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US-NATO escalate war threats against Russia: Are you ready for World War III?

The conflict that Washington is provoking with Russia over Ukraine threatens the globe with a catastrophe beyond measure. Driven by insoluble internal crisis and rapacious geopolitical ambition, US imperialism is recklessly marching to the brink of World War III.

The crisis over Ukraine has been manufactured by the United States and its NATO allies on the basis of lies. The Biden administration denounces Russia for the movement of troops within its own borders. The claim of an imminent Russian invasion of Ukraine is repeated endlessly by the White House and echoed unquestioningly by the mass media.

It is hysterical war propaganda. Russia has never threatened to invade Ukraine. Moscow has stated, however, that it cannot tolerate Ukraine becoming part of NATO.



Members of Ukraine's Territorial Defense Forces, volunteer military units of the Armed Forces, train in a city park in Kyiv, Ukraine, Jan. 22, 2022. (AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky, File)

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is not a geographical alliance of "democratic" states but an imperialist cabal for war with Russia and other countries. Incorporating Ukraine would station NATO arms and forces on Russia's immediate border and would bind the forces of US and Western European imperialism, under Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, to go to war on behalf of the far-right regime in Kiev, tied to neo-Nazis and fascists, in the event it provoked a conflict with Moscow.

US officials have revealed plans to deploy up to 50,000 troops to the borders of Russia and Ukraine. On Wednesday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken delivered a statement spurning Moscow's written request for guarantees that Ukraine will not be allowed to join NATO. The Biden administration is not negotiating. It does not seek to ease tensions but to goad Putin into armed conflict so that he can be presented as the aggressor.

While US and NATO troops are being mobilized, Washington has set into motion the apparatus of economic warfare. Biden and Blinken have both threatened "severe economic sanctions" against Moscow, and Russia is preparing for Washington to cut its access to the global SWIFT financial system for US-dollar transactions, which would exclude the country from much of the world economy.

The US has invaded countries all over the world, and Putin knows what defeat at its hands would entail for him. Manuel Noriega and Slobodan Milosevic died in prison, Muammar Gaddafi was brutally murdered, and Saddam Hussein was hanged. Washington wants Putin dead.

The Biden administration has created a situation that Putin and Russia must construe as an existential threat. There is no concession that Moscow can make that will prevent the advance of NATO forces, short of complete capitulation. It faces the choice of war now or war in the near future when NATO stands on its doorstep.

The White House is recklessly marching to war, yet no one is discussing the implications. No reporter asks Biden what the worst-case scenario might be, and not one has asked if it

might entail the use of nuclear arms. Washington acts as if the conflict it is pursuing will be neatly contained in the eastern regions of Ukraine, sealed off in the Donbass.

The United States has waged a series of wars since 1991, and each has ended in catastrophe. Millions are dead, and entire societies in the Middle East and Central Asia have been reduced to dust and rubble. They were primitively armed. Washington now has the country holding the world's second largest store of nuclear weapons in its sights.

If the US and NATO have convinced themselves that they can level an existential threat against Russia without raising the tremendous danger of nuclear war, they are deluding themselves. How can they exclude this possibility? If they do recognize the risk, their actions are mad.

All of the war propaganda of the US and NATO depicts Putin as a deranged criminal; all of their strategy relies upon his conduct being saner than their own. There is a deeply reactionary faction within the Russian ruling elite and military circles, many of whom are imbued with all sorts of fascistic conceptions.

War has an inexorable logic of its own; it does not abide by the tidy plots drawn up on the Resolute desk of the Oval Office. The military vortex that Washington is setting into motion will drag the great powers into a global conflict.

China confronts Washington's demand that it abandon its Zero COVID policy and allow the pandemic to kill millions of its people. The US war drive in the Asia Pacific region, almost as advanced as that confronting Russia, presents Beijing with a similar existential threat. China sees in the US deployment of troops to Taiwan a direct parallel to the developments in Ukraine.

British imperialism, donning again the pith helmet, invents its own lies in service to the war drive. Washington pressures the German bourgeoisie, with the blood of 28 million Soviet citizens on its conscience, to again set its sights eastward.

The unleashing of a war with Russia would within weeks—if not days—drag in Iran, Israel, China and Taiwan. Japan and Australia would rapidly be caught up in the ever expanding fray. Military imperatives would take over. The world would be engulfed. The loss of life that is being prepared is incalculable.

