Forces Treaty

Ukraine had every opportunity to prevent this war from happening. They opted out of that opportunity and now they pay the price. You say, "You can't annex it." Then why do we support the Israeli annexation of the

Golan [Heights in Syria]? Why do we do that? There has to be consistency in policy and there is no consistency in policy. And because the Russians have done everything in accordance with the rule of law, you can say the law is wrong, but you can't say the Russians are violating international law.

Now, how do we get out of this? The Russians have built a playbook. They put forward a draft treaty on Dec. 17th of last year. They presented that draft treaty to NATO and the United States. It talks about a new European security framework.

Now everybody can say, "Oh, my God, that's surrender. They want surrender, the dissolution of NATO." No, they don't. They're not asking for the dissolution of NATO. In fact, they say, "NATO can exist. We have no problem with NATO the way it's currently configured. You can't have Ukraine. That ain't going to happen because that's in our sphere of interest."

It's amazing; America can have spheres of interest, the Monroe Doctrine. But, Russia's not allowed to have a sphere of influence or sphere of interest. But what the Russians have said, is that they want this new European

security framework that demilitarizes a zone in the center part of Europe, to back NATO off from Russia.

We had something, didn't we? It was called the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, the CFE Treaty. It was done back when the Soviet Union was there. And we said, let's pull it back.

You know why it didn't work? Because NATO expanded into the Baltics and then told Russia, "We can incorporate these new NATO armies in there because they [the Baltic Republics] weren't there when the treaty was originally written." And Russia's responds, "Wait a minute, you've just expanded to my border and now you're telling me that the treaty that's supposed to reduce the conventional threat doesn't apply to their militaries, right on my border? Are you high?" And they got out of the Treaty.

A new European security framework should include a new Conventional Forces in Europe [agreement] that withdraws forces back here like Russia wants, but Russia will also have to withdraw forces back. Maybe Russia reduces its military presence in Kaliningrad, which is feared by Poland and the Baltic states. Reduce

that. But Russia won't do that as long as you have big armies around Russia. But if the armies calm down, Russia calms down; things pull back.

The ABM Treaty: Sign it again, get rid of these missile sites in Poland and Romania. Get rid of them. They don't need to exist; get rid of them.

The Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty: We don't need to have the 53rd Artillery Brigade—which was a Pershing 2 [intermediate-range nuclear missile—ed.] brigade back in the Cold War—reactivated, which we just did last year. And we're going to deploy something called the Dark Eagle Hyper Velocity missile into Europe next year that can strike Moscow within five minutes, recreating the entire thing that brought up the INF crisis to begin with.

A new INF treaty: Arms control is the key. We sit down with the Russians, and we renegotiate these treaties. We breathe life back into the ABM Treaty, the INF Treaty, and the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty. And we implement this new European security framework that the Russians are just begging people to talk about.

EIR readers knew 27 years ago that the destruction of Ukraine was in the works.

READ THIS INTERVIEW, published May 5, 1995, with Ukrainian Members of Parliament Natalya Vitrenko and Vladimir Marchenko:

https://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/1995/eiv22n19-19950505/eiv22n19-19950505_020-natalya_vitrenko_and_vladimir_ma.pdf

These Ukrainian elected officials, leading collaborators with Lyndon LaRouche and his movement, pointed out with astonishing clarity what the consequences would be of Ukraine's embrace of the International Monetary Fund. They warned that "Ukraine is being strictly held in the status of a semi-colonial country", with a corresponding suppression of the nation's productive potential, and the imposition of the IMF's standard brutal austerity upon the nation's population. This was a recipe for disaster, and created the social conditions for the resurgence of Nazism which we are seeing today in Ukraine.



Oleh Tyahnybok, founder of Ukraine Right Sector Party.