

NATO escalation in Ukraine threatens nuclear war with Russia

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There are growing indications that NATO's war against Russia is entering a new stage of escalation that threatens to lead to the use of nuclear weapons. Top NATO officials are publicly talking about resorting to missile strikes and ground war against Russia, while Russian officials are warning they may launch counter-strikes on NATO countries.

Last week, 100 artillerymen and surveillance specialists of the French Foreign Legion were deployed to the front lines at Slavyansk in Ukraine, according to a report by former US Undersecretary for Defense Stephen Bryen in the *Asia Times*. Bryen said a further 1,500 French Foreign Legionnaires could soon deploy to Ukraine. He wrote that one consequence of this is “potentially triggering a pan-European war.”

While the French Foreign Ministry denied Bryen's report, it is in line with President Emmanuel Macron's previous calls for a ground war with Russia. Macron and other top NATO officials are now reasserting these comments in an aggressive press campaign. Last week, in *The Economist*, Macron again demanded that NATO be ready to send ground troops to Ukraine:

If the Russians were to break through the front lines, if there were a Ukrainian request—which is not the case today—we would legitimately have to ask ourselves this question.

This weekend, the Italian daily *La Repubblica* reported on further NATO war plans. It cited secret NATO agreements allegedly defining two “red lines,” Belarus' entry into the war and a Russian “provocation” targeting Poland, Hungary or the Baltic States. If either of these “red lines” were crossed, NATO would mobilize 100,000 troops across Eastern Europe, from the Baltic states to

Romania.

Also, last Thursday, UK Foreign Minister David Cameron went to Kiev, where he said Ukraine has the “absolute right” to use British long-range missiles to bomb Russia.

This weekend, Macron told the French financial newspaper *La Tribune* that NATO must create total uncertainty about its actions in Russia's military command:

President Putin has constantly brandished the nuclear threat. Faced with such an adversary, it is such an act of weakness to give a priori limits on one's own actions! We must on the contrary deny him any idea of what we might do. This is how we can deter him from taking action.

Macron's statements illustrate the mood of utter recklessness prevailing in ruling circles. During the Cold War, US and Soviet officials installed an emergency hotline between the White House and the Kremlin, fearing that nuclear war could erupt accidentally if one side misread the intentions of the other and believed the opponent had launched a nuclear strike. On September 26, 1983, this nearly occurred, when Soviet early warning systems falsely indicated that US forces had launched nuclear missiles at the Soviet Union.

Now, however, Macron says NATO aims not to seek a negotiated peace, but to force the Russian military to assume that NATO may adopt the most aggressive possible policy. This includes possibly launching not only a large-scale land invasion of Russia, but also—since France, Britain and the United States all refuse to rule out initiating the use of nuclear weapons in a war—a preemptive nuclear strike on Russian forces in Ukraine or on

Russian cities.

Whether or not French troops are already deployed in Ukraine, the Kremlin is clearly taking these reports seriously. The “strategic ambiguity” Macron said he wanted to build in NATO relations with Russia has been established. Increasingly convinced that NATO may catastrophically escalate the conflict, Russian officials are calling to prepare the most drastic measures in response, creating conditions for a disastrous escalatory spiral in the war.

Yesterday, the Kremlin announced that it would hold military exercises simulating the use of nuclear weapons. Kremlin spokesman Dmitri Peskov called the nuclear exercises a response to an “unprecedented stage in the escalation of tensions initiated by the French president and the British foreign secretary,” including “an intention to send armed contingents to Ukraine—that is, to actually put NATO soldiers in front of Russian troops.”

Extraordinary warnings emerged after the Russian foreign ministry summoned the British and French ambassadors yesterday to protest the statements of Cameron and Macron.

It warned UK Ambassador to Russia Nigel Casey that Cameron’s statements made Britain “a de facto party to the conflict” between Ukraine and Russia, the *Guardian* wrote. “Casey was told that in response to Ukrainian attacks on Russian territory with British weapons, any British military facilities and equipment on the territory of Ukraine and abroad could be targeted,” the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

Yesterday, on his Telegram channel, former Russian President Dmitri Medvedev bluntly stated that if NATO continues on its course, Russia could bomb Washington, Paris and London amid a “world catastrophe.” Medvedev wrote:

There is some kind of total degradation of the ruling class in the West. This class really does not want to logically connect elementary things. Sending your troops to the territory of Ukraine will entail the direct entry of their countries into the war, to which we will have to respond. And, alas, not only in the territory of Ukraine.

In this case, none of them will be able to hide either on Capitol Hill, or in the Elysée Palace, or in 10 Downing Street. A world catastrophe will come.

On May 4, introducing the International Committee of the Fourth International’s (ICFI) May Day online rally, David North warned of the danger that the NATO war against Russia in Ukraine could escalate into a nuclear world war. Citing US-UK pledges to arm NATO’s Ukrainian puppet regime with long-range missiles that can strike major Russian cities, North said:

But what if Putin, invoking the precedent set by President John F. Kennedy during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, declares, paraphrasing Kennedy’s warning, that attacks on Russian territory by Ukraine with missiles supplied by NATO “will be regarded as an attack” by NATO upon Russia, “requiring a full retaliatory response” upon NATO countries?

It is high time for Biden and his NATO colleagues to tell the people that their pursuit of “victory in Ukraine” means risking nuclear war and describe in necessary detail what will happen to their countries and the world if the confrontation with Russia goes nuclear.

There was no trace of exaggeration in this warning, which has been confirmed in barely three days.

The strongest possible appeal must be made to workers and youth around the world: If the working class does not intervene against the capitalist governments to stop this escalation, one or another confrontation will ultimately escalate into nuclear war.

The greatest danger is that masses of workers and youth are not fully aware of the urgency of the risk of a catastrophic global war. They must be alerted and mobilized through an international movement of meetings, protests and strikes, aiming to build a mass, socialist anti-war movement in the international working class.



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