Biden boasts of his role in expanding NATO to Russia's borders

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23 February 2023

US President Joe Biden met Wednesday in Poland with representatives of the Bucharest Nine, the group of Eastern European countries added to the NATO alliance during the Clinton and Bush administrations, pledging to "defend literally every inch of NATO" against Russia.

Biden began his remarks by stating, "As some of you may remember, years ago, when we were expanding NATO, I was the one in the United States Senate who was pushing the hardest to expand NATO for membership of many of you sitting around this table."

His comments are a testament to the deep historical roots of the war that erupted one year ago.

According to the White House's well-worn narrative, the war in Ukraine is a "war of choice" launched by a single man in February 2022. Putin started the war, and only Putin can end it—by withdrawing Russian troops to where they were last year, the White House endlessly repeats.

But this simplistic and false presentation has nothing to do with the historical record. In reality, the United States has sought to bring the republics of the former Soviet Union and the Eastern European "buffer states" into the NATO alliance, while fomenting domestic nationalist uprisings within Russia with the aim of destabilizing and breaking up the country.

In 1998, the Senate voted in favor of expanding NATO to include Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. "This, in fact, is the beginning of another 50 years of peace," Biden said, upon setting into motion the events that would ultimately lead to the eruption of the war in Ukraine.

"We'll be righting an historical injustice forced upon the Poles, Czechs and Hungarians" by the Soviet Union.

"The United States is a European power," testified Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright in 1997 to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which Biden was the ranking member. "We have an interest not only in the lands west of the Oder River, but in the fate of the 200 million people who live in the nations between the Baltic and Black Seas."

On June 15, 2001, in a speech in Warsaw, Poland US President George W. Bush declared his "Plan to enlarge NATO" in order to create a ring of countries that would stretch "from the Baltic to the Black Sea."

Biden supported the 2004 expansion of NATO with the inclusion of Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

And in 2008, when Bush declared that having Ukraine join NATO is in the "interest" of the United States, he had the enthusiastic support of Biden. Under Bush's guidance NATO declared that Ukraine alongside Georgia "will become members of NATO."

The Obama administration, while publicly distancing itself from the Bush administration's most criminal actions, such as the systematic torture of prisoners, vociferously defended Bush's call for Ukraine to become a member of NATO.

The strategy underlying the eastward expansion of NATO has drawn heavily on the conceptions of the right-wing dictator Józef Pi?sudski, who ruled Poland for much of the interwar period.

In 2014, US geostrategist Robert D. Kaplan stressed in a piece from August 2014 titled "Pi?sudski's Europe" that "it is Poland and Romania, the two largest NATO states in northeastern and southeastern Europe respectively, that are crucial to the emergence of an effective Intermarium to counter Russia. Together they practically link the Baltic with the Black Sea."

As a compliment to the theory of the "Intermarium," Pi?sudski advocated the concept of "Prometheism,"

declaring that "Poland's strength and importance among the constituent parts of the Russian state embolden us to set ourselves the political goal of breaking up the Russian state into its main constituents and emancipating the countries that have been forcibly incorporated into that empire."

Only then, Pi?sudski stressed, will Russia be "sufficiently weakened that she will cease to be a formidable and dangerous neighbor."

At the Wednesday meeting of the nine member countries spanning from the Baltic to the Black Sea, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg declared, "We cannot allow Russia to continue to chip away at European security. We must break the cycle of Russian aggression," the Secretary General said.

Speaking at last weekend's Munich Security conference, Stoltenberg acknowledged the extent to which the Eastern NATO powers had militarily rearmed for years in preparation for the present conflict.

> The war didn't start in February last year, it started in 2014. And since 2014, we have implemented the biggest reinforcement of our collective defense, with more troops, higher readiness, presence in eastern part of the Alliance, new defense plans, and also increased defence spending.

In 2017, NATO created four multinational battalion-size battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

Following the outbreak of the Ukraine war, NATO reinforced its existing four battle groups in Eastern Europe and pledged to form four additional battle groups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

"This has brought the total number of multinational battlegroups to eight, effectively doubled the number of troops on the ground and extended NATO's forward presence along the Alliance's eastern flank—from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south," NATO said in a statement last week.

This expansion is proceeding further, with NATO allies pledging at the June summit in Madrid to "enhance the multinational battlegroups from battalions up to brigade size."

Amid a deterioration of the military position of the Ukraine and evermore direct NATO involvement, there is a looming threat that the massive NATO military presence on Russia's borders will be transformed into an active geographic expansion of the war to the whole of Eastern Europe.

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