

Why the US and NATO want war with Russia

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

The *World Socialist Web Site* condemns the escalating provocations by the United States and NATO against Russia. Their aim is to manufacture a pretext for war. These reckless actions threaten to trigger a global conflagration that would cost the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

The Biden administration announced yesterday that it is placing 8,500 troops on standby for deployment to countries in Central and Eastern Europe, on Russia's border. This follows a report in the *New York Times* that the US government is developing plans to send up to 50,000 troops to the region.

US Colonel Alexander Vindman, who is involved in top-level US talks with the Ukrainian regime, declared: "Why is this important to the American public? It's important because we're about to have the largest war in Europe since World War II. There's going to be a massive deployment of air power, long-range artillery, cruise missiles, things that we haven't seen unfold on the European landscape for more than 80 years, and it is not going to be a clean or sterile environment."

Like the disastrous US interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, the road to war with Russia is paved with lies. The military build-up in Eastern Europe is being justified with media-hyped claims that an invasion of Ukraine is imminent, which even the Ukrainian government has questioned. This has been supplemented by warnings, without any factual basis, that Russia is planning to stage a "false flag" operation. If such an operation takes place, one can be certain that its authors will be in Washington, not Moscow.

The latest lie is the claim, manufactured by the British government, that Russia aims to forcibly install a puppet regime in Ukraine—precisely what Washington, Berlin and the NATO alliance did in 2014, backing a far-right putsch that seized power in Kiev. This lie has already exploded in London's face. The man identified as the putative leader of a Russian puppet regime in Ukraine, businessman and former parliamentarian Yevhen Murayev, is in fact banned from Russia, which has seized his assets.

The biggest lie of all is that the US and NATO are engaged in a defense of "democracy" and against "foreign aggression." The Ukrainian government and state apparatus is riddled with neo-Nazi paramilitary forces who played a central role in the 2014 putsch. This includes the Svoboda party, which the European Parliament had formally condemned for its "racist, anti-Semitic, and xenophobic views," and the neo-Nazi Right Sector militia and Azov Battalion.

As for the Biden administration's claims that it is defending the sanctity of Ukraine's national sovereignty against "foreign aggression," the list of countries invaded and/or bombed by the US in the last 30 years includes Panama, Iraq, Kuwait, Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, Sudan, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Yemen, Iraq, Pakistan, Libya and Syria.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the NATO

military alliance has extended its borders 800 miles to the east, incorporating Poland, Hungary, Czechia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro and North Macedonia. In 2021, NATO officially recognized Ukraine itself as an "aspiring member," and Sweden and Finland are also considering joining the anti-Russia alliance. Both Finland and Estonia are less than 200 kilometers (125 miles) from St. Petersburg, and Ukraine's eastern border is less than 750 kilometers (465 miles) from Moscow.

While the US and European powers are denouncing Russia for alleged troop movements within its own borders, billions of dollars in arms have been supplied by the US to the Baltic states of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia which are now being shipped to Ukraine. The US already has more than 150 military advisers in Ukraine, including Special Operations Forces, joining advisers from the UK, Canada, Lithuania and Poland. Under these conditions, how could Russia not assume that it is the target of a military attack?

While the lies used to justify imperialist aggression are no more credible than the claims of Iraqi "weapons of mass destruction," the new lies, as with the old, are presented by the media as absolute truth.

Neither the Biden administration nor its NATO allies have explained what they believe will be the outcome of the escalating confrontation. What is their worst case scenario?

The US claims that it will not be directly involved in a military conflict with Russia. This is a lie. The United States, pouring arms into Ukraine and stationing American military advisers in the country, is—in law and in practice—already engaged in hostile action against Russia.

What do the US and NATO plan to do if their actions lead Russia to take military action not only against the Ukrainian puppets but also the American and Western European puppet masters? And does the Biden administration and the CIA really believe that a war with Russia will be a small and easily contained localized conflict? If so, they should think again.

A war with Russia would rapidly escalate into a global conflagration, inevitably involving China and, for that matter, every country in the world. The US-NATO provocations have made the danger of a nuclear war greater than at any point since the height of the Cold War conflict between the US and the Soviet Union.

It may appear that only the insane would provoke a war with such potentially catastrophic consequences. There is, however, a logic to this madness.

First, there are the geopolitical calculations of US imperialism. The reference by Biden at his recent press conference to Russia's eight time zones and immense resources indicate the criminal calculations that motivate US military planning.

