

United States seeks to provoke Russia into escalation in Ukraine

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The *New York Times* and NBC News have published reports, based on the statements of US officials, that amount to an attempt to deliberately escalate the conflict over Ukraine into a direct confrontation between NATO and Russia.

In its report published online Wednesday evening, the *Times* cited White House officials confirming that the US has provided intelligence to the Ukrainian military used to target and kill Russian generals, about 12 of whom have been killed during the war.

“The United States has focused on providing the location and other details about the Russian military’s mobile headquarters, which relocate frequently,” the *Times* wrote. This has allowed Ukrainian forces “to conduct artillery strikes and other attacks that have killed Russian officers.”

The intervention by the US has had a “decisive effect on the battlefield.” It added that the scale of “actionable intelligence on the movement of Russian troops that America has given Ukraine has few precedents.”

The next day, NBC News reported that the US was critically involved in coordinating the sinking of the cruiser Moskva, the flagship of the Russian Black Sea fleet, in the greatest Russian military disaster in decades.

With increasing frequency, attacks are being directed inside Russian territory, with US assistance. The *Wall Street Journal* pointed to “a series of attacks inside Russian territory and unexplained explosions at Russian targets.”

The article cites Rob Lee, a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, saying the strikes “could be a result of increased intelligence sharing between the West and Ukraine.”

Any notion that the NATO powers, above all the United States, are not direct participants in the conflict

over Ukraine lies in tatters. The declaration by US President Joe Biden that it is “not true” the US is engaged in a war, or even a proxy war, is a bald-faced lie. The US and NATO are providing tens of billions of dollars in military equipment and, as these reports document, direct intelligence used by the Ukrainian military and far-right militia forces.

The reports in the US media have been clearly orchestrated by the White House.

The *Times* writes, “The administration has sought to keep much of the battlefield intelligence secret, out of fear it will be seen as an escalation and provoke President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia into a wider war.”

If that is the case, why is the administration now publicizing its direct involvement in the war?

The release of this information to the *Times* and NBC, based on off-the-record statements by multiple administration officials, is a deliberate effort on the part of the Biden administration to increase pressure on the Russian government to retaliate against NATO forces. This would create the context for further US escalation, up to and including the direct engagement of US troops or the invocation of Article 5 of NATO.

Just as the United States succeeded in provoking Russia into invading Ukraine by turning the country into an armed camp on its borders and refusing to negotiate over Ukraine’s relationship with NATO, so too it is seeking to place the “burden of escalation” onto Russia by carrying out attacks on the Russian military through Ukrainian forces under its effective control.

Evelyn Farkas, the former top Defense Department official for Russia and Ukraine in the Obama administration, is quoted by the *Times* as saying, “Clearly, we want the Russians to know on some level

that we are helping the Ukrainians to this extent, and we will continue to do so."

In other words, the US-backed attacks on Russian generals, on the *Moskva*, and attacks on Russian territory are designed to be maximally provocative, while remaining, in the words of the *Times*, "deniable." The goal of the United States is exactly to "provoke President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia into a wider war."

As the United States expands the goals and scope of the war, it is seeking to goad Russia into a response that would allow the propagandists of US imperialism to claim the United States' offensive actions are defensive in nature.

While Russia has sought to carry out negotiations to conclude the war, the United States has made clear its opposition to any resolution to the conflict short of the total military defeat of Russia and the re-occupation of Crimea and the Donbas.

This is further demonstrated by an earlier article in the *Times*, which is co-authored by one of the same individuals who wrote the article posted Wednesday, which pondered why Putin was not being more aggressive.

The article "Why Isn't Putin Hitting Harder on the Battlefield?" noted, "American and European officials also say that President Vladimir Putin's tactics in recent weeks have appeared to be remarkably cautious, marked by a slow-moving offensive in eastern Ukraine, a restrained approach to taking out Ukrainian infrastructure and an avoidance of actions that could escalate the conflict with NATO."

While Washington has publicly denounced Russia's "total war," privately US officials have been puzzled by Putin's "remarkable caution." Washington's eyes are on May 9, the day that commemorates the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany, and it hopes to provoke Putin into escalatory measures in his speech and declarations.

The ultimate aim of the United States, as Biden made clear in March with his declaration that Putin "cannot remain in power," is regime change in Russia and its total subordination to US imperialism.

But domestic pressures play an equal if not greater role. The United States is seeking to provoke a major escalation of the war in order to divert massive internal tensions outward. The cost of living is soaring. In order

to head off a wages push by workers, the Federal Reserve is sharply increasing interest rates, likely leading to a recession. And the COVID-19 pandemic remains out of control.

The desperate efforts by the White House to escalate the war are the actions of a ruling class that sees itself as besieged and encircled by mass opposition. It seeks through war and its accompanying attacks on democratic rights to delegitimize domestic political opposition.

Working people must be on guard against the extreme dangers posed by the US military escalation. It is urgently necessary to develop a new and powerful movement against war, unifying the struggle against war with the fight against social inequality, poverty, the surging cost of living, the COVID-19 pandemic and the capitalist profit system.



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