

There Will Be No World War, Russia Is Alone

By [Andrei Malgin](#)

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Recent events have prompted a flurry of headlines suggesting that "the world is on the brink of World War III."

I don't think so. "World war" involves a confrontation between opposing coalitions of global powers. What do we have now? On one side we have lonely and economically weakened Russia, and on the other — the rest of the civilized world.

The fighting in Ukraine is a local conflict that has none of the preconditions for spreading further.

Putin will never attack a NATO country. Even the possibility that NATO could deliver a limited supply of weapons to Ukraine has sent Putin into a poorly concealed panic. No, he will never attack NATO.

Putin must hate going it alone. After all, last spring and summer he tried mightily to convince

other member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization — the military alliance between former Soviet republics — to support Russia's actions in Ukraine.

He did not need the CSTO to beef up Russia's armed forces, but to give the aggression greater political weight.

Putin undoubtedly had the precedent of 1968 in mind, when Warsaw Pact countries sent their tanks into Czechoslovakia for the ostensible purpose of putting down a rebellion. That was, after all, a collective decision and the responsibility for those actions belongs to several states that supposedly made the joint decision to prevent a revolution from occurring in one of their member countries.

However, ever after convening the CSTO in Moscow twice last year, the members did not support the idea of Russia's Ukrainian venture. What's more, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko have never once publicly supported Putin's actions in Ukraine.

Moscow's closest potential military allies all refused to participate in that military intervention. Is it therefore logical that they would sign up for a "world war" against the entire Western world? Of course not.

Those in the West who oppose supplying Ukraine with modern arms offer several arguments. The first is that it would not subdue the aggressor, but rather provoke Russia into increasing its military presence.

But the truth is that Putin is already daily increasing the flow of Russian military manpower and equipment across the porous border into eastern Ukraine.

Photos and videos sent from the conflict zone show advanced modern weaponry, including highly sophisticated anti-aircraft and rocket artillery systems. The territory under separatist control is just one big Russian military base.

Of course, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov vehemently denies that Russia's military is involved. And if he suddenly stops denying it, will anything change? The whole world already knows what is really happening. When Lavrov reiterated this fiction to the participants of the recent security conference in Munich, the entire audience laughed in his face.

Another argument against supplying foreign weapons is that it will only give a trump card to Kremlin propaganda. However, the Kremlin propaganda machine needs no aces: it has long fabricated its virtual world from nothing but phantoms.

For example, rumors are now actively circulating that German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande came to Moscow for talks because the separatist militias had surrounded not Ukrainian army soldiers near Debaltseve, but 1,500 NATO troops.

And only 60 minutes before I sat down to write these lines, television channel NTV broadcast an interview with two Donetsk "eyewitnesses" who claimed to have personally seen U.S. and Polish soldiers shooting civilians in their city.

So, there is no reason to fear an intensification of Russia's propaganda: those Kremlin spin

doctors pulled out all the stops long ago.

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