

French officials debunk NATO warnings of Russian invasion of Ukraine

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US and European claims that Russia is threatening to invade Ukraine are false, based on stove-piped intelligence fed to NATO largely by Washington and contradicted by detailed information available to French intelligence agencies.

This was revealed last month in public testimony at the French National Assembly by Director of Military Intelligence General Christophe Gomar, available on the National Assembly's web site. For several weeks, Gomar's testimony was studiously covered up by the French, European and US media. However, the story broke when it was recently covered by Russian state media outlets *Russia Today* and *Sputnik News*.

Gomar spoke at a hearing of the Commission on National Defense and the Armed Forces at the National Assembly, discussing France's draconian new Intelligence Bill legalizing mass electronic surveillance of the population along the lines of NSA spying uncovered by Edward Snowden. He was arguing, in particular, for boosting the budget of his Directorate of Military Intelligence (DRM).

Responding to Deputy Frédéric Lefebvre's question on relations with NATO, Gomar said: "The real problem with NATO is that US intelligence is preponderant there, whereas French intelligence is only more or less taken into account—from this follows the importance of providing enough intelligence of French origin to NATO commanders."

Gomar bluntly stated that NATO warnings about an imminent Russian invasion of Ukraine were lies contradicted by the DRM's information. He said, "NATO had announced that Russia would invade Ukraine, whereas according to our information, nothing supported this hypothesis—indeed, we observed that the Russians had not deployed command centers or a supply chain, notably military hospitals, that would

allow for a military invasion, and reserve units had not moved at all."

He added, "Subsequent events proved us right, because if some Russian soldiers were indeed seen in Ukraine, it was more a maneuver aiming to exert pressure on Ukrainian President Poroshenko than an attempted invasion."

In his reply to a question by deputy Edith Gueugneau on cooperation with other European countries, Gomar said: "Cooperation with countries in Western Europe is good. The DRM participates in two forums, including one that regularly brings together NATO countries to discuss various subjects."

Gomar added, "I remember that in one of these forums, someone tried to force our hand on Ukraine. This shows the importance of having concrete and factual intelligence: from this standpoint, France has resources that allow it to make an assessment of the situation and to argue for its point of view."

Despite the calculated ambiguity of Gomar's remarks, their implications are staggering. The deputies in the Assembly were remarkably indifferent in their questioning of Gomar on Ukraine, and did not ask him who tried to "force our hand" on Ukraine, and what policies they advocated.

Yet it appears that false information largely provided to NATO by Washington was used to press for NATO preparation for an imminent Russian invasion of Ukraine—that is, a major military build-up placing NATO military forces across Europe on high alert aimed at Russia. The risks posed to the world's population by such a criminally reckless policy, which heightens the danger of the eruption of all-out war between NATO and nuclear-armed Russia, are incalculable.

Gomar's assertions were supported by Philippe

Migault, an Eastern Europe expert at France's Institute of International and Strategic Relations (IRIS) think-tank. "France will not be fooled. France has its own sources of information, and we are aware what the explanation for the crisis in Ukraine is," Migault told Sputnik News.

The remarks of Gomart and Migault underscore the fraudulent character of the NATO war drive against Russia. Since the pro-Western, fascist-led coup in Kiev led to the outbreak of civil war in Ukraine, the Obama administration, the Pentagon, and the European ruling elite have whipped up hysterical propaganda denouncing Russia as an imminent threat to the world order.

Washington used this to launch a sanctions drive to largely cut off Russia from the world financial system, and lead a series of provocative NATO military exercises all along Russia's borders—in the Baltic ex-Soviet republics, Poland, Bulgaria, and the Black Sea area.

The major European imperialist powers knew that the underlying propaganda was fraudulent, but they backed it and sought to use it for their own purposes. The government of German Chancellor Angela Merkel has exploited the Ukraine crisis to declare an end to the post-World War II policy of German military restraint. Berlin is now adding eight billion euros to its military budget, and Merkel is working with French President François Hollande to form a European army.

The fact that a story about public testimony at the French National Assembly broke in the Russian media underscores the duplicity of the French media and political establishment and its participation in the war drive against Russia. Gomart's comments were buried in the proceedings of the National Assembly. Neither the government nor any major French news media reported them or, for that matter, Russian media coverage of Gomart's testimony.

The situation facing the international working class is the most dangerous since the end of World War II or the most tense nuclear standoffs of the Cold War period.

Behind the backs of the world's population, NATO is bringing the world to the brink of nuclear war, based on lies. The NATO governments collectively have adopted the type of criminal tactics the Bush administration adopted as it launched its war in Iraq, based on false

claims that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (WMD). While the resulting invasion and civil war cost over a million lives, that appalling toll would be dwarfed by the casualties that would result from all-out war between NATO and Russia.

The threat of war with Russia also exacerbates the tensions among the imperialist powers inside NATO. The caustic comments by Gomart and Migault on Washington's role in Ukraine follow Hollande's brief warning in February, prior to Minsk talks to broker a temporary peace deal in the Ukrainian civil war, that NATO and Russia could find themselves in a "total" war. At the same time, the European powers' relatively less aggressive attitude to Russia has provoked bitter recriminations by US officials and foreign policy specialists.

In a recent comment titled "America will lose patience with European appeasement," Robert Kaplan of the Center for a New American Security think-tank denounced Europe for its lack of military aggressiveness against Russia.

Threatening that opinion in the US foreign policy elite might shift decisively against Europe if it did not fix its policies, Kaplan wrote: "The America security umbrella will not stay up forever. Barack Obama's alleged lack of resolve in dealing with Mr Putin may say less about the US president's own foreign policy than about a gradual shift in US opinion. Why should America defend a continent that will not defend itself?"



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