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## *NATO intensifies anti-Russia war drive*

In a series of coordinated actions, the United States, NATO and the European Union massively escalated their involvement in the war between Ukraine and Russia on Thursday, threatening to turn the conflict into a new world war.

NATO announced additional shipments of heavy weapons to Kiev, the European Union pledged to end Russian energy imports, and the US and its allies successfully removed Russia from the United Nations Human Rights Council.



Ukrainian servicemen study a Sweden shoulder-launched weapon system Carl Gustaf M4 during a training session on the Kharkiv outskirts, Ukraine, Thursday, April 7, 2022. (AP Photo/Andrew Marienko)

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These actions make clear that US allegations earlier this week of Russian war crimes in the suburbs of Kiev were a propaganda barrage aimed at destroying any prospect of a negotiated settlement and preparing public consciousness for an intensification of NATO involvement.

Speaking at this week's summit of the trans-Atlantic alliance in Brussels, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba declared, "The battle for Donbas will remind you of the Second World War, with its large operations and maneuvers, the involvement of thousands of tanks, armored vehicles, planes and artillery." He added, "And this will not be a local operation, based on what we see in Russia's preparations."

Yet, rather than recoiling from this prospect, the NATO member states are doing everything possible to realize it.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg pledged to provide "a wide range" of weapons systems to Ukraine. Asked by *Al Jazeera* whether NATO would supply "offensive" weapons, Stoltenberg declared, "I think that this distinction between offensive and defensive is a bit strange, because we speak about providing weapons to a country which is defending itself, and self-defence is a right which is enshrined in the UN Charter."

"There was support for countries to supply new and heavier equipment to Ukraine, so that they can respond to these new threats from Russia," UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss told reporters.

She continued, "We agreed to help Ukrainian forces move from their Soviet-era equipment to NATO standard equipment, on a bilateral basis."

Truss declared a "new era" of European relations with Russia, stating, "The age of engagement with Russia is over." Instead, she proclaimed "a new approach to security in Europe based on resilience, defense and deterrence."

On Wednesday, the *Times of London* reported that the UK would provide armored vehicles to Ukraine. The newspaper cited a UK official as saying, "These could enable Ukrainian forces to push further forward towards Russian lines."

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who participated in the NATO summit, pledged to provide “new systems” to Ukraine, adding, “We are not going to let anything stand in the way of getting Ukrainians what they need... We are looking across the board right now, not only at what we have provided.”

On Wednesday, the US Senate passed a bill to expedite arms shipments to Ukraine. “As the war in Ukraine unfolds, delivering military aid as quickly as possible is pivotal for Ukraine’s ability to defend itself against Putin’s unprovoked attacks,” said Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, the leading Democratic sponsor of the bill.

On Thursday, the United States succeeded in its effort to remove Russia from the United Nations Human Rights Council. The last time a country was removed from the body was when Libya was taken off in 2011. Shortly afterwards, Islamist terrorists funded by the United States murdered its president, prompting former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to joke, “We came, we saw, he died.”

The same day, the European Parliament passed a resolution calling for “an immediate full embargo on Russian imports of oil, coal, nuclear fuel and gas.” The resolution also called for Russia to be entirely cut off of the SWIFT banking network.

In announcing a series of measures targeting Russia, Stoltenberg made it clear that China was also a primary object of NATO.

“We have seen that China is unwilling to condemn Russia’s aggression, and Beijing has joined Moscow in questioning the right of nations to choose their own path,” Stoltenberg said Thursday. “This is a serious challenge to us all.”

NATO’s escalation occurred as Russia appeared to call for a diplomatic solution. In an interview with *Sky News*, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov noted, “We have significant losses of troops,” adding, “It’s a huge tragedy for us.”

The reckless and unhinged character of the war fever gripping sections of the ruling class was spelled out in Thursday’s editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*, which declared, “Ukraine won the battle of Kyiv, but the battle for the Donbas in the east is likely to be even more savage... This war could be long, and the West’s resolve will have to match Mr. Putin’s brutality.”

In the past week, it has become clear that sections of the US and European political establishment have shifted and expanded their goals in the proxy conflict with Russia over Ukraine. Instead of merely being content with bleeding Russia dry over the course of months or years, they are eyeing not only a decisive tactical but even a strategic victory.

In this context, there are growing demands within the US political establishment for the country to prepare for nuclear war.

In an interview with Voice of America, Philip Breedlove, NATO's supreme allied commander in Europe, stated, "We have been so worried about nuclear weapons and World War III that we have allowed ourselves to be fully deterred. And [Putin] frankly, is completely undeterred."

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