

Conspiracy of silence shrouds Biden's Ukraine summit in Berlin as NATO holds nuclear exercises

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Outgoing US President Joseph Biden, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron are to meet tomorrow in Berlin for an emergency summit on the Ukraine war. To date, state officials and media in countries whose leaders are attending the Berlin summit have given no concrete information on what the summit agenda will be.

The four leading NATO imperialist powers are however clearly meeting to discuss plans for an international military escalation. It comes only a few days after the Pentagon publicly deployed US troops to Israel amid the genocide in Gaza, Israel's invasion of Lebanon and calls for US-Israeli bombing of Iran. Moreover, Biden was originally slated to travel to Germany to discuss a monumentally reckless plan for mass long-range bombings of Russia.

This trip to Europe, Biden's last as US president, was previously scheduled to be a NATO summit at the Ramstein airbase, to discuss authorizing Ukraine to launch strikes with long-range US, German, British and French missiles deep into Russia. However, the Ramstein summit was suddenly cancelled last week and replaced with the four-power summit in Berlin, disinviting the other NATO member states.

The deafening silence on the agenda of the Berlin summit amounts to a conspiracy by the major NATO powers to hide both the disaster they have caused in Ukraine and the Middle East and their planning for an even more catastrophic military escalation.

While Biden ostensibly cancelled the Ramstein summit to stay in the United States during the emergency response to Hurricane Milton, this came shortly after Russian President Vladimir Putin changed Russia's nuclear doctrine in response to threats of NATO missile strikes. The Kremlin announced that it could use nuclear weapons in response to strikes on Russia carried out by a non-nuclear power with the assistance of nuclear powers.

Further underscoring the nuclear war threat, NATO is now

holding two weeks of nuclear war exercises, codenamed Steadfast Noon, set to end on October 28. This involves 60 nuclear-capable aircraft practicing strike maneuvers over Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Britain and the North Sea. About Steadfast Noon, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte told reporters: "In an uncertain world, it is vital that we test our defense and that we strengthen our defense so that our adversaries know that NATO is ready and is able to respond to any threat."

NATO is also holding the two-week "Exercise Strike Warrior" naval war games in waters northeast of Britain, with a 20-ship task force led by UK aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales.

Yesterday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky presented a reckless, five-point "victory plan" to the parliament in Kiev, supposedly to ensure Russia's defeat. His plan called for Ukraine to join NATO, use NATO countries' weapons for strikes on Russia at will, and develop a "non-nuclear deterrence package" whose content he did not specify.

For the fourth point, Zelensky boasted of Ukraine's "natural resources, including critical minerals worth trillions of dollars." He cryptically pledged to provide a "return on investment" to the United States and other NATO powers, apparently by handing over these resources to them, which he said was spelled out in "a secret annex, which is shared only with certain partners." In short, Zelensky, while claiming to be fighting for Ukrainian freedom from Russia, is in fact selling off its resources to the NATO powers' major corporations.

Finally, he called to integrate Ukrainian troops into NATO armies after the war. Zelensky claimed this would force Russia to "join an honest diplomatic process to bring the war to a just end."

The coverage of Zelensky's proposals in international media has been staggeringly superficial. It is a matter of record that in recent months, NATO heads of state have also

advanced the proposals Zelensky made yesterday. While they are clearly part of an ongoing discussion of policy in the ruling elites of the NATO countries, the media and political establishment are asking none of the obvious questions that flow from Zelensky's remarks.

What estimates are Biden, Scholz, Starmer and Macron seeing on how many millions would die if NATO's use of Ukraine as a launchpad to bomb Russia triggers nuclear war? If Ukraine joined NATO, how soon do they believe the NATO and Russian militaries would be fighting each other? And how does Zelensky intend on this basis to reach peace, since the Kremlin went to war precisely to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and letting NATO station troops on Russia's borders?

At the same time, Zelensky's "victory plan" clearly faces major obstacles, starting with the fact that none of the major NATO imperialist powers have yet agreed, at least publicly, to admit Ukraine into NATO now, or to let Ukraine use their missiles for long-range strikes on Russia.

Moreover, there is mounting popular opposition to Zelensky, who has suspended elections and rules as a dictator. Yesterday, Hromadske television reported that thousands of people marched in Kiev to protest Zelensky, demanding to know the whereabouts of their relatives, in one of the largest anti-war protests in Kiev to date. Many of the protesters were reportedly relatives of Ukrainian soldiers who made an ill-fated attempt to invade Russia and are now trapped near Kursk, pinned down by artillery.

At the same time, a report attributed to US intelligence sources circulated widely on Telegram yesterday claiming to show that Ukraine has suffered a staggering 1.8 million losses in the war, including over 700,000 killed in action. Since Zelensky's regime does not regularly update the number killed in the war, it is impossible to precisely evaluate this number. However, it is plausible. More than a year ago, US military pundits like Douglas MacGregor were already citing Pentagon briefings to claim that Ukraine had suffered over 300,000 deaths.

Ukraine has been bled white in a war that is lost, unless there is a massive intervention by US-NATO troops in Ukraine for an open war with Russia that directly poses the risk of escalation to nuclear war.

There is mounting crisis and panic in European ruling circles over Ukraine. Last week, former NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg argued that Ukraine should negotiate a peace with Russia—which the NATO powers themselves forced Ukraine to reject after Russian and Ukrainian negotiators agreed on a peace deal shortly after the war began. Then-UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson pressed Zelensky to reject the deal, which might have saved hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians who have since died in

the war.

In her regular column yesterday for the French daily *Le Monde*, Sylvie Kaufmann speculated on the possibility of a Trump victory in next month's US presidential elections leading to a slowdown of US military aid to Ukraine and ultimately a Russian victory. "There are three weeks to get ready for the worst possible outcomes," she wrote.

"The defeat of Ukraine would also be the defeat of Europe. We must now imagine the consequences a Russian victory would have in Europe," Kaufmann continued. She said that in such a scenario, "the Europeans will not be able to compensate for the loss of American aid. The Ukrainian army would have more and more difficulty resisting Russian offensives." She speculated that certain Balkan countries could abandon plans to join the European Union. She also worried that the EU itself might split apart if Italy, Hungary or other EU member states abandoned the Ukraine war.

Despite growing talk of defeat and negotiations in ruling circles, the major imperialist powers are firmly set on a policy of escalation. With Russian troops already stationed in Syria and Iran, a planned US-NATO military escalation coordinated with Israel against Iran or other Middle Eastern countries could also very rapidly lead to a direct military confrontation with Russia. Indeed, both Ukraine and the Middle East are fronts in a global conflict NATO is waging against Russia and China.

The decisive question is mobilizing the mass opposition that exists in the working class to NATO plans for escalation in Ukraine and to the Israeli government's genocide in Gaza. According to a Eurasia Group poll earlier this year, 91 percent of Americans and 89 percent of West Europeans oppose plans for military escalation against Russia. This anger will only grow as it becomes obvious that the United States and Europe have both wasted hundreds of billions of dollars on a dirty war that is lost, financing this spending with attacks on social spending and real wages.

An international anti-war movement must be built in the working class, at workplaces and in schools, to call a halt to the war and take power out of the hands of the corrupt and monumentally reckless ruling elites that have led it, on a perspective of a struggle for socialism.



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