

Ukraine Zoom Talk to Fort Collins Group (Friday February 25, 2022)

1. Mistakes

- a. I did not think Russia would attack Ukraine. I believed Putin's claims that he had no intention of attacking.
- b. I dismissed Biden's statements that an attack on Ukraine was imminent as imperialist propaganda.
- c. I minimized the oppressive and dictatorial nature of the Putin regime.

2. History

- a. Prior to World War One
- b. World War One
- c. Russian Revolution
- d. 1922-38
- e. Hitler-Stalin Pact
- f. World War Two
- g. 1945-91
- h. Independent Ukraine

3. Ukraine Society

- a. Monism versus pluralism
- b. Right wing nationalism (neo-fascism)
- c. Anti-Russian and Pro-Russian sentiment
- d. Oligarch power

4. International Context

- a. Asymmetric end of Cold War
- b. U.S. hegemonic obsession
 - i. Global neo-liberal finance capital
 - ii. Bourgeois democracy
 - iii. U.S. military and political dominance
- c. Expansion of NATO
- d. Weakening Russia
- e. Struggle for multipolarity

5. Origins of Ukraine Crisis

- a. 25 million stranded Russians
- b. Ukrainian stagnation

- c. Russia versus the EU orientation
- d. Yanukovich government
- e. Colour revolution of 2004
- f. February revolution of 2014
 - i. U.S. connivance
 - ii. Fascist element
- g. Russian language issue
- h. Breakaway provinces: Donetsk and Lugansk
- i. Russian intervention
- j. Crimea and Kosovo
- k. Minsk 2 Accords

6. Current Situation

- a. Russian objectives:
 - i. Stop further NATO expansion
 - ii. Prevent Ukraine from becoming anti-Russian
- b. U.S. rigidity pushes Russian military response
 - i. U.S. rigidity partially directed at Germany and France
- c. Russian attack upon Ukraine is a criminal violation of international law and world peace. It must be firmly and unambiguously condemned.
 - i. The attack is also a huge tactical error, which will bring enormous and enduring grief to Russia.
- d. Annexing Ukraine would be another huge crime and tactical error.
 - i. Putin's expressed intention to "de-nazify" Ukraine is actually a route to a bloody political purge.
- e. The attack on Ukraine highlights the intensely undemocratic nature of Russian society.
 - i. Most Russians probably oppose the attack on Ukraine. But they are completely unable to prevent this stupid crime.
 - ii. Russians cannot even voice their opposition to this disastrous invasion.

7. Path Forward (necessary but not likely)

- a. Grant Russian security demands
 - i. NATO should guarantee that it will not deploy missiles in nations bordering Russia. (They are already in place from Slovenia to Romania, with Poland to follow).
 - ii. NATO should stop conducting military and naval exercises in nations and seas bordering Russia.
 - iii. Ukraine should not become a member of NATO.
 - iv. The United States, Europe, and Russia should sign a binding East-West security pact.

- v. The landmark treaty between the U.S. and Russia covering intermediate-range nuclear weapons should be restored. (The U.S. abandoned it in 2019)
- b. Russia must remove all their military forces from Ukraine and the vicinity of Ukraine.
- c. Russia must compensate Ukraine for the damage the attack has done.
- d. Russia must guarantee not to attack Ukraine or to interfere with Ukrainian politics.
- e. Ukraine must be politically neutral like Finland, Austria, and Sweden.
- f. Russia must revoke recognition of Donetsk and Lugansk independence and return them to Ukraine sovereignty
- g. Minsk 2 Accords must be implemented (i.e. federalism and autonomy for Donbas region)
- h. Russian language must be accepted as one official language of Ukraine
- i. **Long term:** a new security system that includes Russia must replace NATO
- j. *Possible alternatives to this path are almost all grim.*