

NATO plans for troop deployments in Ukraine threaten nuclear war

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On Sunday, the *New York Times* published an article by David Sanger titled “Biden’s Armageddon Moment: When Nuclear Detonation Seemed Possible in Ukraine.” The article documents extensive and far-reaching discussions within the Biden administration in late 2022 regarding the possibility of the war with Russia turning into a nuclear conflict.

Sanger reports that the Central Intelligence Agency told Biden that “under a singular scenario in which Ukrainian forces decimated Russian defensive lines and looked as if they might try to retake Crimea—a possibility that seemed imaginable that fall—the likelihood of nuclear use might rise to 50 percent or even higher.”

He reported that the Biden administration was making “urgent preparations... for a US reaction” to a Russian nuclear detonation.

An article written by Sanger, a longtime mouthpiece for the US military and intelligence agencies, is less a news article than a controlled release of information by the US intelligence agencies.

The purpose of this article is to acclimate the public to the possibility of the war becoming nuclear. It is also an attempt to place the onus on Russia, when it is, in fact, the US and NATO powers that are engaged in a massive escalation of the war, potentially involving the direct deployment of NATO troops to Ukraine.

Over the past two weeks, four NATO countries—France, Canada, Lithuania and the Netherlands—have stated their openness to sending NATO troops to fight Russia in Ukraine. On Saturday, they were joined by Poland, whose foreign minister, Radek Sikorski, declared that sending troops to Ukraine was “not unthinkable.”

These statements were accompanied by the release of a recording of a discussion by members of the German

military of the prospect of using German long-range weapons to carry out strikes on Russian territory.

The immediate context for these actions is a series of disastrous setbacks for the Ukrainian war effort, raising the prospect of the total collapse of the Ukrainian army without direct NATO intervention.

As a recent article in *Foreign Affairs* warns, “Without a surge in Western military aid and major changes to Kyiv’s strategy, Ukraine’s battlefield position will continue to worsen until it reaches a tipping point, possibly by this summer.” In other words, NATO has a window of just a few months to avoid a precipitous collapse of the Ukrainian military.

Sanger’s article admits that in 2022, under conditions where the Russian military was facing a series of setbacks, the US evaluated that it was entirely possible for Russia to use nuclear weapons to improve its military position.

But it is NATO and the United States that now find themselves on the backfoot, suffering serious defeats. If the Biden administration believed that Russia would use nuclear weapons in order to forestall military defeat, is that any less true for the US and NATO?

In a critical passage, Sanger writes:

The wargaming at the Pentagon and at think tanks around Washington imagined that Mr. Putin’s use of a tactical weapon ... involved a demand from Moscow that the West halt all military support for the Ukrainians: no more tanks, no more missiles, no more ammunition.

But this is precisely the position that NATO is driving Russia to take by planning to deploy NATO

troops to Ukraine. Every escalation by NATO raises the pressure for the Russian government to set an explicit “red line,” to be enforced by the threat to strike NATO territory or use nuclear weapons.

The NATO powers recognize the very real danger that the conflict in Ukraine could develop into a nuclear war, but they are taking no measures to avoid escalation. Instead of discussing negotiations that could avert this catastrophe, they are continuing to pursue a policy that could well result in a nuclear conflict with Russia.

Having feared that a nuclear “apocalypse” could break out in 2022, the Biden administration and its NATO allies are now escalating the war to the point where that scenario becomes more likely than ever.

It is urgently necessary for the working class to intervene and stop the relentless escalation of the Ukraine war. The growing global strike movement by workers around the world must be fused with the movement against war and armed with a socialist perspective. This movement must demand the immediate end of the war and the withdrawal of all NATO forces from Ukraine.



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