

## The Devil Made Him Do It?

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Those of a certain age may remember the late comedian Flip Wilson, who tragically died in 1998 at age 64 from cancer. He was the first successful black host of a television variety show in the early 1970s.

“Geraldine (Jones), with Wilson in wig, high heels and a colorful minidress, was perhaps his most famous character. Her spunky catchphrases “**The devil made me do it**” and “**What you see is what you get!**” became part of the national language,” *CBS News* described in announcing Wilson’s death.

Geraldine’s second phrase, which has morphed today in the acronym “WYSIWYG,” may more accurately characterize Putin’s illegitimate and criminal invasion of Ukraine than blaming NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). Instead of blaming NATO, the devil that made Putin do it, perhaps we should see Putin for what we get – a murderous, egomaniacal, deeply flawed, if brilliant tyrant set upon restoring Peter the Great’s Russian empire, if not the Soviet Union, through political cunning and violence.

I’ll hand this to him – he manipulates geopolitics very well for a nation with a population half that of the U.S. and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) smaller than Canada’s.

***“NATO builds relationships with partners through military-to-military cooperation on training, exercises, disaster planning and response, science and environmental issues, professionalization, policy planning, and relations with civilian government.” — Wikipedia***

Wilson’s signature act came to mind as we hear and read pundits blame NATO for inciting Russia’s brutal and violent invasion of Ukraine, along with Putin’s previous violent incursions into Georgia (parts of which he still occupies) and Crimea. NATO made him do it, these apologists seem to proclaim.

And their walks through history are as selective as Putin’s, leaving out Russia’s *well-documented historical role within NATO* and even Putin’s previously expressed interest in *joining it*. Much of the NATO-blaming is pure propaganda, even the Soviet kind designed to deflect from the actual

crimes being committed. Let's look at a few examples before sharing a little history about Russia's history and interactions with NATO and the perspective that is being overlooked, perhaps purposefully.

I have three examples. Let's get the propaganda out of the way first. The following comes from [envirosagainstar.com](http://envirosagainstar.com). It parrots Putin's *raison d'être* for war against Ukraine, and for that reason alone, it's worth reading.

Russian diplomats are well justified in warning that current US/NATO policy in Ukraine risks crossing Russia's security "red lines" and facts on the ground support their concerns:

- Consider the fact that every US and NATO promise to keep NATO away from Russian borders has been broken for thirty years.
- Consider the fact that since 1990, NATO — which ought not to exist since its antagonist, the Warsaw Pact, went out of existence in 1991 — has moved inexorably eastward. In 1990, with German reunification and the annexation of the GDR, all of Germany became part of NATO. In 1999 the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland joined NATO. In 2004 Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania (all former Soviet Republics), Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined NATO. In 2009 Albania and Croatia joined NATO. In 2017 Montenegro joined NATO. In 2020 North Macedonia joined NATO.
- The incorporation of Ukraine into NATO would move NATO weapons and troops even closer to the heartland of Russia. This is to say nothing of the fact that, within living memory, the Russian people suffered invasion from the West. In 1941-45 Hitler's armies, 4 million strong, devastated the country in a genocidal war that took some 27 million lives.

In his year-end press conference on December 23rd, Mr. Putin stressed that "Further movement of NATO eastward is unacceptable. They are on the threshold of our house. Is it an excessive demand — no more attack weapons systems near our home? Is there something unusual about this?" One need not be an unqualified admirer of the politics of Vladimir Putin to acknowledge that the Russian leader has legitimate security concerns.

The libertarian CATO Institute's [Ted Galen Carpenter](#) is more responsible and holds Putin accountable for his aggression, but still places much of the blame at NATO's feet.

Russia's military offensive against Ukraine is an act of aggression that will make already worrisome tensions between Nato and Moscow even more dangerous. The west's new cold war with Russia has turned hot. Vladimir Putin bears primary responsibility for this latest development, but Nato's arrogant, tone-deaf policy toward Russia over the past quarter-century deserves a large share as well. Analysts committed to a US foreign policy of realism and restraint have warned for more than a quarter-century that continuing to expand the most powerful military alliance in history toward another major power would not end well. The war in Ukraine provides definitive confirmation that it did not.

