

NATO Expansion: Blinken and Stoltenberg lie intentionally and the media let them

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Masking the truth © Jan Oberg 2022
Secretary of State Antony Blinken and NATO's chief Jens Stoltenberg

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To deceive, telling half-truths, or a complete lie is nothing new in politics, particularly security in politics. But until some 20-30 years ago, I would – perhaps naively – see it as an exception. Tragically – and perhaps to many readers' surprise – it is now the rule. At least in U.S. and NATO circles, and that is particularly regrettably since The West professes to be a democratic system with specific values and even a moral leader to The Rest.

Lying systematically about facts – historical facts – and other countries and cultures should be incompatible with The West's perception of itself. But, today, it isn't.

Lies are widespread in so-called security politics when some militarist project doesn't make any (common) sense to intelligent people, when the real motives have to be covered up and war is being prepared or when the sociological cancer called the Military-Industrial-Media-Academic Complex, MIMAC, and the elites it consists of, try to squeeze out even larger military expenditures from their taxpayers.

You lie to manufacture an enemy that can justify what you will do and enrich yourself. With 40+ years of experience in security politics in general and NATO/US policies in particular, I know too much – sorry for the arrogance – and have become too cynical to believe that what goes on goes on for the sake of self-defence, security or peace.

Some quick examples of gross empirically-revealed lying to the word – all the liars still at large:

- In the 1990s, Yugoslav President Milosevic was Europe's new Hitler (Bill Clinton) and planned a genocide on the Albanians in Kosovo.
- Saddam Hussein's soldiers threw babies out of their incubators in Kuwait City.
- Afghanistan had to be destroyed because of 9/11.
- Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.
- The US-led Global War On Terror – GWOT – has been about reducing terrorism.
- The US/NATO orchestrated regime-change attempt in Syria from 2011 to 2016 was exclusively about Dictator al-Assad's sudden sadist "killing of his own."
- Gaddafi was just about to murder all who lived in Benghazi.
- The conflict around Ukraine was started by Putin's "aggression" on Crimea, nothing preceded it.
- Iran has always plotted and lied to acquire nuclear weapons.
- There are only bad things to say about Russia and China and...

You may continue on your own.

A recent lie is particularly nasty because it is not about some limited event or pretext. It is a cynical attempt to rewrite contemporary history to justify (even further) NATO expansion and intimidate Russia.

The lie is this:

- **The West's leaders never promised Mikhail Gorbachev and his foreign minister Edvard Shevardnadze *not* to expand NATO eastward. They also did *not* state that they would take serious Soviet/Russian security interests around its borders. And that, therefore, each of the former Warsaw Pact countries has a right to join NATO if they decide to freely.**

It is this lie I am going to deal with below, and you can hear these lies presented by Antony Blinken and Jens Stoltenberg – in slightly different versions – with crystal clarity in the following two videos.

Before I start, let me say that it has never been my style to focus on or attack individuals. I've always been more interested in structures and processes and in how they shape people. But there comes a time when leaders must be held accountable because they choose to lie repeatedly, although they do have the choice not to.

And because lies have often been war crimes in the making.

Antony Blinken

First, US Secretary-of-State, [Antony Blinken on January 7, 2022](#) – scroll the video below to 38:30 where he begins to speak and distorts the Ukraine conflict history and then, at 43:00-45:00, continues to say that Russia is driving the false narrative that the West had given assurances to Russia/Gorbachev about not expanding NATO back in 1989-90. It wouldn't and couldn't, he says. And all the claims Russia makes are false and shall not permit "us" to be diverted from the main thing: Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine.

Right after (45:40) comes another lie – Russia also invaded Georgia. Anyone who has studied the U.S. Congressional Research Service's analysis of 2009, ["Russia-Georgia Conflict in 2008: Context and Implications for U.S. Interests"](#), knows that this issue was vastly more complex and that it was Georgia – led by hotheaded U.S. friend [Mikheil Saakashvili](#) whose political life ever since has resembled a tragicomic farce – that had occupied the larger part of South Ossetia before Russia intervened massively. The responsibility for the war and violence can not seriously be placed on the Russian side alone.

