

EDITORIAL

‘Nyet’ to Nuclear War, ‘Yes’ to a New Security and Development Architecture

Oct. 19—Russian President Vladimir Putin made perfectly clear Friday, Oct. 18, what the stakes are over the conflict in Ukraine. When asked about Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s demand that Ukraine obtain either NATO membership or nuclear weapons, Putin [replied](#), with a look of conviction and animus that almost needs no words: “Under no circumstances will Russia allow this to happen.”

The plain truth is that Zelensky’s announcement of his “Victory Plan” is meaningless, and no amount of bluff and bluster will change the underlying situation that has existed for over two years now. Namely, Ukraine can never win this war, and either its controllers in the West accept defeat and a negotiated solution, or their continued demand that Russia be defeated will lead to a global nuclear war. This, in effect, is what Zelensky is now demanding, as his entire “plan” revolves around Ukraine being brought into NATO—and therefore under the American nuclear umbrella—for its kamikaze confrontation with Russia. Until that is rejected, the world stands on the brink of catastrophe. Will Western leaders be made to realize this before it is too late?

Underlining that reality, there are now two major NATO/U.S. military exercises underway, which will be clearly seen by Russia and others as a message aimed at the West’s declared “adversaries.”

In a similar fashion, the death of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar in Gaza, while touted as a major “inflection point” by the U.S., has done absolutely nothing

to wind down the conflict in the region. In between meetings with European leaders about further support for Ukraine this week, President Biden found time to call Benjamin Netanyahu to “congratulate” him on the death of Sinwar, and lie about how it presents an “opportunity” to release the hostages and bring the war to a close. However, as these flowery statements were being made, Netanyahu was also promising to scale up Israeli offensives in Gaza and Lebanon, and now appears to be enforcing a total military siege on northern Gaza.

Add to this the fact that Israel is vowing to launch a new, major attack against Iran, just as 100 U.S. troops have arrived in Israel, supposedly to defend and operate an American THAAD missile defense system.

There is no more room for half-truths, fancy slogans, and soft-headed rhetoric. The world has reached a breaking-point, where only a new system, a shift in the way of thinking and interacting among nations, can prevent one or both of these simmering conflicts from becoming a civilization-ending conflagration.

While today’s situation is unprecedented in its scope, previous shifts in thinking have occurred in modern history. Consider, for example, the Treaty of Westphalia, which brought the bloody Thirty Years’ War to an end in Europe. The Treaty’s opening articles read:

“Article I. A Christian, general and permanent peace, and true and honest friendship, must rule....

[T]his Peace must be so honest and seriously guarded and nourished that each part furthers the advantage, honor, and benefit of the other.... A neighborliness should be renewed and flourish for peace and friendship, and flourish again.

“Article II. On both sides, all should be forever forgotten and forgiven.... Instead, the fact that each and every one, from one side and the other, both before and during the war, committed insults, violent acts, hostilities, damages, and injuries, without regard of persons or outcomes, should be completely put aside, so that everything, whatever one could demand from another under his name, will be forgotten to eternity.”

The terms of this peace continued to be worked out over the next several years, but the treaty served as the initial basis—the shift in thinking—which ultimately allowed the agreement to be successful. By securing the idea that peace requires the “benefit of the other,” the previous dynamic of vengeance was transformed.

A similar principle could be brought into existence today. A new security and development architecture, which takes into account the interests of all nations and onerous failures of today’s neoliberal system, must now be created to pave the way for a future for the human species.