

## 1. PEACE IS THE DESIDERATUM

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# Peace is the desideratum

COMMENTARY | BY GEORGE N. TZOGOPOULOS \*

The new phase of the Ukraine crisis is evolving in a changing world. The modernization of Russian armed forces and the reorientation of US foreign policy toward the Indo-Pacific have intensified a long-pre-existing feud. Russia's security interests are clashing with NATO's "open door policy" and the commitment of both the United States and the European Union to support the territorial integrity of third countries, as well as their sovereign choices.

In spite of heated public rhetoric, the content of the American responses to the Kremlin's demands, continuous dialogue and the visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to Moscow outline the room for diplomatic maneuvering.

War will benefit no one. The US is in the process of healing the wounds from the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan, while President Joe Biden is certainly looking into domestic affairs in view of the November midterm elections.

For the EU, another conflict in its

own backyard – with an unknown end – will be a catastrophe causing bloodshed, a new wave of refugees and a deeper energy crisis. Russia will also have little to gain. In tandem with the human and the economic

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cost, the Nord Stream 2 pipeline will be jeopardized and relations with the West will be further damaged.

The common denominator in opposing a war is critical. Much more is required in reaching a sustainable agreement, however. The US and the core of Europe, namely Germany, France and Italy, do not necessarily agree on their approaches vis-a-vis Russia. The hard geopolitical calculations of Washington contradict the

economic priorities of most European capitals, including Athens. Even President Macron, who plays the card of geopolitics in Europe, had started to talk about the integration of Russia into a new security architecture before the outbreak of the pandemic.

Russia, for its part, approaches the West counting on – among other things – the deepening of its strategic partnership with China, as the recent bilateral communique indicates.

History shows that conflicts such as the Great War have erupted due to small incidents, misjudgments and misunderstandings. It's time to stop the dangerous roulette of world politics around Ukraine and envisage a better world anchored to the principle of peace. When there is a common will, there is a way.

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