

The Other Side

by Anil Shrivastava “Musafir”



What is happening in Ukraine is inhumane and brutal. Russia must be condemned for an incursion into a free country. But we shouldn't forget that the Western countries and the USA are equally to be blamed for the Ukrainian tragedy.

Remember the Cuban blockade by the USA against Russian arms shipment in 1962? The US risked nuclear war to prevent missiles installed 90 miles off its shores. Back to the present day, Russia is similarly upset about NATO schemes along their border. Russia is upset as it is not allowed to have a buffer zone around its borders. Would the US stand idly by while Russians covertly backed a coup in Canada or Mexico, as the US did in Ukraine in 2014, and then acquiesce to a Russian military buildup along its frontier?

The United States has been expanding NATO against Russian terrain since 1991 and has been getting the better of the great game lately. If Russia calls a halt to NATO recruitment in and around Ukraine, the West cries foul. In this grim geopolitical game, Ukraine itself is almost beside the point and is suffering severely from the

economic and psychological effects of an unnecessarily hair-trigger environment. Before invading Ukraine, Russia asked for assurance that Ukraine will not be made a part of NATO. The United States denied the Russian request.

In March 1991, for example, British Prime Minister John Major told Moscow that he did not foresee “circumstances now or in the future where East/Central European countries would become members of NATO”. The discourse emanating out of the Kremlin is that Russia trusted these and other verbal assurances, but NATO's eastward expansion violated the spirit of the treaty on German reunification signed in 1990.

“It is easy to imagine how the West would have reacted if the positions had been reversed. The Russians were entitled to take seriously the repeated high-level assurances they were given.” President Putin is playing the betrayal theme to perfection, and, unfortunately, may survive the economic sanctions with the help of economically powerful China.