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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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23.03.2022

## White House plans major escalation of NATO's proxy war with Russia

One month since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, US President Joe Biden will begin a tour of the continent this week in an effort to mobilize the NATO powers in a major escalation of the conflict against Russia.



US soldiers line up during the visit of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Romanian President Klaus Iohannis at the Mihail Kogalniceanu airbase, near the Black Sea port city of Constanta, eastern Romania, Friday, Feb. 11, 2022. (AP Photo/Andreea Alexandru)

The meetings, including those of NATO and the European Council, will seek to galvanize “international efforts to... impose severe and unprecedented costs on Russia,” the White House said.

Ahead of Biden’s trip, NATO military officials have been discussing plans, to be announced at the summit, to vastly expand the positioning of NATO forces on Russia’s borders in Europe as part of an effort to put the continent on a war footing, including potentially doubling the US troop presence in Europe.

The series of meetings being held this week are councils of war. According to the White House:

- On Monday, Biden held a call with French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to discuss “providing security assistance to the brave Ukrainians who are defending their country from Russian aggression.” The same day, the European Union announced that it would send an additional €500 million in weapons to Ukraine
- Later that evening, Biden addressed the CEOs of America’s largest corporations to “discuss the United States’ response to Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified war with Ukraine.”
- On Wednesday, Biden will arrive in Brussels, Belgium, to attend a meeting of the European Council, which will also include UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, despite the UK’s exit from the European Union.
- On Thursday, Biden will attend a NATO summit focused on “ongoing deterrence and defense efforts in response to Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine.”
- On Friday, Biden will travel to Warsaw, Poland, where he will hold a bilateral meeting with President Andrzej Duda. Last week, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki proposed the deployment of a NATO “peacekeeping mission” to Ukraine.

This series of meetings was preceded by clear signals from the White House that, despite statements from Ukraine that it is pursuing negotiations with Russia, the United States has no interest in finding a diplomatic solution to the war.

On Thursday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, “From where I sit, diplomacy obviously requires both sides engaging in good faith to de-escalate.” He added, “The actions that we’re seeing Russia take... are in total contrast to any serious diplomatic effort to end the war.”

Following these statements, Biden seemed to do everything he could to personally antagonize Russian President Vladimir Putin, referring to him as a “thug,” a “dictator” and a “war criminal.”

Under conditions where a war is raging out of control, killing hundreds of people, and nuclear tensions are at the highest level since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, these statements are a deliberate effort to escalate tensions. The Kremlin will see them as a US declaration of intent to carry out regime-change in Russia or massively escalate US involvement in the war.

In response to what Russia called “insults,” Russia’s foreign ministry announced that it had summoned US Ambassador John Sullivan to declare that “Russian-American relations [are] on the verge of rupture.” The “rupture” of relations between states generally signifies that war is imminent.

Indeed, Biden’s whirlwind tour of Europe in an effort to mobilize the United States’ European allies for war has been carefully prepared by extensive military discussions.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported: “U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met at NATO headquarters last week with his counterparts from other alliance members to discuss beefing up forces even further. They directed military planners from all of the NATO members to draft plans that are likely to be discussed when President Biden meets with other alliance heads of government in Europe this week.”

“I expect there will be a rough doubling of the U.S. presence,” Douglas Lute, a former US ambassador to NATO and a retired Army lieutenant general, told the *Journal*.

The United States has deployed more than 15,000 additional troops to Europe since the outbreak of the war, and the US troop levels in Europe have reached over 100,000—the first time this figure has been surpassed since the end of the Cold War. If, as Lute

suggests, the number of US troops deployed in Europe will double, this would mean the dispatch of 100,000 more US troops to Russia's borders.

The *Journal* wrote: "Troops deployed in Eastern Europe will likely be augmented with more ground units equipped with tanks, other armored vehicles, artillery and attack helicopters, instead of the primarily light infantry forces that are already positioned close to NATO's eastern borders, current and former officials said."

The greater significance and implications of war generally emerge as it develops. While the US succeeded in goading the Russian government to take the first shot, it is clear that the war in Ukraine is the first stage of a much broader conflict. Having provoked the Russian government into a desperate and disastrous invasion of Ukraine, the United States is using the war to reassert its global hegemony, building a war coalition for what the United States has termed "great power conflict" targeting not only Russia, but China as well.

On Friday, in a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Biden threatened China with unspecified "consequences" if it provided any material support to Russia. A day earlier, Blinken declared that the US would "not hesitate to impose costs" on China.

This bullying language was turned into open military threats as Biden prepared to set off to Europe. U.S. Indo-Pacific Commander Adm. John C. Aquilino staged a press conference to the Associated Press aboard a military surveillance aircraft plane over territory claimed by China. "Should deterrence fail," he declared, "my second mission is to be prepared to fight and win."

The preparations for world war are being carried out behind the backs of the American population. Biden pledged to end America's "forever wars," promising to "close this period of relentless war" and initiate "a new era of relentless diplomacy." Instead, the Biden administration is carrying out the greatest military escalation since the launching of the "war on terror" in 2001.

In the United States, the 2023 military budget is expected to total \$800 billion: \$60 billion more than the \$740 billion authorized for fiscal year 2022. There are calls for an even more rapid funneling of money into the US war machine.

The bill for this massive expansion of military spending will be paid by the working class. It will be utilized to attack the living standards of the working class, criminalize working class political opposition and distract attention from the deadly surge of COVID-19.

The reckless military escalation threatens to spiral out of control, potentially precipitating the first use of nuclear weapons since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War.

There is no way out of this crisis within the framework of capitalist politics. Only one force can stop the looming catastrophe: the international working class, united in a struggle against imperialism, militarism, the historically obsolete nation-state system and the capitalist social order.

World Socialist 22.03.2022