

# US and NATO escalation of conflict with Russia is leading to war

Statement of the World Socialist Web Site Editorial Board  
17 January 2022

The US and its European allies, using Ukraine as a pretext, are deliberately and recklessly escalating their confrontation with Russia. Everything they are saying and doing leads to the conclusion that war, whether declared or undeclared, is their goal.

All the talk of imminent war is emanating from Washington, the European capitals and filthy pro-imperialist media on both sides of the Atlantic. The claims that Russia is about to invade are supplemented by dire warnings, for which absolutely no evidence is presented, that Moscow is planning to stage a “false-flag” operation, which it will then use to justify an invasion.

In the present circumstances, it is obvious that the claim is being trumpeted as a cover for precisely such an operation by Ukrainian special forces, trained by US military advisers working inside the country.

As it has in all the wars launched by the United States over the past three decades, the media is presenting unverified allegations and transparent lies as fact. Once again, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* are leading the disinformation campaign, the purpose of which is to disorient and pollute public opinion.

As in 2003, when they promoted the lies about Saddam Hussein’s “aluminum tubes” and weapons of mass destruction, the *Times* and the *Post* are citing as “evidence” satellite and video imagery initially posted on social media outlets TikTok and Twitter by unknown individuals in Russia, which supposedly show the movement of military materiel out of the country’s Far East in a westerly direction.

Further “proof” of an imminent Russian invasion are meaningless images of 1) tire tracks allegedly created in the snow by the weight of military vehicles being loaded for transport near Lake Baikal; 2) “Iskander-M launch vehicles covered in tarp at an unspecified location;” and 3) a train allegedly parked near a station in Primorskiy Krai “fully loaded with what appears to be military vehicles.” All of this amounts to nothing.

Turning reality on its head, the *Washington Post* declared in an editorial published yesterday (January 16): “This entire crisis has been manufactured by Mr. Putin.... It has nothing to do with expansion by NATO, whose founding treaty authorizes only defensive military action.”

Even if it were true that Russia is about to invade Ukraine, how can it be claimed with a straight face that such a military action would have “nothing to do with expansion by NATO,” which has extended its boundaries 800 miles to the east since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991? How could Russia not be concerned

by NATO’s obvious intention to bring Ukraine into its military alliance? And, if the issue of Ukraine is a mere pretext used by Putin to disguise his megalomania, why are the United States and NATO insisting that they will not rule out Ukraine’s future incorporation?

As for the *Post*’s pious assurance that NATO’s “founding treaty authorizes only defensive military action,” its editorial writers appear to have forgotten that NATO has been at the center of aggressive imperialist operations for the last 30 years. These include participation in the 1990–91 invasion of Iraq, intervention in Bosnia in 1992, the 1999 bombing of Serbia, the 2001 war against Afghanistan, the 2009 Operation Ocean Shield in Somalia, and the 2011 overthrow of the Libyan government.

The above list is only a partial record of the United States’ and NATO’s bloody violations of other countries’ national sovereignty. Nevertheless, the *Post* hypocritically declares: “Russia’s posture toward Ukraine amounts to prohibited conduct under Article 2 of the United Nations Charter, which specifically bars the ‘threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.’”

The United Nations Charter also prohibits Great Power interventions in the civil wars of sovereign countries and the overthrow of their governments, a stricture that American and European imperialism have ignored countless times over the past 75 years. In fact, the present government in Kiev is itself the product of a coup financed and organized by the United States and Germany.

Speaking with Kremlin spokesman Dmitri Peskov on Sunday, CNN’s Fareed Zakaria highlighted recent tweets by former US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul. The latter, who worked under the Obama administration, declared that if Putin wished to find a resolution to the present conflict he would have to listen to America’s “demands.”

These include, according to McFaul, the withdrawal of all Russian troops from the disputed territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as, remarkably, Kaliningrad. The latter is internationally recognized as sovereign Russian territory. The US/NATO demand that it should decide where troops within Russia’s borders may be stationed means that Russia should accept the loss of its sovereignty. It is the type of demand imposed upon a conquered country.