And he continues his self-righteous accusations. [Blinken's list is long](#), and he reads his accusation list with a submachinegun speed, sometimes so stumbling and unclear that one must wonder whether he is uncomfortable because he is subconsciously aware that he lies, deceives and omits to make his psycho-political projections of the U.S.'s own dark sides sound intelligent, logical and truthful.

This U.S. Secretary of State can't be bothered by facts or nuances. Neither could his predecessor, *Mike Pompeo*, who was proud to say that at the CIA, he directed ["We Lied, We Cheated, We Stole. We had entire training courses..."](#). Mr Blinken continues reading his obsessive, hateful listing of all the sins of Russia. As if the US/NATO did not exist and, therefore, there was no conflict which normally takes a least two parties. In his comprehensive *conflict illiteracy*, this conflict has only one party: Russia.

The intellectual level is deplorable. NATO allies and mainstream media have no public opinion or critical views on any of it. One must assume that they agree and can make no better analyses themselves.

Now, take a look – at least at the sequences, I've mentioned above. Then, I show you how Mr Blinken is lying deliberately under the video.

If this link doesn't function anymore, [please use this](#). You may also see it on [C-Span](#) and [YouTube here](#).

Now, how can Mr Blinken flatly deny that assurances were given to Gorbachev?

The only source I have been able to find is an article by *Steven Pifer* from 2014, which argues that Gorbachev himself denies that NATO expansion was ever discussed, "[Did NATO Promise Not to Enlarge? Gorbachev Says "No"](#)" which refers to [an interview with Gorbachev in *Russia Beyond*](#).

But this is a piece of citation fraud.

Steven Pifer quotes from it but stops right before the well-known *statement* in the interview article by then U.S. Secretary of State, James Baker, that "NATO will not move one inch further east." He also omits *these* words by Gorbachev himself:

"The decision for the U.S. and its allies to expand NATO into the east was decisively made in 1993. I called this a big mistake from the very beginning. It was definitely a violation of *the spirit of the statements and assurances made to us in 1990*. With regards to Germany, they were legally enshrined and are being observed."

[Interesting too? Western moral decay: Syria - the war, the loss and the silence](#)

Can this really be interpreted to mean that Gorbachev says that no assurances were ever given?

We get a key to why Blinken uses a fake analysis: Because it fits his posturing as a paragon of truth and because [Mr Pifer](#) is a senior fellow at [Brookings](#) but *also* a former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine and adviser to one of the most hawkish think-tanks, [Center for Strategic & International Studies](#) in Washington.

A slight twist, omission or interpretative casuistry isn't that important, is it? Well, if you are not yet convinced that Mr Blinken lies deliberately, I ask you to now go to the authoritative [National Security Archive at George Washington University](#). It's an incredible source of facts, and we should thank it for making the truth available through comprehensive documentation on so many security-related issues.

TFF has reproduced two essential pieces from that archive of irrefutable documentation that Gorbachev indeed was given such assurances – "cascades" of them! as is stated in the article – by all the most influential Western leaders at the end of 1989 and into 1990:

["NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev heard"](#) – and

["NATO Expansion: The Budapest Blow Up 1994"](#)

Read them, and you'll be shocked.

You'll find that they have lots of notes and, in sum, no less than 48 original historical documents. For instance, here is just one of the 48 informing us about then [NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner's view and statement](#):

“Woerner had given a well-regarded speech in Brussels in May 1990 in which he argued: “The principal task of the next decade will be to build a new European security structure, to include the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact nations. The Soviet Union will have an important role to play in the construction of such a system. If you consider the current predicament of the Soviet Union, which has practically no allies left, then you can understand its justified wish not to be forced out of Europe.”

Now in mid-1991, Woerner responds to the Russians by stating that he personally and the NATO Council are both against expansion – “13 out of 16 NATO members share this point of view” – and that he will speak against Poland's and Romania's membership in NATO to those countries' leaders as he has already done with leaders of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Woerner emphasizes that “We should not allow [...] the isolation of the USSR from the European community.”

This is just one of the “cascades” of statements and assurances given to the Russians at the time. Over 30 years ago, 13 out of 16 members were against NATO expansion because they respected Russia's crisis and legitimate security interests! Today – 2022 – NATO has 30 members.

