

Washington and Berlin push NATO to the brink of war with Russia

Johannes Stern
15 October 2025

The planned meeting between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday threatens to push the world to the brink of nuclear war. According to reports, the United States is preparing to supply Ukraine with Tomahawk cruise missiles—long-range precision weapons capable of striking targets up to 2,500 kilometers away, including Moscow and other major Russian cities.

Trump confirmed that Zelensky would visit him at the end of the week. “He wants weapons. He would like to have Tomahawks,” the US president said, adding that he was “disappointed” in Russian President Vladimir Putin and would “not rule out” sending such missiles. The delivery of these systems would mark a qualitative escalation in the conflict: Tomahawks require direct US technical and operational involvement, meaning American personnel would effectively be operating within Ukraine. The line between “indirect support” and direct warfare would be erased. What is being prepared is nothing less than a full-scale NATO air war against Russia.

The Washington-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) estimated that at least 1,655 Russian military facilities, including 67 air bases, lie within range of existing Tomahawk variants with a 1,600-kilometer reach. A 2,500-kilometer model could strike nearly 2,000 Russian military targets, including 76 air bases. “Ukraine could significantly degrade Russia’s combat power at the front by targeting its logistical nodes with Tomahawks,” said ISW analyst George Barros.

Moscow has warned that any Ukrainian attack on Russian territory using such missiles would provoke immediate retaliation against military targets in NATO countries. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov declared that such a delivery would be an act of “direct participation in the conflict” and a “grave threat to Russian security.” Tomahawks can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads, he stressed, and their deployment in Ukraine would bring the world to the threshold of a nuclear confrontation.

The escalation coincides with NATO’s ongoing nuclear war exercise “Steadfast Noon,” currently taking place over Northern Europe. The annual maneuver involves around 2,000 soldiers and more than 70 aircraft, including German Tornado fighter jets capable of carrying US nuclear bombs stationed in Europe. According to NATO headquarters in Mons, Belgium, the drills simulate the dropping of nuclear weapons on Russian targets. The current phase focuses on the North Sea and includes the Dutch air base at Volkel, Belgium’s Kleine Brogel, Britain’s Lakenheath, and Denmark’s Skrydstrup. Germany is participating with three nuclear-capable Tornados and four Eurofighters.

These “exercises” underscore that the NATO powers are not preparing for defense but for nuclear war. On Wednesday, just two days before the Trump-Zelensky summit, NATO defense ministers met in Brussels to coordinate the next phase of the war. US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth made clear that Washington expects its allies to massively increase arms spending and weapons purchases, chiefly from the United States. “Our expectation today is that more countries contribute more money, that they buy more to support Ukraine,” Hegseth declared, cynically insisting this was necessary to bring the war to a “peaceful end.” In the Orwellian doublespeak of the 21st century, “peace” is to be achieved through total war.

Washington is dissatisfied with the hesitancy of the European powers. Earlier this year, Trump and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte set up the “Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List” (PURL), a mechanism by which European governments purchase weapons from US stockpiles for Ukrainian use. So far, equipment worth around \$2 billion has been financed through this channel. Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Canada have been among the largest contributors. Hegseth pressed for “peace through strength”—a slogan that, in the context of the genocide in Gaza carried out under Trump’s “peace deal,” can only be read as a threat: Either Russia submits to imperialist diktat, or it is threatened with annihilation.

Germany plays a particularly aggressive role in this offensive. Defense Minister Boris Pistorius announced at the NATO meeting that the Bundeswehr would deploy additional Eurofighter jets to Poland to conduct “air policing” along the alliance’s eastern flank. “We will contribute to the protection of the eastern flank,” he said, boasting that the alliance was now “more united than ever” following alleged Russian airspace violations. According to reports Germany is sending several combat-ready fighter jets to support the NATO mission.

Berlin also pledged an additional €2 billion in military aid for Ukraine, including Patriot interceptor missiles, IRIS-T air defense systems, radar equipment, precision artillery and thousands of rounds of ammunition. “The latest developments on the battlefield must strengthen our determination to continue our support for Ukraine,” Pistorius said.

At the NATO headquarters in Brussels, Pistorius described the signing of an agreement on closer military and armaments cooperation with Ukraine as a “win-win situation.” The agreement, he said, would strengthen Ukraine’s “defense and deterrence capabilities” while at the same time allowing Germany to benefit from Ukraine’s “innovation potential.” As concrete projects, he cited joint development in the field of air defense, the facilitation of work and study stays, and closer cooperation between the armed forces in training—steps that advance the integration of Ukraine into NATO structures and the preparation of a new war offensive against Russia.

At the same time, Germany and the European Union are accelerating their preparations for drone warfare. The EU’s new “European Drone Defense Initiative” (EDDI), formerly known as the “drone wall,” is to be fully operational by 2027. The project, alongside the “Eastern Flank Watch” program, will integrate air defense and surveillance across NATO’s eastern borders. Pistorius confirmed that Germany alone plans to spend around €10 billion on the development and procurement of drones and hundreds of Skyranger air defense systems—the successor to the Gepard (Cheetah) anti-aircraft-gun tank used in Ukraine.

Among the most fervent advocates of escalation are the warmongering Greens. Party figurehead Anton Hofreiter told the *Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland* that supplying Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine “would make absolute sense.” If Washington sends its cruise missiles, he said, “Germany would have no argument left” against delivering its own Taurus systems to Kiev. Russia must be “put under more pressure—otherwise the killing will never end.” Such statements reveal that the ruling class in Berlin is not merely preparing for war; it already considers itself at war and is ready to escalate the “killing” on an even more massive

scale.

This murderous war drive is accompanied by an intensifying campaign of militarist propaganda and hysteria. In a joint public hearing before the Bundestag, the heads of Germany’s foreign and domestic intelligence agencies—BND Chief Martin Jäger and Verfassungsschutz President Sinan Selen—warned that the “threat from Russia is greater than ever.” “We must prepare for further deterioration of the situation,” said Jäger. It was “naive” to assume that a Russian attack could not occur before 2029. “We are already in the line of fire,” he declared, citing alleged sabotage, drone incursions and disinformation as evidence of a Russian “hybrid war” against Germany.

In reality, these alarmist declarations serve to justify a policy of relentless militarization. The German government is systematically using the confrontation with Russia to reestablish itself as a major military power. The massive rearment plans announced this year—€80 billion in weapons contracts over the next 15 months, and more than €350 billion in long-term procurement—represent the largest militarization of German society since the Nazi era. The combined war credits approved with the backing of the Greens and the Left Party exceed over 1 trillion euros.

Eighty years after the crimes of the Wehrmacht and the SS, the German ruling class is once again preparing for a war of conquest in the East. Under the banner of “defending democracy,” Berlin is pursuing the same imperialist aims that twice plunged Europe into catastrophe: domination of the continent, control over Eastern Europe and ultimately the subjugation of Russia itself. The reckless drive to arm Ukraine with Tomahawks, to rehearse nuclear strikes under “Steadfast Noon” and to transform Europe into a forward operating base for NATO war is bringing humanity face to face with the danger of annihilation.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:
wsws.org/contact