And finally, there is Vasko Kohlmayer, writing for the conservative blog site [American Thinker](#).

For years Putin had warned that including Ukraine in NATO was a red line for Russia. It should not be difficult to understand his position. It is not unreasonable for Russia to object to the presence of what it perceives to be a hostile military alliance on its border with a country that has historically been either part of Russia or within its sphere of influence. Russia does not want to allow such a threat to its security for similar reasons the United States would not allow Russia to build a military base in Cuba.

In their drive to implement a New World Order, however, Western globalists have been dismissive of Russia's security concerns. Russia continued its strenuous objections and warned that if they were not taken seriously, they would take the necessary action to keep Ukraine out of NATO. The last time Russia made this clear was in November of last year...

Do you want to know what kind of response Putin received to his legitimate security concerns? It was given by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg. This is what he told Putin:

“It's only Ukraine and 30 NATO allies that decide when Ukraine is ready to join NATO. Russia has no veto, Russia has no say, and Russia has no right to establish a sphere of influence to try to control their neighbors.”

Do you get the insult and the humiliation of this response? Not only did the pompous globalist Stoltenberg refuse to address Russian security fears, but he also implied that pip-squeak countries like North Macedonia, Portugal – who happened to be members of NATO – have a greater say than Russia in whether a large country on its border joins the alliance.

Having ridden roughshod over their populations for nearly two years with their lockdown and vaccine regime, the Western globalists grew arrogant, overbearing, and overconfident. They lost touch with reality and assumed that everyone would submit to their chicanery in the same way that their own docile populations went along with their random edicts and mandates.

Much of what Carpenter, Kohlmayer, and others have said is not wrong, and as for the “Enviros Against War,” propaganda is best defined as a kernel of truth wrapped in a lie.

But perhaps Russia should ask itself why NATO has almost tripled in size from an original 12 nations to 30 today as central and eastern European nations rushed to join both the European Union and NATO. And now historically neutral Sweden and Finland (the last country to face a full-fledged Russian invasion) are eyeballing NATO membership, bolstered by public opinion, at least in Finland's case.

Reading about the Russian-Finnish “Winter War” of 1939-40 reads eerily similar to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. One can easily see the Russian invasion of Ukraine ending the same way.

None of this changes the fact that Russia was an active participant at NATO, has offices and a permanent presence at NATO headquarters (until last October), and participated actively in NATO's “Partnership for Peace” program for years. Further, Putin came to power in Russia in 2000 proclaiming that he wanted Russia to be a part of Europe and was open to joining NATO.

Blame NATO all you wish for its eastward expansions. It's a good debate, and as with all history, some things should have been said and done differently. There are lessons to be learned. But NATO has never invaded another nation and has never been an *offensive* threat, military or otherwise, to Russia. It is clearly defensive by design.

NATO is the opposite of "Hotel California." It isn't easy to "check-in," and you can leave whenever you want. No nation has ever left NATO.

Russian border countries such as Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and Lithuania, among others, weren't *forced* into NATO at gunpoint, as the former Warsaw Pact nations were – *they badly wanted to join*. Much of NATO's political belligerence toward Russia was in reaction to Putin's military actions and violence in Chechnya and, most recently, Crimea. And unlike Putin, NATO nations and leaders don't poison political opponents. NATO's reaction to Putin's annexation of Crimea – gifted to Ukraine by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in the 1950s – was nothing more than economic sanctions that largely remain in place.

If anyone is driving NATO expansion today, it's Vladimir Putin.

Putin has only himself to blame for his military offensives and the violence and carnage he launched. The "devil" – NATO – didn't pull the trigger on the invasion of Ukraine, which isn't remotely close to becoming a NATO member. Perhaps that may also change.

If Ukraine somehow beats back Putin's invasion, the devil Putin may actually push them into NATO and the European Union.