

The Bucha atrocity allegations: A pretext for escalating NATO's war against Russia

Andre Damon
6 April 2022

In yet another major effort to escalate NATO's proxy war against Russia, the Biden administration is seizing upon claims by Ukrainian officials of a massacre by Russian forces in the Kiev suburb of Bucha to implement a new round of sanctions and undermine any effort at a peaceful settlement of the war.

"I got criticized for calling Putin a war criminal," US President Joe Biden said Monday. "Well, the truth of the matter, you saw what happened in Bucha. He is a war criminal." Biden added, "We have to continue to provide Ukraine with the weapons they need in order to fight."

The American government, along with the media, proceeds according to the principle: first the conclusion, then the investigation. Biden, who more than one year after the January 6 coup attempt cannot make up his mind whether Trump is guilty of a crime, has already decided that Russian President Vladimir Putin is guilty of "war crimes" in Bucha.

The actual facts, however, do not prove the conclusion. Russian troops withdrew from Bucha right after the Kremlin promised to dramatically reduce its forces in the direction of Kiev in peace negotiations last Tuesday. For days, no significant civilian casualties were reported. On Saturday, Ukrainian forces—including members of the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion—entered the town, and a torrent of reports were unleashed in the Western press about alleged atrocities.

The images shown widely only indicate that bodies were found, but not who killed whom, when and under what circumstances. While video evidence has emerged of Ukrainian forces executing and torturing unarmed people, no similar evidence has emerged for Russian troops.

Given the systematic use by the United States of false

allegations of atrocities to justify wars all over the world, and absent clear and convincing evidence, there is no reason to view the claims of a massacre in Bucha as anything other than war propaganda, aimed at enraging the population to justify military escalation.

Even if it were established that Russian troops fired on civilians—and that has not been established—that would not mean that they were acting under the instruction of the Russian government.

In the past 30 years of unending wars—and, of course, one can go back further—the American military has committed countless atrocities: firing on civilians, drone attacks on wedding parties, helicopter assaults on hospitals, the massacre of entire towns. In this time of universal amnesia, is it again necessary to remind everyone that the United States tortured prisoners at Abu Ghraib in the most barbaric manner and then sought to destroy the evidence? Or that, for this reason and many others, it does not even recognize that International Criminal Court before which it insists its antagonists must be tried?

If these crimes are ever acknowledged by the American media, they are invariably attributed by the media to mistakes or "bad apples." No leading officials have ever been prosecuted. Yet here, on the basis of a few photos, it is already concluded that Putin is guilty of war crimes, even "genocide." Under such logic, why is not every American president, Biden included, behind bars?

Beyond the obvious element of hypocrisy, there is another legal concept that must be leveraged in evaluating the conflicting allegations between the United States and Russia: "Cui bono?"

Who benefits from the intensification of the war? Here, clearly, the answer is the American government. Biden's conclusion of war crimes, made in an almost

offhand manner, is intended to preclude negotiations. The US does not want the war to end. Biden's declaration in Warsaw last month that Putin "cannot remain in power" was not a "gaffe," as presented by the US media, but expressed actual US policy toward Russia, which is regime change.

All of this takes place amidst a media campaign demanding that the war be "won." In an article published Tuesday, *Financial Times* columnist Janan Ganesh declared, "America will be the ultimate 'winner' of the Ukrainian crisis." The *Economist*, for its part, has called for "a decisive victory" against Russia in Ukraine.

Atrocity allegations are a critical element of US war propaganda. Every aggressive war ever launched by the United States was built upon allegations of atrocities by the targets of US military intervention. In every case, whether the first Gulf War, Afghanistan, Syria, or Libya, the script is the same: the government targeted by the US has murdered civilians and threatens to kill more unless the US intervenes.

Then, when the US intervention leads to the mass murder of civilians on an even greater scale in the country being "rescued," the press simply moves on to breathlessly report the "atrocities" by the next targets of US imperialism.

In addition to escalating the US-NATO conflict against Russia, US officials are using the anti-Russia war hysteria in the liberal upper middle class to promote a massive military buildup whose ultimate target is China no less than Russia. On Tuesday, the White House announced a new agreement by the Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) partnership to produce a new generation of nuclear weapons targeting China.

Under such conditions, it is necessary not to be swayed by the torrent of war propaganda in the media. The United States instigated this war, provoking the Russian government into a reactionary and desperate invasion of Ukraine. Having begun the conflict, the American ruling class—driven by geopolitical interests and a deepening economic, social and political crisis—is determined to see it to the end, whatever the disastrous consequences.

A central target of the US war drive is the working class at home, which will be told to "sacrifice" its social interests in the name of promoting the war effort. Workers must oppose both the disastrous invasion by

Russia and the US-NATO war drive and mobilize across national borders against the capitalist system that is the root cause of war and inequality.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact