

Biden pledges billions more for the “forever war” against Russia in Ukraine

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On Wednesday, US President Joe Biden pledged an additional \$3 billion in weapons to Ukraine, the largest single funding disbursement since the start of the war six months ago. To date, the US has provided more than \$50 billion in weapons and other funding to Ukraine, including long-range missile systems, high-end anti-ship missiles, helicopters and other aircraft.

Six months since the start of the war, the message is clear: Far from seeking to end the conflict, the US is doing everything it can to expand and prolong its new “forever war” against Russia in Ukraine.

Wednesday’s announcement came after weeks of extraordinary provocations, designed to goad the Kremlin into an expansion of the conflict. Multiple Russian military bases in Crimea were subject to major attacks by Ukraine. On Saturday, Daria Dugina, the daughter of far-right nationalist ideologue Alexander Dugin, was assassinated on the outskirts of Moscow. All of these operations bear the imprint “made in Washington.”

With these provocations, the US is seeking to strengthen the forces inside the Russian state apparatus and oligarchy that are calling for Russian President Vladimir Putin to retaliate. The aim is to force the Kremlin into a military response that would create the necessary justification for a further escalation of the war.

On Tuesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reaffirmed that the goal of his country’s involvement in the war is to retake the Crimean Peninsula, declaring, “the war started with Crimea, and it will end in Crimea.”

Zelensky’s statement revealed more than it intended to. Indeed, the war with Russia began not in February 2022 but in February 2014. However, it did not start with Russia’s annexation of Crimea in March, but

rather with the February 2014 coup that was orchestrated and funded by the imperialist powers. The coup provoked not only Russia’s annexation of the Black Sea peninsula, but also an eight-year-long civil war in which Russian-backed separatists, fighting against the imperialist-armed Ukrainian military, came to control significant portions of East Ukraine.

Above all, the 2014 coup formed the basis for the open transformation of Ukraine into the launching pad for an imperialist war against Russia. In the eight years between February 2014 and February 2022, the imperialist powers spent tens of billions of dollars to train, arm, expand and restructure the Ukrainian army. Neo-Nazi forces in the Ukrainian state apparatus and military were built up and armed as the principal shock troops of imperialism for the war against both Russia and the working class in the region.

After the fascist coup attempt in Washington D.C. on January 6 and amidst mass death from the raging pandemic, a decision was taken to systematically provoke a full-scale war with Russia. In March 2021, the Ukrainian government adopted a military strategy to “recover” Crimea and the separatist-controlled parts of East Ukraine. Eight months later, in November 2021, the US and Ukraine signed a “strategic partnership” document which made clear that the two countries were effectively in an offensive military alliance, targeting Russia.

Throughout 2021, the Kremlin, with ever more open anger and despair, insisted on “red lines” for its national security interests in Ukraine and the Black Sea, but these “red lines” were brazenly and contemptuously dismissed by Washington. The aim of US imperialism and its stooges in the Ukrainian oligarchy was not to prevent but to provoke a war.

With its invasion of Ukraine on February 24, the

Putin regime, backed into a corner, gave the imperialist powers the war they had been so eager to have. The invasion and the promotion of Great Russian chauvinism by Putin have been grist for the mills of the war propaganda of the imperialist powers and have strengthened the most reactionary and nationalist forces within Ukraine itself.

All the calculations of the Russian oligarchy, which emerged out of the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy's destruction of the Soviet Union, have proven to be disastrously wrong. Far from engaging in "negotiations," the imperialist powers seized on the invasion as the long-awaited pretext to put their plans for war into action.

Their ultimate goal is not so much any "victory" by Kiev, but the destabilization, carve-up and eventual colonization of Russia itself, come what may.

No one should underestimate the level of disorientation and derangement that prevails among the imperialist war mongers. On Wednesday, UK Foreign Minister Liz Truss stated that she was "ready" to hit the nuclear button if she becomes prime minister next month, even if it meant "global annihilation." According to the British *Independent*, Truss "appeared emotionless when asked how 'annihilation' would make her feel." Meanwhile, Washington, with crazed recklessness, is seeking to provoke yet another, even bigger war with China over Taiwan.

The war abroad has been accompanied by a war on the working class at home. In the name of "national security" and the "fight against Putin," workers in the imperialist centers are being told that they must prepare to starve. In both Europe and the US, the ruling class has used the war as a pretext for massive rearmament programs and the fundamental restructuring of class relations.

While tens of billions of dollars have been made available for the slaughter in Ukraine, there is supposedly no money for vaccines, COVID-19 treatment and testing, as tens of millions of teachers and children are being forced back into unsafe classrooms. Worldwide, the war has fueled inflation. Rising food and fuel prices have gravely undermined the already precarious living standards of hundreds of millions if not billions of workers.

In its February 24 statement on the outbreak of the war, the International Committee of the Fourth

International insisted that the fight against war and the capitalist catastrophe unleashed by the Stalinist destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991 required "a revival, in Russia and throughout the world, of the socialist internationalism that inspired the October Revolution of 1917 and led to the creation of the Soviet Union as a workers state."

In the six months since these lines were written, major struggles by the international working class have erupted, including in Sri Lanka, the UK, Germany, Turkey, Brazil, the US and Canada. This emerging global movement of the working class will form the basis for the building of a powerful, socialist anti-war movement and the realization of the perspective of world socialist revolution.



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