

# France, Germany and Poland hold Paris summit to escalate NATO war on Russia

Alex Lantier  
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On June 12, Polish President Andrzej Duda, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron met in Paris for a summit on the NATO war against Russia. They met as NATO launched the largest airborne war game in the alliance's 74-year history, with hundreds of warplanes simulating a war with Russia spreading from Ukraine across Europe.

The meeting of Duda, Scholz and Macron was fully aligned on NATO plans for a staggering escalation of the NATO war with Russia in Ukraine. At a joint press conference at the Elysée presidential palace, they laid out a program leading to total war with Russia, a major nuclear-armed state. They called for Ukraine to join NATO and for Russia to be permanently demilitarized and rendered incapable of waging military operations against any neighboring state.

Macron introduced the press conference, explaining that it would prepare the June 29-30 European Council summit and the July 11-12 NATO summit in Vilnius. Predicting that "Ukraine will not be conquered" by the Russian invasion, Macron added: "We will ensure not only that Russia will not emerge victorious from this unfortunate undertaking, but that it never be able to repeat it."

Scholz argued that the war with Russia had to be seized as a historic opportunity to rearm Europe. "The Russian invasion of Ukraine remains the central foreign policy issue of our time, and it will also be a central theme of our meeting today," he said. "The turning point represented by the Russian war will have consequences for us in Europe and the European Union. We will create an even more unified geopolitical Europe that is even stronger and more sovereign."

After Macron pledged to provide Ukrainian forces with armored vehicles, arms, ammunition and logistical support, Scholz pledged to provide these as well as artillery and air defense units.

It was Poland's far-right president who spelled out most clearly the implications of this policy, defining the European Union (EU) as an alliance dedicated to crushing Russia.

Duda said, "What is fundamental for the Union is that Russian imperialism be crushed, so that Russia never has the potential or the possibility of attacking another state, or extend its sphere of influence to the detriment of the wealth of other states, or of their sovereignty and independence."

Amid mounting speculation that Poland could lead a direct NATO military intervention into Ukraine and clash with Belarus, Duda made clear that EU policy for crushing Russia involves the possible use of nuclear weapons. He said: "Russian nuclear missiles with nuclear warheads will be sent to Belarus. This should happen in July. I think this deserves a clear NATO response, and that is another subject that I will discuss in my talks [with Macron and Scholz]."

Duda also called for the reconquest of all Russian-speaking regions of Ukraine, like Crimea, now held by Russian forces against the pro-NATO regime in Kiev. He said, "In my view, victory will signify that Russian military forces will be expelled of all occupied territory, of all Ukrainian territory recognized as Ukrainian territory by international law. ... But above all, we will speak about how we can create realistic perspectives for Ukraine's future membership in NATO."

The suicidal recklessness of the warmongering of Duda, Scholz and Macron was matched only by the dangerous air of unreality hanging over the entire event. None of the journalists present asked the heads of state the obvious questions raised by their staggering statements: What are their plans for war with Russia, and how many millions of people do they think would die in such a war?

If NATO admitted Ukraine, Kiev could then invoke Article 5 of the NATO treaty to demand that all the NATO countries—including Poland, Germany and France—go to war with Russia. Such a war between the world's leading nuclear powers and waged by the NATO powers as a war to crush Russia would lead inexorably, unless stopped by the independent intervention of the working class, to the use of nuclear weapons.

Indeed, Duda's call for a NATO reply to Putin's stationing of nuclear weapons in Belarus raises the most

horrific questions. Did Duda ask, at the Paris summit, for Macron to provide guarantees that France will allow NATO to use its nuclear arsenal against Russia? Did Macron provide these guarantees, and have America and Britain, NATO's other nuclear powers, done so as well?

Does Macron feel any responsibility to inform the French people of what its chances of survival are if a nuclear war begins based on the guarantees requested by Duda? Russian and NATO nuclear arsenals have grown vastly more powerful in the 78 years since Washington dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. One Russian RS-28 Sarmat missile, with 12 independent warheads exploding with a force of 50 million tons of TNT, is thought to be enough to wipe out human life on a surface the size of France, Europe's largest country by surface area.

The fact that such questions are raised by official statements of European governments shows that capitalism has plunged into a crisis as mortal as in the world wars of the 20th century. The EU's embrace of a war to crush Russia in Ukraine is a toxic manifestation of the reactionary implications of the Stalinist bureaucracies' restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe and their dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Indeed, referring to his call to crush and permanently demilitarize Russia, Duda said: "This is one of the most important things today, and I say this as a Pole, as a person who grew up when the Iron Curtain fell in 1989. Thanks to solidarity and support of our Western European allies, we managed to defeat communism and realize the will of the Polish people at the time. We became members of a community of democratic states, Western countries, to which we always belonged culturally. But then we joined the West politically. Now, the Ukrainians want the same thing."

This is a reactionary political fairy tale. Firstly, it is not to promote the Polish Stalinist regime that in fact restored capitalism in 1989 to say that a call to "defeat communism" by building a tiny, ultra-rich capitalist oligarchy and waging total war on Russia would not have enjoyed broad support among Polish workers in 1989. More broadly, however, Duda's hailing of Western Europe and NATO as "democratic" is flatly contradicted by their evolution over these last 34 years.

The NATO imperialist powers have waged wars of occupation or for regime change in Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Mali and beyond that cost millions of lives. The pouring of trillions of dollars and euros into wars and repeated bank bailouts for the investing classes brought social inequality to levels incompatible with democratic forms of rule. In every major European country, the influence of neo-fascist tendencies in official politics is surging as wildly unpopular governments raise military

spending by tens or hundreds of billions of euros.

Ukraine's NATO puppet regime, installed in 2014 in a NATO-backed coup in Kiev, is not democratic. Rather, it reflects NATO's historic origins in a post-World War II alliance between US and British imperialism and the defeated Nazi-collaborationist bourgeoisies of continental Europe. Based on far-right nationalist militias descending from the Ukrainian collaboration with Nazism, it is sending hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian troops to be killed at the front, banning political parties, jailing journalists, and persecuting speakers of Russian and other minority languages.

Duda's hailing of the war on Russia as necessary to fight communism underscores that the war is indissolubly bound up with waging class war against the workers. Macron's decision to raise €126 billion for the French military budget by slashing pensions this spring, despite overwhelming popular opposition and protest strikes by millions of workers, further underscores this point. NATO is escalating war on Russia by trampling upon the will of the people and the struggles of the working class.

Class struggles have surged across Europe, well beyond France, with mass teacher strikes in Romania, strikes against austerity in the Czech Republic and Portugal, and strikes against inflation in Germany and Britain. This is the force that can be mobilized in an international movement of workers in Europe, America, Ukraine and Russia to stop the war. Such a movement can only proceed based on the traditions of the Trotskyist movement, waging an irreconcilable, international struggle for workers' power and socialism against capitalist governments hell-bent on plunging Europe and the world into a new, catastrophic war.



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