

Pelosi pledges war “until victory is won”

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Over the weekend, Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the US House of Representatives and second in the line of presidential succession, traveled in secret to the war zone of Kiev, Ukraine and pledged a commitment by the United States to ensure “victory” against Russia.

Repeating the false premise that the United States’ involvement in the war with Russia is about helping Ukraine, an embattled ally, Pelosi told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, “Our commitment is to be there for you until the fight is done.” She added, “We stand with Ukraine until victory is won.”

Democratic Representative Jason Crow, who accompanied Pelosi on her trip to Ukraine, was even more emphatic in asserting that the United States is a party to the war, declaring at a press conference in Poland, “The United States of America is in this to win, and we will stand with Ukraine until victory is won.”

Pelosi’s pledge, coming just one week after similar assurances by Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, amounts to an unlimited commitment of treasure and blood to the pursuit of sweeping, open-ended war aims that threaten to draw the United States into what Biden called “world war.”

What does “victory” in Ukraine mean? In the span of just one week, Biden, Austin and leading members of the president’s political party have all given conflicting and irreconcilable answers as to what the United States is trying to achieve in Eastern Europe.

On one hand, Biden claimed that it is “not true” that the United States is engaged in a proxy war with Russia. On the other, Austin said at a press conference in Poland last week that the United States is seeking to “weaken” Russia. The *New York Times* has raised the prospect of “bringing Russia to its knees,” while former US Army Europe Commander Ben Hodges called for “breaking the back” of Russia.

To which of these goals is Pelosi committing the

United States?

If one accepts Pelosi’s statements in the most limited and most literal sense, they mean that the United States will assist Ukraine in achieving its military aims in regard to Russia. But Ukraine’s own military goals, developed in close cooperation with US military planners, are sweeping.

On March 24, 2021, Zelensky signed a document pledging to “implement measures to ensure the de-occupation and reintegration of the [Crimean] peninsula.” This means that Ukraine is formally committed to the seizure of Crimea, territory that Russia claims as its own, through military means.

If Ukraine succeeds in breaking the Russian offensive in the Donbas, routs the attacking Russian forces, and pushes into Russian territory, would the United States be “committed” to support Ukraine in this “fight”?

In another scenario, what will the United States do if Russian forces continue their advance toward Western Ukraine, encircling pockets of the Ukrainian army and leading to its disintegration? What does Pelosi’s open-ended commitment to “victory” against Russia mean if Ukraine is threatened with strategic defeat?

Pelosi’s statement makes clear that, forced to choose between the prospect of reneging on its “commitment” and the deployment of troops—or even the use of nuclear weapons—the United States will choose the latter.

Last week, Democratic Senator Chris Coons called for a “conversation” about sending US troops to fight against Russia in Ukraine.

Asked about Coons’s statements, Senator Tim Kaine, Hillary Clinton’s running mate in 2016, merely called the measure “premature”—effectively an admission that plans are already in the works. On Sunday, Republican Congressman Adam Kinzinger announced that he has introduced an Authorization for Use of Military Force that would allow Biden to deploy US troops in a full-

scale war with Russia.

In the course of the Vietnam War, the United States was drawn into an ever more bloody and brutal war that followed the logic of the military commitments it had made.

The Pentagon Papers, first published in 1971, revealed that in the early 1960s, under President John F. Kennedy, American imperialism transformed its involvement in Vietnam, which had up to that point been called a “limited-risk gamble” into a “broad commitment.”

One of the most damning components of the Pentagon Papers was an internal Defense Department memo, drafted in 1965, that concluded that the main reason for US involvement was to uphold the United States’ “commitment,” the breach of which would lead to a “humiliating U.S. defeat.” The United States’ goals were ranked as follows:

- 70% – To avoid a humiliating U.S. defeat (to our reputation as a guarantor).
- 20% – To keep [South Vietnam] (and the adjacent) territory from Chinese hands.
- 10% – To permit the people [of South Vietnam] to enjoy a better, freer way of life.
- NOT – To help a friend

In pursuit of enforcing the global position of the United States in the post-war period, 58,220 American soldiers lost their lives, hundreds of thousands were physically and psychologically destroyed, and over 1 million Vietnamese men, women and children were killed.

The Pentagon Papers revealed the extent to which American foreign policy is made in secret. The public is presented with a set of facts and arguments that bear no relationship to the actual goals that are propelling the conflict. The aim of media discussion is not to allow the people to democratically control the conduct of foreign policy, but to condition public opinion to accept the outcome desired by the American state apparatus.

The stakes in the present war are vastly higher than they were in Vietnam. From its origins as a US proxy war aiming to “bleed Russia white,” the conflict over Ukraine is rapidly spiraling into a full-scale war between two nuclear-armed states.

Within the entire US political establishment, there is no serious attempt to explain what the war is about.

There simply exists no opposition to a reckless and insane policy that threatens to end human civilization through the eruption of a nuclear third world war.

The real aims of US imperialism in the war against Russia were spelled out by WSWS International Editorial Board Chairman David North in his opening report to the May Day 2022 Online Rally, “The NATO-Russia war and the tasks of the international working class”:

Russia has become a target of US imperialism not because of the Putin regime’s autocratic character, but because, first, its defense of the interests of the Russian capitalists collides with the drive of the United States for global hegemony, which is centered on its preparations for war with China; and, second, the vast expanse of Russian territory is the source of immensely valuable and strategically critical raw materials, metals and minerals—gold, platinum, palladium, zinc, bauxite, nickel, mercury, manganese, chromium, uranium, iron ore, cobalt and iridium, to name only a few—that the United States is determined to bring under its control.

US officials are admitting with increasing candor that American imperialism wants to “break the back” of Russia and “bring Russia to its knees.” In pledging to wage war to complete “victory,” the United States is creating the conditions for catastrophe.

The social force that must be mobilized to stop the mad drive to world war is the working class. As North concluded his report, “The international working class must declare war on imperialist war.”

The May Day Rally, addressed by representatives of the International Committee of the Fourth International throughout the world, detailed the international socialist perspective upon which this struggle must be waged.



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