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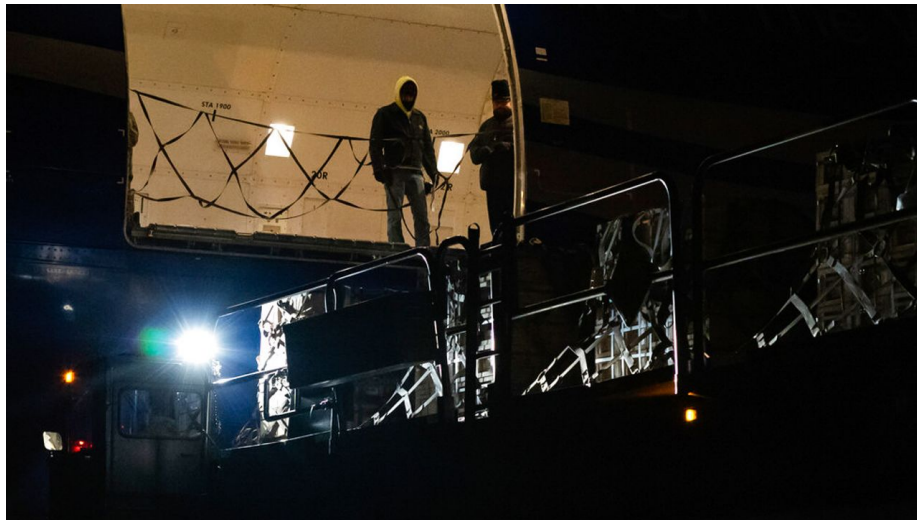
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US sends another 3,000 troops to Eastern Europe

The United States announced Wednesday it is deploying another 3,000 troops to two East European NATO member states, further escalating the prospect of an all-out war on the continent. The nearly 2,000 paratroopers being sent to Poland will join a 4,000-man NATO force already there, while those dispatched to Romania will more than double the size of military personnel currently stationed in that Black Sea nation. Washington reiterated that it has another 8,500 soldiers on standby. In late January, it emerged that war planners had considered putting 50,000 boots on the ground in Eastern Europe.



Airmen from the 436th Aerial Port Squadron load ammunition, weapons and other equipment bound for Ukraine during a foreign military sales mission at Dover Air Force Base, Del., on Jan. 30, 2022.

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“It’s important that we send a strong signal to Mr. Putin and the world that NATO matters,” said Pentagon spokesman John F. Kirby yesterday. “We are making it clear that we are going to be prepared to defend our NATO allies if it comes to that,” he added. Given that Ukraine is not a NATO member, Kirby is implying in this statement that Russia’s war aims extend far beyond its western neighbor and that the United States is prepared to light the whole region on fire.

Along with these latest troop deployments, the Pentagon is sending another six F-15 fighter jets to Estonia, whose border is only about 200 miles from Russia’s second major city, St. Petersburg. The Belgian government is further bolstering NATO airpower in the Baltics by sending F-16s to join the American contingent. Sweden, although not a member of the alliance, just committed to several million dollars-worth of spending to help Ukraine “strengthen reliance” in its southeast.

The United States and NATO are making clear that they are prepared not to draw down, but rather increase the size of their forces arrayed along Russia’s entire western flank. The expansion of the trans-Atlantic alliance on the basis of an openly anti-Russian geopolitical and military policy is at the core of the current conflict with Moscow, which has made clear this is an existential threat to a country that has a tragic and bitter experience with hostile armies pouring across its European borders.

In response to Wednesday’s announcement of further US troop deployments, deputy head of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Aleksandr Grushko told news agency *Interfax* that the move would only increase military tensions.

On Wednesday, the Spanish newspaper *El País* published the contents of a written response by the US and NATO to Russia’s insistence that Ukraine not ever be admitted to the trans-Atlantic alliance. The letters, one from Washington and the other from Brussels, rejected that demand out of hand and declared it to be a violation of NATO’s “Open Door Policy,” whereby any country can be admitted at any time if seen fit.

While declaring that it is willing to consider a reciprocal agreement that neither party will station “ground-launched missile systems and permanent forces” on Ukrainian territory, the US position outlined in the letter left open plenty of opportunity for Washington and

NATO to further militarize Ukraine by providing arms and financing to Kyiv or moving armed forces through the country on a rotating basis.

The entire proposal, which includes an offer to review nuclear arms agreements of concern to Russia and start discussions on the basis of countries' conceptions of the "indivisibility of security," is contingent on Moscow "deescalating" the present situation and removing its forces from Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. While unstated in the letter, this would have to involve, among other things, Russia abandoning its naval base on the Black Sea, turning Crimea back over to the far-right government in Kyiv, and giving up its military presence in the highly contested and geostrategic southern Caucasus.

In addition, the letters declare Russia's actions to be "unprovoked" and "unjustified" and demand that Moscow "refrain from coercive force posturing, aggressive nuclear rhetoric, and malign activities directed against Allies and other countries." Apparently, such actions are the sole right of Washington and Brussels.

The Kremlin responded to these communications earlier this week by saying that neither the US nor NATO had seriously addressed any of its concerns.

Since then the media war mongering has continued, with the latest installment being satellite evidence published Wednesday that allegedly details Russia's military build-up near Ukraine. The company that produced the photos, Maxar, is a Washington-based firm with extensive ties to the US government and military.

Not even two decades ago, Iraqi society was destroyed on the basis of lies, supposedly substantiated with satellite imagery, that Saddam Hussein had "weapons of mass destruction." None of today's claims, nor the newspapers that peddle them, has any credibility. And in all of the media coverage on this issue, it never occurs to any journalist or commentator that, even if the images are accurate, there is no reason why Russia, which faces overwhelming NATO firepower, cannot equip forces on its sovereign territory.

From the standpoint of both the US government and its backers in the mass media, Russia, in essence, has no right to exist. This is why all of the Kremlin's national security concerns, as well as the sentiments of the country's 140 million people who have lived

through war on a scale not experienced by any other population, are dismissed as “misinformation.”

In a discussion on Wednesday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, whose government is in crisis because of its flagrant violation of COVID-19 protocols, warned President Vladimir Putin that a Russian invasion would be a “tragic miscalculation.”

The same day, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, coming out of a meeting with Johnson, declared, “There will be, unfortunately, a tragedy if the escalation against our state begins. This will not be a war between Ukraine and Russia — this will be a war in Europe, full-scale war.”

The Kremlin has repeatedly said that it is not preparing to invade anyone.

In an indication that the US may be trying to slow down the mad dash to World War III or at the very least tone down the out-of-control war hysteria in the press, White House Spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Wednesday that the Biden administration would no longer describe Russia’s alleged plans to invade Ukraine as “imminent.” With the world standing on the brink of disaster, Psaki blithely noted, “I think it sent a message that we weren’t intending to send.”

Whatever the immediate twists and turns, the United States is on a collision course with Russia. It also has China in its gun sites. A major question facing Washington is how, or whether, it can manage a two-front war. The COVID-19 pandemic, for which the White House has no answer apart from mass death, is pushing the ruling class to find outlets for its internal crisis in foreign war.

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