

# Biden arrives in Europe to press for military escalation against Russia

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US President Joe Biden arrives today in Brussels for two days of meetings with the European Council of European heads of state and then the NATO military alliance. His visit aims to ensure that NATO recklessly escalates military operations against Russia, despite the rising danger of nuclear war.

Asked yesterday about Biden's trip, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan stated that the war would continue indefinitely, dismissing reports of successes in Russian-Ukrainian talks on ending the war begun by Russia's February 24 invasion of Ukraine.

"This war will not end easily or rapidly," Sullivan said. "For the past few months, the West has been united. The president is traveling to Europe to ensure we stay united, to cement our collective resolve, to send a powerful message that we are prepared and committed to this for as long as it takes."

Biden is to discuss plans for a ground invasion of Ukraine by NATO member states during his subsequent March 25 visit to Poland, which has championed plans for NATO troops to deploy to Ukraine as "peacekeepers."

US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield denied that US troops are now in Ukraine but gave a green light to other NATO states to invade. "I can't preview what decisions will be made at this NATO conference and how NATO will respond to the Polish proposal [to deploy peacekeepers in Ukraine]. What I can say is American troops will not be on the ground in Ukraine at this moment," she said, adding that "other NATO countries may decide that they want to put troops inside of Ukraine."

Thomas-Greenfield's denial of US military involvement on the ground in Ukraine is misleading and false. US private military contractors like Academi (formerly Blackwater) and CIA paramilitaries are aiding Ukrainian nationalist militias and army units against Russia. However, a major escalation is being prepared: retired US military officers have said the Pentagon may double its current force of 100,000 troops in Europe.

Conditions are emerging for NATO to launch a land war against Russia in Ukraine that could escalate to global nuclear war. The Russian army has an estimated 1 million regular troops. Of those, around 150,000, largely drawn from elite armored units, are bogged down in bloody fighting in Ukraine. NATO armed forces, at about 3.3 million, enjoy overwhelming numerical superiority on a world scale and are publicly preparing to launch military operations in Ukraine.

Yesterday, CNN interviewed Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov and provocatively asked him about Russian willingness to use nuclear weapons.

Peskov emphasized that Russia may use nuclear weapons if the Kremlin believes it faces a threat to Russia's national survival. "We have a concept of domestic security and it's public, you can read all the reasons for nuclear arms to be used. So, if it is an existential threat for our country, then it [the nuclear arsenal] can be used in accordance with our concept," he said.

Peskov also gave CNN an account of the bankrupt calculations that led the Kremlin to invade Ukraine. He said it was concerned about an invasion of separatist Russian-speaking areas of eastern Ukraine such as the Donbass by the current far-right Ukrainian regime in Kiev. Moreover, he added, the Kremlin was increasingly frustrated with NATO's treatment of Russia in the decades since the Stalinist bureaucracy dissolved the Soviet Union in 1991.

"President [Vladimir] Putin's intents are to make the world listen to and understand our concerns," Peskov said. "We've been trying to convey our concerns to the world, first to Europe, to the United States for a couple of decades, but no one would listen to us."

Russian desperation mounted as US and NATO weaponry and support poured into Ukraine, which became a heavily armed NATO base directly on Russia's borders. Moscow was "hoping that Ukraine will never get prepared for a strike against Donbass," Peskov said, and counting on "Normandy Format" talks between Berlin, Paris, Kiev and Moscow. However, Peskov added, "No one would warn Ukrainians

not to do that [attack the Donbass]. No one would push Ukrainians towards the solution within a framework of Normandy process. No one did.”

Peskov indicated that the Kremlin concluded that to reach a deal with the NATO imperialist powers, it had to intimidate them militarily. After Ukraine amassed about 120,000 troops on the front lines in the Donbass, Peskov said, it became “perfectly clear for us ... for our military specialists, that Ukraine was going to launch an offensive against Donbass.” Moscow decided, he stated, that “no one would listen to our concerns” until Russian military operations began.

The extreme danger of a global military conflagration is rooted in the disastrous consequences of the Stalinist bureaucracy’s dissolution of the Soviet Union. Over 30 years, NATO absorbed countries across Eastern Europe, moving ever closer to Russia’s borders, while rampaging across the Middle East and Central Asia, attacking countries including Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. Now, it is now deploying troops directly on Russia’s borders in Poland, the Baltic republics and potentially in Ukraine.

Peskov’s comments lay bare the reactionary conceptions of the leaders of Russia’s post-Soviet capitalist regime, trained on false Stalinist theories of “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. Constantly disappointed in their attempts to negotiate a settlement with NATO powers they call their “Western partners,” they gambled, according to Peskov, that a credible military threat would force NATO to negotiate. This gamble is visibly failing.

While the Kremlin fired the first shot, it is the NATO imperialist powers that have goaded Russia into the conflict. Now they are reacting to Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, and to Moscow’s nuclear threats, simply by escalating their operations. Even as Peskov stresses that the Kremlin is looking for a negotiated settlement, the NATO powers are recklessly pressing ahead, risking nuclear war.

As the American and European media demonize Russia for its military operations in Ukraine, NATO military and intelligence officials appear to be drawing the unsubstantiated and extremely dangerous conclusion that Moscow will be reluctant to use heavy weaponry in a war.

Yesterday, military correspondent William Arkin wrote in *Newsweek* an account of Russian tactics in Ukraine, based on US intelligence sources. It emphasized Moscow’s relatively limited use of air power and artillery causing large-scale damage to Ukrainian cities. After nearly a month of war, Arkin wrote, Russian aircraft flew “some 1,400 strike sorties and delivered almost 1,000 missiles.” By contrast, he noted, “the United States flew more sorties and delivered more weapons in the first day of the 2003 Iraq war.”

“The heart of Kyiv has barely been touched. And almost all of the long-range strikes have been aimed at military targets,” a senior US Defense Intelligence Agency official told Arkin. “I know it’s hard ... to swallow that the carnage and destruction could be much worse than it is. But that’s what the facts show. This suggests to me, at least, that Putin is not intentionally attacking civilians, that perhaps he is mindful that he needs to limit damage in order to leave an out for negotiations.”

In Europe, official circles are clearly calculating about the increased likelihood of nuclear conflict, which could rapidly destroy any or all European countries. Yesterday, Professor Benoît Pelopidas, a nuclear weapons expert at the Political Science University in Paris, spoke to France Info to stress France’s vulnerability to nuclear attack.

“France’s military and political elites bet on nuclear deterrence,” Pelopidas said. However, under extreme political conditions, France’s possession of nuclear weapons may no longer be sufficient to deter Russia or other powers from using nuclear weapons, leaving France open to annihilation if Russia and NATO fire ever-larger salvos of nuclear bombs.

Pelopidas explained, “Already in the 1950s, a National Civil Protection Service report indicated that 15 thermonuclear bombs would be enough to destroy France.”

France is the largest Western European country by surface area, meaning that it would take less to annihilate other countries. While building masses of underground shelters might protect the population, Pelopidas said, “Faced with anything more than a very small number of [nuclear] explosions, it has been shown that these shelters offer only illusory protection.”

Workers across Europe and around the world must be warned: As the NATO powers press ahead with military escalation in Europe, nuclear war is now a clear and present danger.

Appeals to reason on the part of the NATO ruling classes are falling and will fall on deaf ears. The only way to avert a catastrophic conflict is to politically alert the international working class of the mounting danger of world war and mobilize it in a powerful, socialist anti-war movement.



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