

# UK Prime Minister Truss pledges escalated offensive against Russia

Robert Stevens

21 September 2022

Prime Minister Liz Truss, in her first trip outside the UK since she succeeded Boris Johnson on September 6, declared that London would double down on military aid and assistance to Ukraine.

Truss spoke Wednesday evening at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, just hours after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the mobilisation of 300,000 troops and threatened to use nuclear weapons. Putin was responding to NATO threats to do the same, and to dismember the Russian Federation.

She stated that Putin was “making yet more bogus claims and sabre-rattling threats. This will not work.”

This was said just weeks after Truss declared her willingness to use nuclear weapons against Russia even though this would mean “global annihilation”. A Downing Street press release reported that Truss would announce a new defence review to “ensure the UK’s diplomatic, military and security architecture is keeping pace with evolving threats posed by hostile nations”.

The review comes 18 months after the last defence review ordered by Johnson. The *Financial Times* revealed, “Professor John Bew, the prime minister’s special adviser for foreign affairs and defence, will lead a Downing Street process to update the review, which is expected to be completed by the end of the year.”

Russia was to be offered no opportunity for a negotiated settlement in Ukraine, with Truss stating in reply to a question in New York, “First, Russia needs to leave Ukraine, and we need to make sure that there is proper recompense for what has happened in Ukraine, and we need to make sure Russia is never again able to threaten countries on its border.”

Downing Street said she will tell the UN, “The free world needs this economic strength and resilience to push back against authoritarian aggression and win this new era of strategic competition.”

Truss has pledged to increase UK spending on the

military to 3 percent of GDP by 2030 at a staggering additional cost of £157 billion. The *Financial Times*, ever the watchful eye on the profit margins of the ruling elite, noted that an agenda of militarism and war against Russia and China was coupled with Truss’s agenda of class war at home. It commented, “In her speech to the UN General Assembly, Truss will try to link her rightwing economic reforms, including tax cuts and deregulation, with a broader imperative for the west to build its economic resilience.”

These comments are made ahead of an emergency budget Friday that Truss has already declared will be “unpopular” and centred on tax cuts for big business.

Prior to Truss’s trip, Downing Street said it “will meet or exceed the amount of military aid spent on Ukraine in 2022 next year.”

Truss told the UN, “The UK will spend 3% of GDP on defence by 2030, maintaining our position as the leading security actor in Europe. And that’s why – at this crucial moment in the conflict – I pledge that we will sustain or increase our military support to Ukraine, for as long as it takes. New UK weapons are arriving in Ukraine as I speak – including more MLRS [Multiple Launch Rocket System] rockets.”

In an acknowledgement of how deeply Britain is engaged in the military conflict and provocations against Moscow, Downing Street boasted, “The UK is already the second largest military donor to Ukraine, committing £2.3bn in 2022. We have trained 27,000 members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces since 2015, and in the last year we have provided hundreds of rockets, five air defence systems, 120 armoured vehicles and over 200,000 pieces of non-lethal military equipment.

“Last week saw the largest commercial road move of ammunition since the Second World War as tens of thousands more rounds of UK-donated artillery ammunition went to the front lines in Ukraine.”

There is no limit to Britain's investment in military action against Russia. The statement warned, "The precise nature of UK military support in 2023 will be determined based on the needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine."

Figures with close connections to Putin have insisted for months that the first nation to face Russia's vast nuclear arsenal would be Britain, given its role as Washington's main partner in attacking Moscow.

Former Putin advisor Sergei Markov told the BBC's *Today* radio programme Wednesday, "For western countries, for your British listeners, I would say that Vladimir Putin tells you that he will be ready to use nuclear weapons against western countries including nuclear weapons against Great Britain."

Russia would use its nuclear arms, "if Great Britain continue to be aggressor against Russia, if Prime Minister of Great Britain Liz Truss still has plans to destroy Russia... This nuclear war could be [the] result of the crazy behaviour of the President of the United States, Joe Biden, and prime ministers of Great Britain Boris Johnson and Lizzie Truss. People in London should understand that this threat comes from Liz Truss, who is the aggressor."

At the end of August, Russian General Andrey Gurulyov, a deputy in Russia's parliament (Duma), said of a nuclear attack on Britain, "Let's make it super-simple. Two ships, 50 launches of Zircon [hypersonic cruise] missiles—and there is not a single power station left in the UK. Fifty more Zircons and the entire port infrastructure is gone. One more—and we forget about the British Isles."

None of this deters in the slightest the war fever of Britain's ruling elite. Foreign & Commonwealth Office Minister of State Gillian Keegan said brazenly of Putin's threat to use nuclear weapons, "Some of the language is quite concerning and obviously we should aim for calm... of course, we will still stand by Ukraine as well, with all of our Nato allies." Her words echo the World War Two slogan, "Keep Calm and Carry on".

Tobias Ellwood—a former Tory MP, chair of parliament's Defence Select Committee and captain of the Royal Green Jackets regiment—who now sits in parliament as an Independent, has long demanded a doubling of military spending to a least 4 percent of GDP. This week he co-authored an op-ed in the *Telegraph* with Hamish de Bretton-Gordon. Only last month Bretton-Gordon, the former commanding officer of the UK's Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Regiment, wrote in the same newspaper to insist, "Britain should prepare for nuclear war."

Ellwood and Bretton-Gordon complain, "The West can throw money at the food and fuel crisis to alleviate problems in home countries and less developed ones, but not at the nuclear conundrum."

Justifying their war aims by warning of the uncertain fate of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear facility, they insisted, "If we are to prevent a serious disaster, we must be far more proactive in establishing and defending precedents for modern nuclear warfare before it's too late."

As "the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] and the UN are calling for a demilitarised zone to ring fence Zaporizhzhia and other nuclear power stations," they wrote, "we need a No-fly zone around the plant. The UN could deploy air defence systems to enforce it. An anti-missile system could be in place to prevent missiles hitting the reactors."

Britain's involvement in the military confrontation with Russia continues apace. Between August 29-September 2, the UK completed Exercise Vigilant Knife alongside Swedish and Finnish Armed Forces. This followed a trip by Armed Forces Minister James Heapey to meet UK troops in Tapa, Estonia, 160 kilometres from Russia's border. An MoD statement said, "More than 800 troops from 1st Battalion, the Royal Welsh currently lead a NATO enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battlegroup in Estonia. The UK also has a second battlegroup of over 800 from 2nd Battalion, The Rifles, in the country after deploying them in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine."

The MoD added, "Defence Secretary Ben Wallace announced in June that the lethality of these deployments would be enhanced with advanced capabilities including helicopters and artillery systems, as part of an increased UK contribution to NATO. Meanwhile, the UK's existing HQ in Tallinn will be expanded. Led by a Brigadier, it will support the rapid deployment of high readiness forces at the brigade level."



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**