Is the U.S. Secretary of State, his advisors and speechwriters unaware of the next-door National Security Archives and what is in them concerning one of contemporary history's most important events: the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact? Are we really to believe that they have no clue about the conditions and dialogues at the end of the first Cold War? If so, they ought to resign or be fired for their unbelievable incompetence.

If *not* so – if they know the content of these historical documents – Mr Blinken, his advisors and speechwriters know that they lie.

Their words, therefore, should never be trusted. Neither should the media that avoid highlighting these lies and thereby become complicit. The task of a supposedly free press is to reveal the power abuse of democratically elected people who deliberately fill their constituencies with lies.

Simple as that.

Jens Stoltenberg

In this press conference video from January 7, 2022, NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg states some of the same rhetoric, distortions, simplifications and lies. Not to mention platitudes accompanied by an almost funny body language of bombastic gestures to compensate for his weak content, mantras and repetitions.

Listen at around 19:00 minutes how he maintains that NATO enlargement has been “extremely important for stability and peace and freedom and democracy in Europe”

where it can indeed be argued that that enlargement is *the main* reason that Europe is now in a situation which can reasonably be called the 2nd Cold War.

Why else has NATO not created the desired and stipulated peace and stability since it was created in 1949? So, no, Mr Stoltenberg, you cannot continue – like your masters in Washington – to argue that the present war risks are caused by Russia and Russia alone? If that's what they order you to say, you have the option to choose decency and resign.

The NATO Secretary-General repeats that each state has a sovereign right to decide its own course and choose its own security arrangements. And that NATO has not dragged in anybody, and they have all just decided democratically to become a member.

That is simply not true.

NATO as an alliance has enormous resources to influence opinions in potential member states. Contrary to his open door talk, NATO's Charter speaks only about *inviting* new members, not about holding a door open for anyone who might want to join.

It should be well-known by now – but isn't – that in the late 1990s, [Vladimir Putin asked to join NATO](#) – but it didn't happen, did it, Mr Stoltenberg? And why not? Because Putin – Russia – wanted to be invited as an equal partner and not sit and wait till Montenegro had become a member, to put it bluntly. NATO decided to close the door at Putin's request.

[This – fantastic – story is told by a former NATO Secretary-General, George Robertson;](#) there is no reason to assume that is not credible or just a rumour. Or, for that matter, that Putin was not serious.

And what an exciting thought: Russia in NATO! Who would Mr Stoltenberg and Mr Blinken – and all the rest of the Military-Industrial-Media-Academic Complex, MIMAC, then have to put all the blame on? How then legitimate NATO's permanent armament and 12% higher military expenditures than Russia's?

Mr Stoltenberg must know that he lies when saying NATO has an open door. It doesn't for Russia. It doesn't even have open ears for Russia's security concerns (which each and every NATO member, the U.S. in particular, would consider reasonable if a Russian military alliance incrementally crept close to their borders).

And he must know that he lies when he acts as though he does not know that Russia has been against that very NATO enlargement that he fakes has been so positive for all of Europe during no less than 30 years.

Funnily, Stoltenberg first emphasises (around 19:30) that all new NATO members have freely decided to join. Then he boasts about all NATO does to train, help, support *candidates* and how important Ukraine is as a NATO *partner* while not a member. As he says, candidates need to carry through reforms to meet NATO standards. And NATO gives them "practical and political support" so they can – later – meet NATO standards and become members.

Interesting too? NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev heard and how he was cheated

What an extraordinary altruism NATO radiates! Are we really to believe that NATO certainly drags in no one, as he maintains?



NATO set up an office in Kyiv, Ukraine, already in 1994, and [here](#) you can see how – incrementally – Ukraine has been dragged in, seduced, and promised a great Euro-Atlantic future in one document after the other.

And [here](#) you'll see how *Olga Stefanishyna*, Ukraine's deputy prime minister, standing at NATO's H.Q. with Stoltenberg, consistently talks about NATO as Ukraine's "allies," expect all kinds of guarantees and – in *Foreign Policy* of course – argues that [Ukraine Needs a Clear Path to NATO Membership](#) in the face of Russian aggression.

