

Dropping pretense of “non-involvement,” US seeks to escalate war with Russia

Clara Weiss
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The series of major explosions at Russian military bases on the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea over the past week mark the beginning of a new, even more dangerous phase in the imperialist war waged on Ukrainian territory against Russia.

Ukrainian officials have all but admitted that Kiev is behind the attacks, threatening that more is to come. Mykhailo Podolyak, a top adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, described the explosions as part of a beginning counteroffensive. “Our strategy is to destroy the logistics, the supply lines and the ammunition depots and other objects of military infrastructure. It’s creating a chaos within their own forces.” Hinting at plans to strike the Russian-built Kerch Bridge, which connects Crimea with the Russian mainland, Podolyak stated, “Such objects should be destroyed.”

There are only two scenarios that can account for the explosions, and both bear the imprint “made in Washington.”

The German *Der Spiegel* has provided evidence suggesting that US-made missiles and ammunition that had not been officially delivered to Ukraine could have caused the explosions, circumventing Russian missile defense systems. Ukraine has openly acknowledged that the US is involved in the decision-making process behind every single strike on Russian targets.

Meanwhile, the American press takes as a given that the explosions were caused by the work of Ukraine’s special forces. The *New York Times*, which had praised the explosions as a “brazen” act of “defiance” against Russia, gloatingly reported on Wednesday about the work of these forces and one of its members, who had been trained by the neo-fascist Right Sector and the Azov Battalion. According to the *Times*, these units are not only responsible for these attacks on Russian

military bases, but are also terrorizing Ukrainian workers, including teachers, for supposed “collaboration.”

These far-right terrorist forces have been armed and trained by the CIA. In January, Yahoo News reported that the CIA had conducted a secret extensive training program for Ukrainian special operation forces and intelligence personnel to prepare them for an insurgency since 2015. A former CIA official bluntly stated that the program had taught the Ukrainians how “to kill Russians”, adding: “The United States is training an insurgency.”

Whatever the political bankruptcy and reactionary nature of the Putin regime and its invasion of Ukraine, the fact of the matter is that this war was provoked and is now funded and escalated by the imperialist powers.

The Russian military is confronted with an army and paramilitary fascist forces that have been armed and trained systematically by NATO ever since the imperialist-orchestrated coup of February 2014. Their operations are planned and coordinated not in Kiev, but in Washington.

In a massive overhaul that was overseen and funded by NATO, the crumbling Ukrainian military was restructured and ballooned from 130,000 in 2014 to almost 250,000 in 2021. Even before the beginning of the war in February, tens of thousands of troops had been trained directly by the US, UK, Canada and other NATO members. These training programs have been massively expanded since February, and US paramilitary forces are also providing training to Ukrainian troops in action.

The flood of sophisticated weaponry and ammunition into Ukraine, an impoverished country with a pre-war population of less than 40 million, has no precedent. According to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy,

the imperialist powers have pledged over \$40 billion in weapons and ammunition since January 24. The US is by far taking the lead with \$25 billion, followed by the UK (\$4 billion), Poland (\$1.8 billion) and Germany (\$1.2 billion).

By now, any pretense of the “non-involvement” of the US in the war against Russia has been dropped, from decisions and statements by the White House to the coverage in the media, whose war reporting is tightly controlled by the national intelligence apparatus. Indeed, the triumphant reporting about Ukraine’s strikes on Crimea in the US media itself bears the imprint of a deliberate provocation against Russia.

The Biden administration has warned openly of the danger of World War III, yet it has deliberately crossed every single supposed limitation upon US involvement that it had set itself.

Russian officials as well as Western military experts have repeatedly warned that attacks on Crimea by Ukraine would be seen as an existential threat by the Kremlin and could trigger a nuclear exchange. Yet the US, using its proxy forces in Ukraine, has been doing everything possible to provoke precisely such a response.

So far, the Kremlin has been markedly restrained in its response to the evident efforts by Washington to escalate the war. There are no doubt significant divisions among the Russian oligarchs and within Russia’s state apparatus. The Russian oligarchy, the outgrowth of the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy and its destruction of the Soviet Union, is inherently incapable of responding in a coherent, let alone progressive, manner to its bloody encounter with imperialism.

But the political impotence and instability of the Putin regime, far from lessening the danger of an escalation of the war, is, on the contrary, another major destabilizing factor. Already, elements within the ruling United Russia party are calling for retaliatory strikes on “decision-making centers,” which, as everyone knows, are located not in Kiev but in Brussels and Washington.

Regardless of the intentions and plans of the warring sides, the war in Ukraine cannot be contained. Already, NATO is pushing aggressively to open up a northern front in the war. In Scandinavia, Sweden and Finland are set to join NATO. In the Baltics, the far-right governments of Lithuania and Latvia have stopped

issuing visas to Russian citizens, while Estonia has begun the demolition of World War II-era Soviet monuments. This is a targeted provocation not only against the Kremlin, but also against the large local Russian-speaking population, which, like much of the working class population of the former Soviet Union, still feels a powerful allegiance to the victorious struggle of the Soviet masses against German fascism.

In an indication that the Kremlin is anticipating a broadening of the front of the war with NATO, Russia has significantly increased its troops and missiles in neighboring Belarus, which shares borders with Ukraine and the NATO member states Poland, Latvia and Lithuania.

Only one conclusion can be drawn from the constant, reckless and ever more brazen provocations by US imperialism and its lackeys in Eastern Europe: the American ruling class is determined to escalate the war with Russia. The aims, just as the borders, of this war extend well beyond Ukraine. From the standpoint of imperialism, Ukraine is but the opening shot in a new redivision of the world.



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