

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد
بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم
از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

Boaventura De Sousa Santos
01.02.2022

Europe and the War in Ukraine

The world needs to hear authoritative voices that don't repeat the script imposed by rivals.

The most authoritative of all is the voice of the UN.



No analyst remembers that, in 2000, when he came to power, Vladimir Putin publicly expressed his desire for Russia to join NATO and also the EU so that Russia "does not remain isolated in Europe." Both applications were denied.



The demanding challenges the world faces today – from the climate crisis to the pandemic, from the worsening cold war to the danger of a nuclear confrontation, from the increase in human rights violations to the exponential growth in the number of refugees and hungry people – demand more than ever an active intervention by the UN, whose mandate includes the maintenance of collective peace and security, as well as the defence and promotion of human rights.

Cold war

Among the many areas of action in which the UN can intervene, one of the most important is peace and security, specifically with regard to the intensification of the Cold War. Initiated by Donald Trump and enthusiastically pursued by Joe Biden, a new Cold War is underway that apparently has two objectives, China and [Russia](#), and two fronts, Taiwan and [Ukraine](#). In principle, it seems unwise for a declining power, such as [the United States](#), to engage simultaneously in a confrontation on two fronts. Moreover, unlike the previous Cold War, with the Soviet Union in the crosshairs, China is a power of great economic power and a major creditor of the American public debt. It is about to overtake the United States as the largest economy in the world and, according to the National Science Foundation of the United States, in 2018 it had for the first time a scientific production superior to that of the United States. Likewise, logic would advise the United States to have Russia as an ally and not as an enemy, not only to separate it from China, but also to preserve the energy and geostrategic needs of its historical ally, Europe. The same logic would advise the EU to take into account Central Europe's historical and economic relations with Russia (up to *Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik*).



[Willy Brandt, the pragmatic socialist](#)

It is particularly troubling that the *neocons* (the ultra-conservative politicians and strategists who since the attack on the Twin Towers in 2001 dominate American foreign policy) intensify hostilities with Russia and, at the same time, urge the United States to prepare for a war with China at the end of the decade, a hot war of a new kind (the war with the means of artificial intelligence). As happened in 2003 with the preparations for the invasion of Iraq, we are witnessing an alarming unanimity among foreign policy commentators in the Western world. Suddenly, China, which until now was an important and reliable trading partner, becomes a dictatorship that massively violates human rights and a malevolent power that wants to control the world, objectives that must be neutralized at all costs. For its part, Russia, until today a strategic partner (as in the nuclear agreement with Iran), is now perceived as a country ruled by an authoritarian and aggressive president, Vladimir Putin, who wants to invade democratic Ukraine. To defend it, the United States will help militarily and, for this, Ukraine must join NATO. This narrative, while false, is reproduced without contradiction in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, then expanded by Reuters and associated Press, and seconded by reports from U.S. embassies. Western commentators simply regurgitate it uncritically. In view of this, it is urgent that the intervention of the UN be heard and felt to stop the drift of a third world war.

The division of Ukraine

The UN has abundant information that allows it to counter this narrative and actively intervene to neutralize its destructive potential. Ukraine is a country ethnolinguistically divided between a predominantly Ukrainian west and a predominantly Russian east.

Throughout the 2000s, elections and opinion polls revealed opposition between a pro-EU and pro-NATO West, on the one hand; and a pro-Russia one, for another. As for energy resources, Ukraine depends on 72% of Russia's natural gas, as is the case with other European countries (Germany depends on 39%), which gives an idea of Russia's negotiating power in this area. Since the end of the Soviet Union, the United States has been trying to take Ukraine out of Russia's orbit and integrate it into that of the Western world and, in fact, turn it into a pro-American stronghold on the Russian border. This strategy has had two pillars: militarily integrating Ukraine into NATO (approved at the Bucharest Summit in 2008, as well as Georgia, another country bordering Russia) and integrating it economically into the European Union.





The Orange Revolution or, rather, the coup of February 22, 2014, strongly supported by the United States, was the pretext for accelerating Western strategy. Its immediate cause was President Yanukovich's refusal to sign an economic integration agreement with the EU that left Russia out. Protests followed, much social unrest and a brutal government crackdown that resulted in more than 60 deaths (it is now known that the demonstrators included heavily armed fascist groups). On February 22, the president was forced to leave the country. The "promotion of democracy" led by the United States had produced results: the "orange revolution" was beginning its anti-Russian policy. Russia had warned that Ukraine's NATO membership and exclusive integration into the EU constituted a "direct threat" to Russia. In the following months, Russia occupied Crimea, where it already had an important military base.

El despliegue militar ruso en las fronteras de Ucrania



Climbing

In 2014 and 2015 the Minsk protocols were signed with the intermediation of Russia, France and Germany. The ethnolinguistic specificity of the Don River (Donbas) region (mostly Russian-speaking) was recognized and provision was made for the establishment, by Ukraine and in accordance with Ukrainian legislation, of a system of self-government for the region (covering areas of donetsk and Luhansk districts). These protocols were never complied with by Ukraine. Tensions have now escalated again with Russia's alleged intention to invade Ukraine. It is even likely to do so (certainly limited to ethnically Russian eastern Ukraine) if NATO, the United States and the European Union continue their policy of hostility. In the face of all this, one has to wonder whether it is Russia or the United States that has been creating problems in this region of the world. We all remember the missile crisis of 1962, when the Soviet Union proposed to install missiles in Cuba. The American reaction was strict; it was a direct threat to the sovereignty of the United States and under no circumstances would such weapons be accepted at its border. It even sounded the alarm of a nuclear war. Was this reaction very different from Russia's current reaction to the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO? In 2017, the report of the meeting between US Secretary of State James Baker and Mikhail Gorbachev on February 9, 1990, was made public. At that meeting it was agreed that, if Russia facilitated German

reunification, NATO "would not expand an inch to the east" (<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu>). Despite this and the defunct Warsaw Pact, nine years later Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joined NATO. And no commentator remembers that, in 2000, when he came to power, Vladimir Putin publicly expressed his desire for Russia to join NATO and also the EU so that Russia "does not remain isolated in Europe." Both applications were denied.



A Ukrainian soldier at a lookout in Donetsk, near the border with Russia. Image: AFP

Given this, the UN knows that Russia is not the only aggressive power in the current conflict, and that it would be enough for Ukraine to comply with the Minsk agreements for hostilities to cease. Why can't Ukraine remain a neutral country like Finland, Austria or Sweden? If there is war in this region, the theatre of war will be Europe, not the United States. The same Europe that a little more than seventy years ago came out of the hell of two world wars that resulted in some 100 million deaths. If the UN wants to be the voice of peace and security, which is included in its mandate, it must assume a much more active and independent position from the countries involved. We must find out *in situ* what is happening in the territories where the great powers are facing and preparing for wars of hegemony in which the minor allies will probably suffer the consequences and pay with lives (Taiwan or Ukraine) – the so-called *proxy wars* – even if the aggressive policy of "regime change" targets Russia and China, eventually with results similar to those it had in Iraq, Libya or Afghanistan. The world needs to hear authoritative voices that don't repeat the script imposed by rivals. The most authoritative of all is the voice of the UN.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos

Original: USA [A Europa e a guerra da Ucrânia](#)

La Pluma.net 31.01.2022