US and European imperialism view Russia, as Hitler did in 1941, as a vast arena for plunder. Through a combination of war and internal

destabilization, imperialism seeks to instigate the breakup of Russia. Their aim is to carve up Russia into numerous puppet states that would exist as colonies of the major imperialist powers.

Further, the United States views the integration of Russia into its sphere of influence as essential to preparations for war with China.

But all of this is taking place within the framework of a catastrophe produced by the ruling class's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 900,000 Americans are dead from COVID-19, according to official figures. As the Omicron variant spreads without restraint, the ruling class has abandoned any pretense of containing, let alone eliminating, the virus. Schools and workplaces are being kept open, guaranteeing mass infection on a scale that has not been seen throughout the entire pandemic.

In the UK, the principal co-conspirator with the US in the war drive against Russia, the government of Boris Johnson, is hanging by a thread. But Johnson, the political and social lowlife who infamously declared, "let the bodies pile up in their thousands," only exemplifies the degeneration of European bourgeois politics as a whole.

The pandemic has triggered an economic, social and political crisis of the entire capitalist order. Over the past week, Wall Street has seen the steepest declines since the collapse in March of 2020. Soaring inflation threatens to undercut the Federal Reserve's policy of providing unlimited cash to the financial markets, which has fueled a speculative mania unlike anything seen since the years prior to the Great Depression.

The Biden administration barely survived a fascistic coup a year ago that was aimed at blocking it from taking power. The instigator of the coup, Donald Trump, remains the de facto leader of the Republican Party, and the conspiracy to overturn the Constitution and establish a dictatorship continues.

For the past year, the obsessive fixation of the Biden administration has been "unity." With regards to the divisions within the ruling class, Biden is using the provocations against Russia to forge an alliance with the most right-wing sections of the Republican Party—that is, a unity of the ruling class on the basis of military aggression abroad.

The greatest fear of the ruling class, however, is the growth of social opposition from below. The fight against the pandemic is beginning to take the form of a class struggle, as expressed in walkouts by teachers and students, and growing anger among broader sections of the working class. Just this month, teacher struggles have erupted in Chicago and across France, followed by student protests and walkouts in New York, San Francisco, Oakland, Boston, and in Austria and Greece. A wave of wildcat strikes against sell-out contracts agreed to by the trade unions has erupted in mines and metalworking factories across Turkey.

The fear of the emergence of a mass working class movement is what imparts to the anti-Russia campaign its hysterical and homicidal character. This would not be the first time that war is utilized in a desperate effort to establish a false "national unity."

Historically condemned ruling classes have frequently turned in the past to suicidal policies of war in an attempt to preserve their class rule. In his work on this subject, titled "Internal Causes and Purposes of War in Europe, 1870-1956," Princeton University historian Arno Mayer observed, "In their bid to recover greater internal control, embattled governments tend to flaunt the specter of external dangers with the calculation that international tensions short of war can help to foster domestic cohesion."

Such considerations were central to the "war on terror," which was used to wage war abroad and domestic repression at home. After the

debacle of the war in Afghanistan, which culminated in the withdrawal of US forces last year, the temptation of the ruling class is to find a way out through an even more catastrophic military conflagration.

A ruling class that proves willing to needlessly sacrifice millions of lives during the pandemic will ultimately prove no less willing to sacrifice tens or hundreds of millions, or even billions, in a war.

The Russian as well as the Ukrainian working class is confronting the catastrophic consequences of the dissolution of the Soviet Union by the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1991. This criminal act was justified with the claim that Russia would be enriched by its peaceful integration into the bountiful world capitalist order. As for the potential danger of imperialist aggression, Gorbachev and Yeltsin and the Stalinist theoreticians of capitalist restoration dismissed this as a bizarre Marxist fantasy. "Imperialism" was merely a Leninist—or still worse, Trotskyist—concept, invented to justify the 1917 October Revolution and socialism. This "invention" is now armed to the teeth and preparing the violent dismemberment of Russia and its transformation into a colony of world imperialism.

The Putin regime, which rules on behalf of the capitalist oligarchs that dominate the country, has no viable, let alone progressive, response to the threat. Hostile to the working class, it oscillates between attempts to negotiate a deal with the imperialist powers and threatening them with Russia's military might. No political support whatsoever can be extended to the Putin regime by the Russian working class.

The situation is urgent. The working class must be made aware of the war danger and of the necessity to intervene politically to stop it.

The fight against war must be connected to the growing movement of the working class against the ruling class policy of mass infection, unprecedented levels of social inequality, and the growing danger of far-right and fascistic dictatorship. That is, the fight against war must be developed as an independent political movement of the working class against the ruling class and the entire capitalist system.



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