The American ruling class has shown that it is impervious to mass death. Over 900,000 Americans have died of COVID-19 in less than two years, but the Biden White House does not even speak of it. The evening news anchor discusses the daily weather and not the daily dead. There is not a shred of a conscience that will prevent Washington from starting a catastrophic global war.

There is a madness in this policy, but it is a madness with objective causes. The drive to war is fueled by an utterly toxic mixture of deranged geopolitical ambitions and insoluble internal crisis.

The conflict flows from the desperate efforts of the US since the dissolution of the Soviet Union to restore its geopolitical dominance and offset its economic difficulties, by military means. As the Stalinist bureaucracy dismantled the Soviet Union, the imperialist powers weighed how best to profit from the ensuing social devastation.

In 1992, a leading foreign policy academic, Walter Russell Mead, published a significant article in *World Policy Journal*, bearing the subtitle “A Modest Proposal for US Policy after the Cold War.” He advocated that the US acquire Siberia from the impoverished Russian nation and profit off “privatizing Siberia’s vast storehouse of natural resources.”

“This area contains some of the world’s most valuable deposits of oil, gas, diamonds, and gold,” Mead wrote. “There are vast stands of timber; huge mineral deposits. All of these resources are worth more as part of the United States than as part of Russia.” He wrote of the value of acquiring Vladivostok, “one of the finest harbors in Asia,” and of royalties to be secured from concessions to the Japanese. This is the language of imperial plunder.

Mead proposed to purchase Siberia. Now Washington seeks similar ends by means of military aggression to fragment the country. Hitler conceived of Russia as a breadbasket. The United States has more grandiose designs.

Even more decisively, it is the explosive social crisis of the pandemic and the emergence of open class struggle that is driving the ruling class to war. The immense rupture of social life produced by the global pandemic has fundamentally destabilized all the bourgeois regimes.

An opinion piece by Thomas Edsall, published Wednesday in the *New York Times*, declared that intense social polarization placed the United States in “uncharted and very dangerous territory.” He quoted a political scientist who stated that a successful “depolarizing event” would have to be one “where the causes are transparently external.”

It is this above all that fuels the drive to war. War with Russia would allow the American ruling class to use nationalism to channel social anger outward and provide it a pretext for suppressing dissent. The crisis of capitalism, brought to a knife’s edge by the pandemic, confronts the bourgeoisie with an insoluble dilemma, and it turns to war to find a way out.

The greatest danger that now exists lies in the vast chasm between the scale of the danger and the public awareness of it. The working class has been kept in the dark, lied to, battered by the pandemic and is being forced back to work.

The working class, which is fighting to prevent the spread of the pandemic and oppose the relentless growth of social inequality and exploitation, must be made politically aware of the war plans of the elite.

Whatever the immediate outcome of the provocations over Ukraine, the situation is immensely dangerous. The working class must proceed on this basis. It is necessary not to throw up one’s hands in fright but to fight for a correct policy. Imperialism is preparing a catastrophe that can be averted only through the development of an international working class movement to fight against war.

In 2016, already recognizing the intensification of the war drive of US imperialism, the International Committee published a statement, “Socialism and the Fight Against War,” calling for the construction of an international movement of the working class and youth against imperialism. The ICFI distilled the critical principles of this anti-war movement:

- The struggle against war must be based on the working class, the great revolutionary force in society, uniting behind it all progressive elements in the population.
- The new antiwar movement must be anticapitalist and socialist, since there can be no serious struggle against war except in the fight to end the dictatorship of finance

capital and the economic system that is the fundamental cause of militarism and war.

- The new antiwar movement must therefore, of necessity, be completely and unequivocally independent of, and hostile to, all political parties and organizations of the capitalist class.
- The new antiwar movement must, above all, be international, mobilizing the vast power of the working class in a unified global struggle against imperialism. The permanent war of the bourgeoisie must be answered with the perspective of permanent revolution by the working class, the strategic goal of which is the abolition of the nation-state system and the establishment of a world socialist federation. This will make possible the rational, planned development of global resources and, on this basis, the eradication of poverty and the raising of human culture to new heights.

The urgency of building this movement has only increased. The most critical question is the fight for these policies in the working class. All those who agree with this perspective need to take up this fight and join the Socialist Equality Party.

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