And now, the integration process has probably gone so far that neither NATO nor Ukraine would be able to see any other alternative but full membership at some point. Being fiancées, why not marry through a formal membership – as has been said about Sweden?

In its Russia-humiliating policies, NATO has not even seen it coming: That with all the promises, structures and processes accumulating and creating expectations, the alliance would, at some point, run into serious conflict with Russia. If so, the entire alliance suffers from conflict illiteracy and a tremendous *lack of foresight*.

An *that* is why you have to construct Russia as a huge militarily aggressive state with an unsympathetic leader – one "we" can freely demonise and don't even have to listen to.

Now, listen then to this Stoltenberg statement about the – real – importance of NATO's help (20:45): "...It also makes the societies of Ukraine and Georgia stronger. So resilient, well-functioning societies are also less vulnerable from interference from Russia."

Just a welcoming open NATO door to countries that decide freely and democratically that they want to knock on it?

It's time for a reality check in NATO Realpolitik's – outdated – world. If you do not manifestly want to provoke and increase war risks, you would do it completely differently every day since 1989.

The NATO expansion basis is obvious: Get as many as possible into NATO, demonise Russia and Putin and make it impossible for Russia to have any influence in Europe and on its future.

How strange, indeed, that Russia perceives the Alliance's expansion right up to its borders as a deliberate military threat and a politically motivated undermining of its status and power!

How surprising that it thinks its security interests in its near-abroad should be respected, just because it has been invaded historically from the West and contained all along its borders since the Second World War in which, by the way, it lost some 24 million people!

It is tragic beyond words that the West has not a single politician today like Willy Brandt, Egon Bahr, Olof Palme or any of the real statesmen who gave Gorbachev cascades of assurance because *they* possessed two essentially important qualities: *intellectual competence* and *empathy*, a wish and ability to try to live themselves into the situation of "the other" and thereby think in terms of common security at lower military levels.

They were mature personalities basing their policies on analysis and consultations. They knew that you can only achieve security *with* and not *against* "the other".

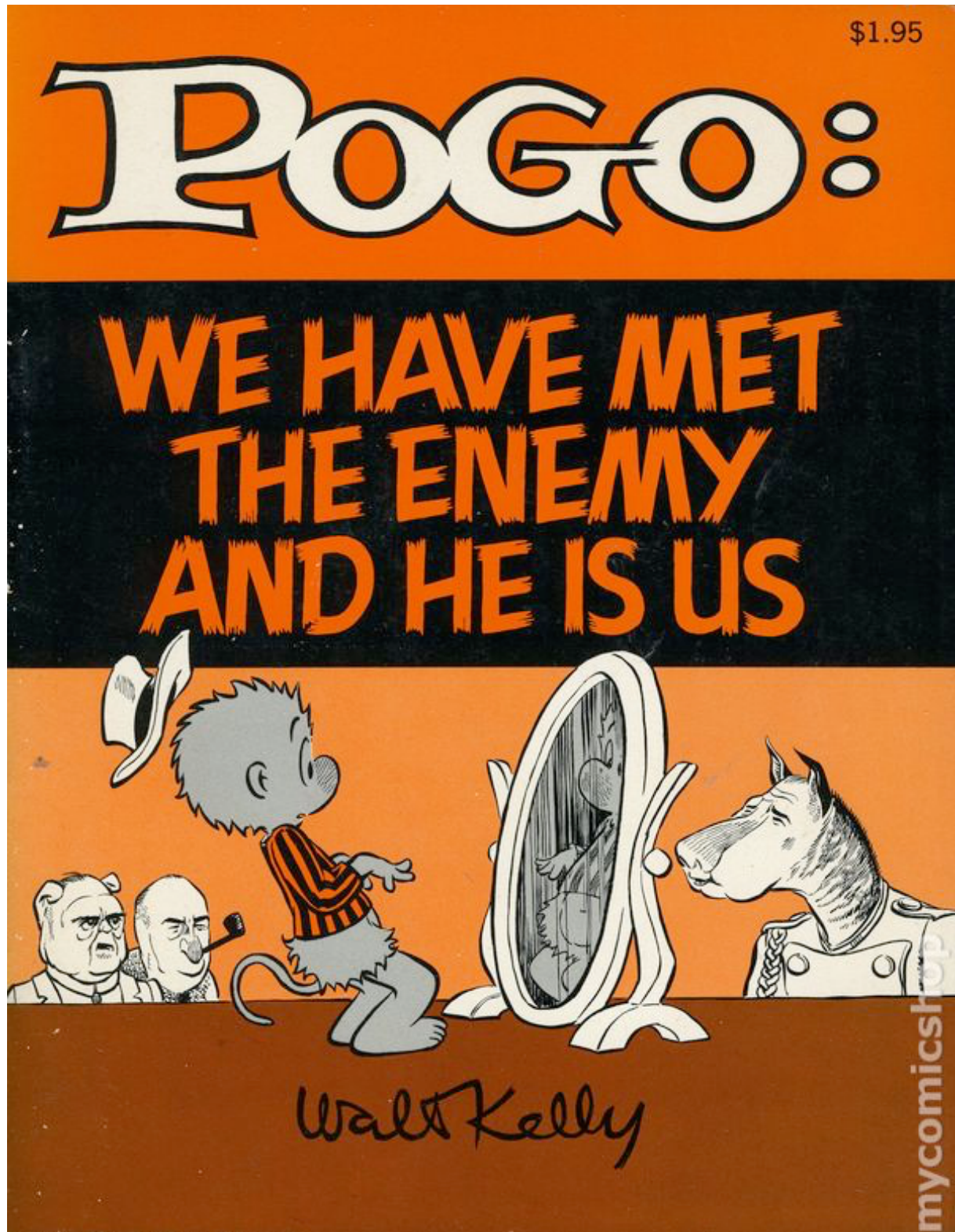
Instead, NATO has only anti-intellectual, self-centred and -aggrandising militarists running the self-defeating "know-everything-listen-to-nobody" show foolproven by history to lead to war.

