

NATO meets to plot next stage in Ukraine proxy war

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This week US President Joe Biden, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron will travel to Brussels, Belgium to take part in a NATO summit. The summit is, in fact, a war council, which will organize a major escalation of the US-NATO conflict with Russia.

Speaking ahead of the summit, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg vowed to impose “unprecedented costs for Russia.” Reviewing the troops that have already been deployed on Russia’s borders, he said:

There are now hundreds of thousands of Allied troops at heightened readiness across the Alliance. One hundred thousand US troops in Europe. And 40,000 forces under direct NATO command, mostly in the eastern part of the alliance. All backed by major air and naval power. Including five carrier strike groups in the High North and in the Mediterranean.

Turning to the outcome of the upcoming summit, Stoltenberg said, “I expect leaders will agree to strengthen NATO’s posture in all domains. With major increases to our forces in the eastern part of the Alliance. On land, in the air, and at sea.”

Stoltenberg then threatened China. “Beijing has joined Moscow in questioning the right of independent nations to choose their own path,” he said. Stoltenberg’s threats against China, echoing statements by Biden last week, express the basic reality that Russia’s invasion has provided the pretext for long-standing plans by the US and NATO for “great power conflict”: a major world war to return Russia and China

to colonial subjugation.

Significantly, Stoltenberg’s historical reference point was not the Russian invasion of Ukraine last month but the 2014 fascist-led coup that turned Ukraine into a proxy for NATO. “Since 2014, [NATO] Allies have trained Ukraine’s armed forces and significantly strengthened their capabilities. They are putting that training into practice now, on the front lines, with great bravery.”

Stoltenberg made no effort to conceal NATO’s massive military buildup of Ukrainian forces over the past eight years. NATO, he said, has been “providing anti-tank and air defense systems, drones, fuel and ammunition. As well as financial aid.”

He went on, “I would like to commend the courage and the professionalism of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. I have met them in Ukraine, and we are all aware that compared to where they were back in 2014, this is a totally different force than eight years ago. The Ukrainian Armed Forces today is much bigger, much better equipped, much better trained, much better commanded. They have much better logistics than they had back in 2014.”

The main reason for the staggering losses the Russians have incurred is that they are fighting an army that had been armed and trained by NATO. As a result, Stoltenberg said, the Ukrainian army has been “able to push back and stand up against the much bigger Russian invasion.”

In its February 28 statement, “NATO goes to war against Russia,” the WSWS noted that “the essential causes and interests of wars are often not at first apparent. They are concealed by an avalanche of propaganda. However, sooner or later, the real and more profound driving forces and significance of the conflict emerge.”

Three weeks later, it is clear that what is involved is not only a war in Ukraine, but a campaign by the US and the NATO imperialist powers for war against Russia and a redivision of the world. Russia's desperate invasion of Ukraine, provoked by the imperialist powers themselves, has provided the pretext.

In a meeting with the US Business Roundtable ahead of the summit, Biden pointed to the long-running plans that are being put into practice.

"You know, we are at an inflection point," Biden said. "It occurs every three or four generations. As one of the top military people said to me in a secure meeting the other day, 60 million people died between 1900 and 1946."

He added that "now is a time when things are shifting... There's going to be a new world order out there, and we've got to lead it."

The phrase "New World Order" has a long and bloody provenance.

On September 11, 1990, US President George H.W. Bush gave a speech entitled "Toward a New World Order." He declared, "The crisis in the Persian Gulf, as grave as it is, also offers a rare opportunity to move toward an historic period."

As in the present crisis in Ukraine, the United States maneuvered to have Iraq invade a neighboring country to provide a pretext for war plans long in the making. The Gulf War triggered an eruption of US militarism that continued through the wars in Yugoslavia, the "war on terror" and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the US overthrow of the Libyan government, and the years-long destabilization campaign against Syria.

Biden's "New World Order" involves the transition from 30 years of wars and interventions in the Middle East and Central Asia, which have killed more than 1 million people, into a conflict targeting Russia and China, which raises the specter of a Third World War waged with nuclear weapons.

The headlines in the capitalist press expose the reckless war mania that has swept over the ruling class, bringing behind it the affluent middle class. "NATO Plans to Ramp Up Forces on Eastern Flank," blared the *New York Times*. Another article in the *Times* stated that "both Russia and the United States have nuclear arms that are much less destructive—their power just fractions of the Hiroshima bomb's force, their use

perhaps less frightening and more thinkable."

David C. Gompert, a former acting director of national intelligence under the Obama administration, wrote in an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* that the US "has more survivable, accurate and reliable offensive nuclear forces that could further decimate Russia's strategic deterrent on the ground. Whatever Russian missiles survive such disarming strikes would be picked off by US missile defense systems."

The Putin regime, confronted with the failure of its plan for a limited war in Ukraine that was aimed at pressuring NATO to negotiate on its security concerns, is trying to escape the trap into which it was lured by resorting to nuclear saber rattling. The world could face a dystopian crisis that ends in a "big nuclear explosion," former Russian president and Putin ally Dmitry Medvedev said on Wednesday.

The interaction of NATO's recklessness, fueled by a series of intersecting domestic crises, and Russia's desperation has created an extraordinarily explosive situation.

This dangerous escalation must be opposed through the development of a mass anti-war movement, based on the international working class.

There is a growing movement of workers throughout the world against social inequality and exploitation. The consequences of the war drive are fueling protests and strikes over soaring inflation and mass poverty.

This is combined with the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which, as a result of the criminal policies of the ruling class, has killed more than 6 million people worldwide, including more than 1 million people in the United States alone.

The fight against imperialist war must be fused with these struggles and developed as a conscious and international political movement for socialism. This means the building of the International Committee of the Fourth International and its affiliated Socialist Equality Parties in every country.



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