

Defense Secretary Austin admits the US is a party to Ukraine war

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On Sunday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin traveled to Ukraine, where Austin effectively stated that the United States is a party to the Ukraine war.

After meeting with Ukrainian President Volodimir Zelensky, Austin declared in prepared remarks, “our focus in the meeting was to talk about those things that would enable us to win the current fight and also build for tomorrow.”

In using the first-person plural to describe both the United States and Ukraine as engaged in a “fight” against Russia, Austin effectively admitted—for the first time by a US official—that the United States is a combatant in the war.

This statement is especially striking given the declaration by Biden in March that “Direct confrontation between NATO and Russia is World War III, something we must strive to prevent.”

Combining the statements of Austin that “we” are engaged in a “fight” against Russia, and Biden’s declaration that a war between the US and Russia would mean “World War III,” it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the proxy war between the US and Russia over Ukraine threatens to rapidly spiral into a world war.

Austin then said, “We want to see Russia weakened to the degree that it can’t do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine.”

Austin’s statement echoed the declaration by US Army Europe Commander Ben Hodges that the US should aim for “breaking the back of Russia.” A recent *New York Times* editorial also invoked the prospect of “bringing Russia to its knees.”

Commenting on the statements by Austin, the *New York Times*’ David Sanger wrote,

Mr. Austin’s comments, bolstered by statements by Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken about the various ways in which Mr. Putin has “already lost” in the struggle over Ukraine, reflect a decision made by the Biden administration and its closest allies, several officials said on Monday, to talk more openly and optimistically about the possibility of Ukrainian victory in the next few months.

Sanger continued:

There is a second risk: that if Mr. Putin believes that his conventional military forces are being strangled, he will turn to stepped-up cyberattacks on Western infrastructure, chemical weapons or his arsenal of tactical, “battlefield” nuclear weapons. It is a possibility that was barely conceivable eight weeks ago, but is regularly discussed today.

“Given the potential desperation of President Putin and the Russian leadership, given the setback they’ve faced so far militarily, none of us can take lightly the threat posed by a potential resort to tactical nuclear weapons or low-yield nuclear weapons,” William J. Burns, the C.I.A. director, warned earlier this month.

In other words, the Biden administration is consciously leading the population of Ukraine, Russia, the US and the world down a path that risks nuclear war.

Yet there is no public discussion of the implications

of these policies, nor has the Biden administration alerted the population about the vast danger posed by its escalation of the war. Rather, for months it has systematically worked to chloroform public opinion about the dangers of nuclear war. Thus, Biden recently declared, “I don’t think he [Putin] is remotely contemplating using nuclear weapons.”

Russian officials, by contrast, have repeatedly threatened the use of nuclear weapons and have stressed the immense dangers posed by the present conflict. On Monday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned about the risk of nuclear escalation, stating, “the risks now are considerable.”

Lavrov concluded, “NATO, in essence, is engaged in a war with Russia through a proxy and is arming that proxy. War means war.”

The remarks of Blinken and Austin made clear the massive scale of US involvement in the war. “The strategy that we’ve put in place—massive support for Ukraine, massive pressure against Russia, solidarity with more than 30 countries engaged in these efforts—is having real results,” Blinken said.

On Sunday, Blinken and Austin announced over \$322 million in new weapons financing for Ukraine, bringing the total US weapons shipments to \$3.7 billion since the start of the war, Reuters reported. US weapons deliveries include Javelin missiles, artillery, ammunition and drones.

On Monday, the US defense department announced that it was using an emergency declaration to approve the sale of \$165 million of ammunition to Ukraine. The Pentagon said the sale would include ammunition for howitzers, tanks and grenade launchers.

Reuters reported that the plan “could include artillery ammunition for howitzers, tanks and grenade launchers such as 152mm rounds for 2A36 Giatsint; 152mm rounds for D-20 cannons; VOG-17 for automatic grenade launcher AGS-17; 125mm HE ammunition for T-72 and 152mm rounds for 2A65 Msta.”

Today, the US will host a meeting of dozens of countries centering on arming Ukraine.

Now, two months since the outbreak of the war, US officials are stating publicly what they previously admitted only in secret: The United States is the driving force in a war aimed at crippling and subjugating Russia and overthrowing its government.

Austin’s de facto admission that the two countries

with the world’s largest nuclear arsenals are both parties to the military conflict in Ukraine must be treated as a stark warning by workers all over the world. The present crisis poses immense dangers and raises the urgent need to mobilize the international working class in opposition to war.



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