And it is tragic beyond words that the peoples of Europe do not debate these issues and that all alternatives to militarism have been deprived of all their resources while NATO militarism costs trillions of dollars what are desperately needed in all other sectors of Western society.

In summary, the US/NATO world threw away the most significant and precious opportunity to create peace in Europe after 1945, when it decided to take advantage of Russia's weakness. As suggested by Gorbachev and many security and peace intellectuals at the time, the members of the old blocs could have joined forces and created an entirely new all-European security and peace architecture.

We are now facing the tragic consequences of the arrogant winner-takes-it-all policy manifested by the US Clinton administration's decision to ignore all the assurances and begin expanding NATO eastward in 1994, helped by submissive European allies that had neither the intellectual capacity nor political will to manifest their own interests.

That is why they have to lie to us today.



Notes

1. Over the years, TFF has published numerous analyses that can serve as supplements to this article. Several of them contain predictions and early warnings about the situation we are now facing:

[TFF PressInfo # 390 – Ten articles on the new Cold War and a reflection](#) (2016)

[Various on the new Cold War](#)

[NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev heard and how he was cheated](#) (2017)

[Various on Ukraine](#)

Jan Oberg's blog:

[Maktspelet vid Rysslands gränser – Power games at the borders of Russia](#) (2021)

Containing also a series of highly relevant links

2. When you see the two videos above, note that all questions from the media are very understanding of the two speakers' statements. Like – how will NATO ensure that it can react swiftly if Russia should invade Ukraine, etc. Press conferences have become carefully planned stage events with written statements being read aloud and carefully selected pro-military media – critical questions a priori cancelled by organisers and reinforced by self-censorship. Where did we see that before? In the Soviet Union, but just done more clumsily.

3. The Guardian, January 12, 2022

[Russia's belief in Nato 'betrayal' – and why it matters today](#)

A new book on this problem.

If you feel that this was a useful analysis please consider making a small donation. TFF is among a handful of research outfits left in the world that is completely independent of corporate and government funds and operates as totally all-volunteer and people-funded. And we shall never compromise on the UN Charter norm that peace shall be established by peaceful means. Many thanks.

[Antony Blinken lies, Clinton broke promises to Gorbachev, Jens Stoltenberg lies, NATO did assure Gorbachev, promises given to Gorbachev, Western leaders promised Gorbachev](#)

