

A history of US threats to use nuclear weapons

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The Biden administration and the media present Putin's threat to use nuclear weapons in response to military setbacks as an unprecedented break with long-established and hitherto unquestioned rules of international statecraft. This narrative is a lie.

In fact, the United States and other imperialist powers have not only considered on several critical occasions using nuclear weapons to reverse military defeats. They have directly threatened to drop atom bombs in order to extract concessions from their enemies.

There are the well-documented demands of General Douglas MacArthur for the dropping of nuclear bombs on China, President Eisenhower's weighing of France's request for the detonation of nuclear devices at Dien Bien Phu, and President Kennedy's threats during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Far less known and even more serious were the use of nuclear threats by President Nixon against the USSR and Vietnam. Operation Giant Lance was initiated on October 27, 1969, according to Wikipedia, to force a settlement of the Vietnam War on terms favorable to the US.

According to Wikipedia, Nixon "authorized a squadron of 18 B-52 bombers to patrol the Arctic polar ice caps and escalate the nuclear threat ... to coerce both the Soviet Union and North Vietnam to agree on favorable terms with the US, and conclusively end the Vietnam War."

Nixon made use of what was referred to as the "madman" tactic to convince the Soviet Union that he was capable of ordering a nuclear strike. Another operation, related to Giant Lance, was "Duck Hook."

Its purpose was to force North Vietnam, using the threat of a massive nuclear strike, to accept US terms for ending the war. Wikipedia states that Duck Hook

called for the nuclear bombing of military targets throughout North Vietnam. This included "the saturation bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, the bombing of dikes to destroy the food supply of much of the population of North Vietnam, air strikes against North Vietnam's northeast line of communications as well as passes and bridges at the Chinese border ..."

Henry Kissinger, Nixon's criminal accomplice, told the president that the US had to be prepared to use nuclear weapons. In a memo to Nixon, Kissinger wrote: "To achieve its full effect on Hanoi's thinking, the action must be brutal."

Eventually, because of doubts about its strategic effectiveness and fear of a violent popular reaction, Duck Hook was not implemented. But Nixon continued to threaten Vietnam and the Soviet Union with nuclear war.

This history proves that 1) the claims that Putin is breaking a previously unquestioned taboo on the use of nuclear weapons are fraudulent; and 2) that the US, if confronted with the prospect of military defeat, would certainly resort to nuclear warfare.

Knowing that the US would use nuclear weapons if confronted with a desperate military situation, the Biden administration's relentless efforts to push Putin into a corner and force capitulation are totally reckless.



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