**A threat of war**

Khalid Bhatti

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The geopolitical struggle to dominate Eastern Europe and Eurasia regions has intensified between Russia and the US; and the situation in Ukraine has reached flashpoint. On the one hand, Russia is trying to keep US-led Nato out of Georgia and Ukraine. On the other, the US and some European powers want to incorporate both Georgia and Ukraine in Nato to consolidate their positions in the region.

The question is: will this intensified struggle turn into an open military conflict involving Nato, Ukraine and Russia? War drums over Ukraine are beating louder and harder with every passing day.

Russian intention is not to invade Ukraine at this stage but to put maximum pressure on the country. Instead of the Ukraine invasion, Russia is likely to prefer to use the threat of war to protect and defend its national and strategic interests.

Both Washington and Kremlin are making hard-hitting and threatening statements against each other. Military maneuverings are also taking place on both sides. Russia had already deployed more than 100,000 troops on the southern border of Ukraine.

US President Joe Biden has announced deployment of three thousand US troops in Germany, Romania and Poland. Such manoeuvring creates fears of a war, but the situation hasn’t reached the stage where the war will become imminent. The Western media is playing its role in beating the war drums. One speculative story after the other about the ‘possible’ Russian invasion of Ukraine is appearing in leading mainstream media outlets.

The Western media blames Russia for heightened tensions in the region, ignoring the provocative role of the US and Ukraine. The Biden Administration knows well that Russia will not tolerate Ukraine’s Nato membership, but it still pushes it.

Western media outlets are not pointing out how the US and its allies have continued to arm the reactionary government in Ukraine and how they are using the tension between Russia and Ukraine to fully arm Ukraine with modern military hardware.

Allegations of Russian aggression and military adventurism made by Western leaders are just an example of heightened hypocrisy. The US and its allies – Britain in particular – have waged a series of catastrophic wars since 1991 in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Afghanistan. Millions have died and whole countries are reduced to ruins.

Russia considers Nato expansion a direct threat to its security and strategic interests, so it is using maximum pressure tactics to force Ukraine not to join the alliance. On the other hand, the US wants to expand Nato to put immense pressure on Russia to contain its growing global influence. Nato is not a benign force but an armed alliance of imperialist interests, representing the geostrategic aims of capitalist powers. The expansion means to increase influence in the region to protect the geopolitical and strategic interests against the challenge posed by the China-Russia alliance.

Putin knows the possible cost of a war with Ukraine both in terms of human lives and economy. War is not the preferred choice for Russia. But if forced into a situation where the country is left with no other option but to use military force, it might opt for limited military action – like those against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 – instead of a full-fledged war. On both occasions, Putin annexed strategically important regions in timely limited military action.

On both occasions, the US and Nato failed to stop Russia from taking over the breakaway regions and its annexation. It was an embarrassing situation for the US and its powerful European allies on both occasions. Will the US do something differently this time?

If Putin were to order an invasion aimed at taking control of the ‘land bridge’ connecting the Donbass to Crimea in rapid military action, what options would the US and its allies have in that situation? It will be difficult for them to get involved in this military conflict with active military engagement. So they would continue to supply arms to Ukraine.

American and European powers may impose further sanctions as an option. The threat of further sanctions might not be enough to stop Russia in that situation. In my view, both sides will avoid such a situation.

The war with Russia will have disastrous consequences for Ukraine. The loss of Ukrainian ports and metallurgy resources would weaken the Ukrainian economy and threaten its promising recovery. The idea that the main reason for the conflict is the aggression of Russian imperialism against semi-colonial Ukraine leads directly to the support for Kyiv, its murderous ‘Anti-Terrorist Operation’ (ATO) and the fascist gangs fighting in it, its assault on democratic rights and its reactionary nationalism.

Since the 2008 war in Georgia, Russia has been attempting to assert itself on the world arena. Though it does not really have the economic or military strength to challenge the US, it seeks to have its own independent foreign policy and wants to negotiate with the US from a position of strength.

The war against Georgia in South Ossetia represented a turning point, where Russia eventually managed to turn the mistakes of US imperialists in overstretching their forces and Russia’s superior forces on the ground on a regional level to its advantage.

For more than 20 years, the US has humiliated and provoked Russia by promoting the expansion of Nato into Central and Eastern Europe, absorbing all the countries that were previously part of the Warsaw Pact and even some ex-Soviet Republics. Such a policy had two aims: to intimidate Russia, and to keep European powers in a subordinate condition to the US.

The writer is a freelance journalist.