

By Gerry Condon

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International peace and disarmament movements would do well to heed Russia's concerns, including its warning about a possible nuclear "false flag" in Ukraine.

Noam Chomsky says that if you google the word "unprovoked," you will get millions of hits, as that was the officially sanctioned adjective to describe the [Russian invasion of Ukraine](#). All the media fell into line with the required language. Now, we can add another necessary word.

"Unsubstantiated" is the requisite adjective to describe Russia's recent warning about a [possible "dirty bomb" being prepared in Ukraine](#)

. "Unsubstantiated allegation" can be read and heard over and over. Well, aren't most allegations "unsubstantiated" by their very nature – allegations until they are proven? So why is the word "unsubstantiated" constantly repeated in virtually all the media?

Chomsky says the reason "unprovoked" is such a ubiquitous descriptor is because just the opposite is true. The Russian invasion may be illegal and abhorrent, but it was most definitely provoked by the US and NATO, who are surrounding Russia with hostile military forces, nuclear missiles and anti-ballistic missiles.

So What About the "Unsubstantiated Russian Allegations?"

We are being told that we can never believe anything the Russians say. That it is ridiculous to think that the US and NATO would ever stage a false flag – detonate a "dirty" radiation bomb and blame it on Russia. Never mind that they did the very thing with "false flag" chemical weapons attacks in Syria – repeatedly – and always blamed Syria's President Assad, whom they were seeking to overthrow.

The Russians say that some forces in Ukraine have the means and the motivation to build a “dirty bomb,” and that they *may* be working on one, or considering doing so. They postulate a scenario in which Ukraine and/or the US would explode a “dirty bomb”

[and then claim that the Russians had used](#)

a tactical nuclear weapon. This would horrify the world and provide cover for direct US/NATO military intervention in Ukraine, or possibly even a US nuclear attack against Russia.

If I Were the Russians, I Would be Pretty Darn Concerned

I would go to all the combatants to let them know I know. I would go to the United Nations. I would go to the people of the world. I would tell them to look out for a false flag and a dangerous escalation of the war in Ukraine. I would hope to deter such a dastardly plan before it got underway.

I would expect to be ridiculed for my laughable and “unsubstantiated” allegations, and to be accused of planning such a dangerous false flag myself. But I would have warned the world.

Whether this was a real threat or just a concern of the Russians – presumably based on information gathered by their intelligence services – we have no way of knowing. But it is most interesting that the Russians did warn the world about this possible scenario. And they even went further. They called on the international movement for nuclear disarmament to pay attention and to protest the use of nuclear weapons.

Are we paying attention?

Some say this is an act of grave hypocrisy on the part of the Russian leadership. After all, isn't it Putin who has repeatedly threatened to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine? Actually no – or not necessarily. Top Russian leaders have spoken out in high visibility, international forums to say they have no intention of using nuclear weapons in Ukraine, that there is no such need and no military objective compatible with doing so.

President Putin has said the same. Putin has reminded the world several times, however, of the official Russian [Nuclear](#) Posture – if Russia feels an existential threat from superior US/NATO conventional military forces, they reserve the right to respond with tactical nuclear weapons. That is a stark reality and a timely warning.

It is the western media, however, that have amplified and repeated this “threat” over and over. Putin has never actually threatened to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine.

With so much propaganda about “Putin’s reckless and criminal threats” then, it is no wonder that the Russians would worry about a US/Ukrainian “false flag” operation with a “dirty bomb” to blame Russia for detonating a nuclear weapon in Ukraine.

Are we paying attention now?

What About the US Nuclear Threats?

The US has nuclear bombs at the ready in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Turkey. The US – under President George W. Bush – unilaterally exited the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and proceeded to establish ABM systems near Russia’s borders in Poland and Romania. These systems are not just defensive, as implied. They are the shield in the sword-and-shield First Strike strategy. Furthermore, the ABM systems can quickly be converted to launch offensive nuclear missiles.

The United States – under President Donald Trump – unilaterally exited the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty that had eliminated intermediate nuclear missiles from Europe. Clearly, the US is seeking to gain the upper hand and to increase their threat of a nuclear attack on Russia.

What were the Russians supposed to think and how did we imagine they would respond?

In fact, the aggressive US military posture toward Russia – including the ever-present threat of nuclear attack -- is at the very bottom of the war in Ukraine. The war in Ukraine would never have happened except for the US/NATO encirclement of Russia with hostile military forces, including nuclear weapons.

The US Nuclear Threat is Further Amplified by President Biden's Recent Release of His (and the Pentagon's) Nuclear Posture Review

While running for president, Biden hinted that he might adopt a No First Use policy – a promise that the U.S. would never be the first to use nuclear weapons. But, alas, this was not to be.

President Biden's Nuclear Posture Review retains the US option of being the first to strike with nuclear weapons. Unlike Russia's nuclear posture, which retains this right only when Russia perceives an existential military threat, the US. First Strike options include defending its allies and even non-allies.

In other words, anywhere and anytime.

Biden's Nuclear Posture Review also retains the sole authority of the President of the United States to launch a nuclear war, with no checks or balances whatsoever. And it commits the US to spend billions of dollars on the "modernization" of its nuclear triad, including developing a new generation of nuclear weapons.

This is a gross violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1970, to which the US, USSR (now Russia), China, France and the UK are all signatories.

Understanding Russia's Legitimate Concerns for its Homeland

Some US imperial planners talk openly about overthrowing the Russian government and dividing that huge country into smaller pieces, allowing US penetration and access to vast

reserves of rich mineral resources. This is US imperialism in the 21st Century.

This is the context for the war in Ukraine, which – among other things – is clearly a US proxy war against Russia.

International peace and disarmament movements – including in the US – would do well to take Russia's concerns seriously, including its warning about a possible nuclear "false flag" in Ukraine. We should accept Russia's call on the nuclear disarmament movement to take heed and to be watchful.

Russia's Stance on Nukes Hints at Willingness for Peace with Ukraine

There are a growing number of indicators of a new openness on all sides to diplomatic initiatives. It is certainly high time to end this unfortunate, unnecessary and very dangerous war, which threatens all of human civilization. All peace-loving peoples should join together in loudly calling for a ceasefire and negotiations. The nuclear disarmament movement, in particular, can push all sides to declare they will not use nuclear weapons, and to engage in good faith negotiations for a durable peace.

We can also seize this moment to remind the world once again of the overarching urgency of eliminating all nuclear weapons. We can push all the nuclear-armed states to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and begin a concerted effort to destroy their nuclear stockpiles. In this way, we will hopefully bring the Ukraine war to an end – sooner rather than later – while simultaneously building momentum to abolish nuclear weapons and war.

Gerry Condon is a Vietnam-era veteran and war resister, and the recent past president of Veterans For Peace.