In this context, the aggressive stance of Germany must be particularly jarring to Russia, which has not forgotten the 1941

invasion, which cost the Soviet Union approximately 30 million lives. *Der Spiegel*, Germany's most widely circulated news magazine, declares in its latest issue: "NATO should finally deliver lethal weapons to Ukraine."

This is not the language used when efforts are being made to de-escalate a crisis. The *Washington Post* goes so far as to imply that the possibility of a negotiated resolution of differences with Russia has been exhausted.

It writes: "With winter turning Ukraine's flat terrain into a frozen-earth fast track for Russian tanks, the window of opportunity for a diplomatic solution is rapidly closing—if it were ever really open."

The claim that the time for negotiations is coming to an end is a ploy used by those who are planning to launch a war, not by those who are seeking to avoid it.

The fact that more than 75 years after the conclusion of World War II the population of the former Soviet Union is once again confronting a catastrophe is the tragic consequence of the liquidation of the USSR 30 years ago, which was orchestrated by the Communist Party *nomenklatura* on the basis of the claim, now proven so tragically false, that imperialism was some sort of a myth and the reintegration of Russia into the world capitalist economy would usher in a new era of peace and security.

Russia now faces a situation in which NATO troops and war machinery are stationed on its very borders and NATO regularly conducts massive military exercises all along its western flank.

The question that arises is why the United States, the principal instigator of the confrontation with Russia—and, it must be added, China—is pursuing an incredibly reckless policy that can lead only to disaster.

The answer can be found only within the context of the crisis of American and world imperialism. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States has repeatedly resorted to war to offset the longstanding decline in its global economic predominance. But all the military interventions have produced results that were the absolute opposite of what the United States intended. From Desert Storm through to the War on Terror, the record of its military operations has been a brutal, bloody and pathetic saga of disasters.

But the United States cannot "learn from its mistakes." Thirty years after the first Bush administration proclaimed the "unipolar moment" and the start of a New American Century, the United States confronts a complex set of international and domestic economic, political and social contradictions for which it has absolutely no rational, let alone progressive solutions.

The entire economic system rests precariously on an unsustainable mountain of debt, which has grown exponentially over the past 14 years, particularly since the bailout of Wall Street in the wake of the 2008 crash.

Fueled by financial parasitism, social inequality has reached staggering levels. The dysfunctional political system is the product of rising and uncontrollable social tensions.

The pandemic, now entering its third year, has brought the tensions within American society to a breaking point.

The US media's relentless pro-war propaganda is driven by the delusional belief that a major military conflict overseas will

distract public attention from the massive domestic social, economic and political crisis. "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad."

The American crisis is, however, not unique. It is the epicenter of a global crisis of the entire capitalist system.

The murderous foreign policy being pursued by Washington and its allies is the flip side of their homicidal domestic policy. Eight-hundred fifty thousand Americans have died so far from COVID-19. Soon enough it will be well over one million. To that body count can be added 152,000 British citizens, 124,000 French and 116,000 German. The Biden administration's response to the Omicron variant is to promise American households that in two weeks they can order some COVID home-test kits from a government website.

Schools, hospitals, essential infrastructure, production—all of this is breaking down under the weight of the mass infection program pursued by these governments. The markets continue to rise nonetheless, and so workers have to be chained to their workplaces in order that the value needed to sustain the stock bubble can be pumped out of them.

Social anger is mounting, and a strike wave of global dimensions is gathering strength. Walkouts by teachers, autoworkers, health care personnel, miners and other sections of the working class are hitting industries around the globe. But everywhere in the centers of global capitalism the political institutions that have worked to contain popular opposition are in a state of advanced decay. Fascists are climbing out from under every rock. In the US, they were climbing the walls of the Capitol building. In Germany, they sit in the halls of power.

Unable to contain the pressures building within capitalist society, the ruling class turns to war in an attempt to channel social anger in a direction that it thinks, or desperately hopes, will rescue itself from itself. But perhaps the greatest delusion of all is the belief that this policy has support among broad sections of the population.

The American and international working class cannot allow US imperialism's far-reaching war plans to be put into effect. The fight against the ruling class's death policy at home demands a fight against its death policy abroad. The rush, led by the United States and Germany, to draw Russia into a bloody conflict can be stopped only by an international movement of the working class, united on an anti-capitalist and socialist program.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**