

Top French general announces preparations for “state against state” wars

Will Morrow
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The head of the French Armed Forces, General Thierry Burkhard, rolled out a new military strategy document on Wednesday that signals the turn by French imperialism to preparations for large-scale “state against state” wars.

Introducing the document before the National Assembly’s defense committee, Burkhard made clear that the blueprint, entitled “Operational security 2030,” would prepare the military for wars against not only the targets of French neo-colonial interventions in the Middle East and North Africa of the past 15 years, but major powers.

Drawing an analogy to the coronavirus pandemic, Burkhard stated that the eruption of a major war “is missing only the patient zero of a war epidemic.” In other words, the conditions for a war between major powers already exist and are awaiting only the necessary spark to set it off.

“The world is evolving quickly enough and badly enough,” he said, pointing to a growth in the pace of conflicts and an “uninhibited re-militarisation.” The army had “imagined a situation of 2035... But in 2020, a certain number of check-boxes are already ticked.” France now confronted “the end of a stage of conflicts” that had been marked by interventions in the Sahel and Afghanistan, in which French forces enjoyed overwhelming military superiority against the targeted populations. The army expects new, “symmetric” conflicts, Burkhard said, “state against state.”

In an internal video to the army cited by *Le Monde*, Burkhard added that “the most minor incident can degenerate into an uncontrolled military escalation.”

Le Monde, reporting on Burkhard’s statements, quoted an unnamed NATO official in Paris pointing to a war with nuclear-armed Russia. “The future conflict with Russia will not be preceded by an invasion, but

perhaps by tactical miscalculations that will draw us in.” The official’s conclusion was that “the French army must concentrate on its deterrence capacities”—that is, on nuclear weapons—while “always testing itself and innovating under pressure, developing its arms, its interoperability, its anti-missile defenses...”

The conclusion drawn by Burkhard from his presentation of the state of world geopolitics was that France must carry out a massive build up in every area of its military forces. Between now and 2030 it must “harden the military so that it is ready for more difficult engagements” and “shocks,” he said. This “did not mean that we must prepare to re-do May 1940,” when French military forces were defeated in World War II, because “we must better combine the effects of cyber and information technology.”

The General and the assembled members of the defense committee did not spell out the implications of this invocation of a new world war, which today would rapidly develop into a nuclear conflagration that would dwarf in its death toll the more than 85 million people killed in the course of the Second World War.

Le Monde, citing the statement of unnamed generals, noted that the term of “the masses” had returned to the vocabulary of the military. “They have noted that the 155mm Caesar cannon fired more than 20,000 rounds in three years in Iraq, or that an international force of 90,000 soldiers were needed to expel 15,000 jihadists from Mosul. The French army will not increase in size ... but it will extract more significant forces from the reserves.”

The reference to Mosul—a city destroyed by the US-led coalition in 2017 in an offensive that US General James “Mad Dog” Mattis termed a “war of annihilation,” killing anywhere up to 40,000 people—is indicative of the scale of crimes being prepared by the

French military.

The blueprint contains numerous references to the need to increase the number of soldiers via the recruitment of youth, referring to the Universal National Service (SNU) reintroduced by President Macron, which includes the option to spend one's compulsory service in the military. Under the title, "A ground forces ambition for the youth," it states that "without the support of the reserves," the army will "invest in the universal national service in order to extract all the possible opportunities from it." Its reintroduction was supported by the entire political establishment, including Jean-Luc Mélenchon's Unsubmissive France.

Before the latest announcement, the French military was already carrying out a military build-up alongside its neo-colonial intervention in the Sahel, where 5,000 French troops are deployed. In September 2019, the armed forces budget were increased by €1.7 billion to €37.5 billion per year, an increase of 4.5 percent. Nonetheless, Burkhard stated that even this was insufficient, complaining that the army was ruled by a "corporate mentality" and declaring that "efficiency means a lack of resilience."

In July last year, the Macron administration announced the creation of a new space command, including the deployment of a new generation of satellites equipped with visual cameras to identify and ultimately destroy rival powers' satellites. The announcement was part of French preparations to wage war against major powers, which rely heavily on satellite technology for their operations.

The cost of this program of military build-up is to be paid for by the working class in France and internationally, both in the form of destruction and death and in the slashing of social programs to fund the transfer of resources to the military. Within the working class, however, there is no support for the ruling class' megalomaniacal plans for French imperialist domination and wars for spheres of influence.



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