

Ukraine: for peace and de-escalation

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The current unprecedented escalation around Ukraine has been the culmination of a “New Cold War” growing between Russia and the “collective West” (represented by the US, NATO and the EU leadership) since 2014. The objective that Putin’s Russia has invariably declared in this confrontation is to create a new world architecture in which there will be not one sovereign (the US), but many sovereigns, each of which will be assigned certain “spheres of interest”.



This logic, which recognised the quality of “sovereigns” only for global players, was based on the denial of any autonomy for smaller countries - such as the republics of the post-Soviet space or Eastern Europe, including Ukraine. Russia’s method as the weaker (compared to NATO) side in this struggle remained a constant escalation of risks: it was assumed that the West was internally divided and NATO, despite its combined military power, was not ready to take decisive action. But the main victim of Russia’s actions was not NATO countries, but an even weaker Ukraine. The result of Russia’s aggressive policy was more than a million Ukrainian refugees, thousands of deaths, and the violation of Ukraine’s state integrity and security. The annexation of Crimea and informal Russian control over part of Donbass, which ensured the adoption of the Minsk agreements, as well as the absence of serious sanctions against Russian elites, demonstrated the relative success of this line of Russian foreign policy.

However, the pressure expressed in a growing Russian military presence on the Ukrainian border clashed with the expected stance of NATO and the US. Russia either overestimated the divisions within NATO, especially Germany and the US, or made radical demands with no hope of enforcing them in order to force NATO to compromise on “minor” issues. This all provoked a series of tense negotiations with mutual upsets. Putin’s Russia has discovered that the US can quite confidently use its own weapons, raising the temperature of military hysteria by actively using fake news, disinformation and an aggressive style of diplomacy. Behind the thick cloud of lies and propaganda spread by both sides, what matters most is that the irresponsibility and imperial pretensions of the elites of countries with huge potential for weapons of mass destruction endanger millions of lives of their own and other citizens, the right of the Ukrainian people to self-determination, and the further existence of Ukraine and other countries in the region that may become involved in the conflict.

In these conditions, an anti-war stance becomes necessary at the international level for all leftist and progressive forces. Russian, Ukrainian, American and Western European leftists need to demand from their governments an immediate de-escalation, including the withdrawal of Russian troops, support for a ceasefire in Donbass and the start of meaningful negotiations which would rule out the very possibility of a military clash and which would focus on symmetrical arms reduction. This can

only be achieved by solidarity between the left and progressive forces and, above all, by engaging the millions of people who are potential victims of imperialist conflict in the struggle for peace, democracy and justice.

Russian Socialist Movement

30 January 2022

P.S.

- Fourth International. :
<https://fourth.international/en/asia/417>
- The Russian Socialist Movement (RSD) is an organization of the radical left in which members of the Fourth International in Russia are active.