

Answer to Question

The Difference Between Russia's Position on Ukraine and Its Position on Sweden and Finland

(Translated)

Question:

Why did Russia move militarily against Ukraine when it revealed its intention of seeking to join NATO, and did not take any military action against Finland, which actually joined the alliance, nor did it move anything against Sweden, whose accession to the alliance is now a matter of time?

Answer:

To clarify the answer, we review the following:

First: We have already published a great deal on Ukraine and the reasons that prompted Russia to declare war on it:

1- **In the Answer to a Question dated January 24, 2004, we said:** ("As for Ukraine, it is closely related to Russia and an important ally to it, in addition to the presence of Ukrainians who consider themselves as Russians, and they speak Russian and a large percentage of them descend from Russian origins, especially those living in eastern Ukraine...").

2- **We said in the Answer to a Question dated March 20, 2010:** ("Ukraine, which has an area of 603,700 square kilometers and a population of 48 million, is strategically located overlooking the Black Sea, and is characterized by the passage of energy lines, especially natural gas lines, in addition to its location that connects Europe with Asia...").

3- **We said in the Answer to a Question dated May 23, 2013:** ("As for Russia, Ukraine is one of the most important countries to it. If it loses it, the West will be on its borders directly. It is like a protective shield for it from Europe's side, this is in addition to its economic importance, as the Russian gas pipelines pass through it to the West. Note that Russia insists on restoring its hegemony in the region of the Soviet Union, which included Ukraine...").

4- **We said in the Answer to a Question dated February 22, 2014:** ("As for Russia, Ukraine is one of the most important countries for it. If it loses it, the West will be on its borders directly, as it is like a protective shield for it from Europe's side... as Ukraine is located only 300 kilometers from Moscow. **This is the reason for Russia's intervention in Ukraine...** This is on the one hand, and on the other hand the presence of the Russian military base of the Black Sea Fleet in it. On the one hand, it is considered a bridge between Europe and Russia, and on the other hand it is considered a buffer zone between them").

5- **And we said in the Answer to a Question dated December 22, 2021:**

(Ukraine is Russia's front yard. Russia is not like Central Asia, for example, as a backyard in terms of location, national religious and historical bonds. It overlooks the Black Sea ...and if the weakness of the Soviet state forced it to abandon Eastern Europe as a buffer zone, in facing the advancing of NATO towards Eastern Europe, it at least wants its neighbours Ukraine and Belarus to provide it with an area that isolates it from the dangers of NATO and advances of its military machine to the east. Russia today wants to prevent Ukraine from joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or supporting it).

Second: All of this shows the importance of Ukraine to Russia, rather it almost does not consider it an independent country from it. Putin said in his speech on 21/2/2022: [Putin indicated that Ukraine is not just a neighboring country to us, as it is an integral part of our history, culture and moral space. These are not only our comrades, colleagues, and friends, but they are also our relatives, with whom we have blood ties and family ties... (Anatolia Agency, 23/2/2022)]. It also considers it a buffer zone from NATO, that is, a red line for its geographical and strategic location and demographic structure, so it does not allow NATO to reach it. Putin warned NATO [from

deploying its forces and weapons in Ukraine, saying: "Expanding NATO's military infrastructure in Ukraine is a red line for to Russia, and it will lead to a strong response." (Noon Post, 4/12/2021)].

And after Russia's failure to restore Ukraine to its fold, whether in the matter of sharing the Black Sea Fleet in the early nineties, or in the matter of the long, wide gas pipelines that the Soviet Union had built inside Ukraine to transport gas from Russia's lands to Europe, or in trade matters where the Russian market is in dire need of sugar and oils produced by the fertile lands of Ukraine, or after the emergence of Ukrainian orientations towards the European Union and NATO, after its failure to do so, it resorted to military force as the last option. By doing that Putin thought that it would restore Russia to an international position as a superpower, and his belief that America is busy with the issue China, this is why it will remain silent if Russia attacks Ukraine... especially since Putin thought he would quickly dominate Ukraine before America moves, because of its preoccupation with China, as both his political stupidity and megalomania were pushing him to do so!! The result was that America adopted the issue of Ukraine, provided it with military equipment, conducted military training for its soldiers, mobilized Europe behind it, and ignited war for the last Ukrainian and Russian soldier while its soldiers watch from a distance!!

Third: As for why Russia did not take any military action against Finland, which had already joined the alliance, nor did it move anything against Sweden, whose accession to the alliance had become a matter of time? The answer to that is as follows:

1- Although Sweden is not a neighbour to Russia but Finland is, they are not like Ukraine in terms of their geographical and demographic location, history, hegemony, economy and security, as is known. That is why these two states are not viewed as a matter of life and death by Russia as Ukraine. In addition, Russia's view of these two countries is completely different. Russia does not see Ukraine as a completely independent country from it, as in Putin's statements that we mentioned above, especially since it was part of the Soviet Union. As for the reality of Finland and Sweden, it is different. Finland has become a member of the European Union since 1995, and Finland joined NATO in 2023. Sweden enjoys a close relationship with NATO and regularly conducts joint exercises. Sweden is one of six non-NATO members of the European Union, as it joined the Union in 1995. Thus, Russia does not have a pretext, even if in formality, to attack them, as it did with Ukraine.

2- Moreover, Russia is now in the predicament of Ukraine and has not exited from it, and this reality does not make it capable of entering into a new war. It is not unexpected that it realized the size of its forces and capabilities, as its war on Ukraine has been nearly a year and a half and it has not won it so far. Therefore, going into a new war while it is in apparent weakness in front of Ukraine and the West that supports it, is unlikely in its current circumstances.

3- There is a similar precedent that should be mentioned. When the former Warsaw Pact countries Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia (which were part of the former Soviet Union) joined NATO in waves of expansion of the alliance since 1997, Russia was weak and had not yet got rid of the chaos of remnants of the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was suffering from the effects of its collapse, it had not yet fully recovered from these effects, it had not yet stabilized as a major country politically or economically, and therefore it was not able to stand up to the West to prevent those countries from joining the alliance. Likewise, its attack on Ukraine, which did not succeed in making Ukraine surrender to its terms, revealed a serious military weakness in it. Its reputation and prestige were shaken, as it was like in the nineties. Therefore, it is not currently in a position to oppose Sweden and Finland's membership in NATO because of their position and its current military weakness.

I hope the picture has become clear about the difference between Russia's position on Ukraine and its position on Sweden and Finland.

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