

Europe on brink of war with Russia and America at Paris summit

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On January 6, European leaders met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for a war summit in Paris, joined by Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and two of the Trump administration's Russia negotiators, Steve Witkoff and Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner.

The assembled NATO officials issued an open-ended commitment to stationing troops in and arming Ukraine as a military base on Russia's borders, once a ceasefire is reached. As the Kremlin went to war to prevent just such a situation and has threatened to fire on NATO troops arriving in Ukraine, this makes a mockery of US-European claims to be trying to negotiate with Russia to end the war. Rather, the Paris declaration is goading Russia to continue the war, potentially setting the stage for its escalation into a total war across Europe.

The elephant in the room, however, was Trump's blatantly illegal invasion of Venezuela and the explosive conflicts building between Washington and its NATO allies, as Trump threatens to seize Greenland from Denmark. The summit's "underlying atmosphere was extremely tense," the BBC reported, as Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen sat across Witkoff and Kushner. Frederiksen was, the BBC added, "under pressure from European colleagues not to antagonise the US over Greenland, in case that impacts US support for Ukraine."

Capitalism, as twice in the 20th century, is plunging into world war that can only be stopped by the working class. Even the NATO powers' nominally diplomatic initiatives at the summit, like the seven-country European statement warning Washington over Greenland, reflected rising fears of a war among nominal NATO "allies" which they could not stop. The task of averting a catastrophic military escalation falls to the working class, in a struggle to rise up and take power out of the hands of the representatives of the capitalist oligarchy.

The summit's ostensible focus was issuing the Paris

declaration, which calls for NATO countries to continue arming Ukraine and for European troop deployments to Ukraine, coordinated with Washington, at the risk of provoking total war with Russia.

"We stand ready to commit to a system of politically and legally binding guarantees that will be activated once a ceasefire enters into force," it states. However, the Paris Declaration does not give any timetables or specific plans, or make any commitment to do so. It states that the signatories can be ready to commit to this in future, after a ceasefire is negotiated, if it can be done "in accordance with our respective legal and constitutional arrangements."

It calls to send a "Multinational Force for Ukraine ... once a credible cessation of hostilities has taken place." It proposes to establish "a proposed US-led ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanism," a US-led agency that would be headquartered in Paris. It also calls to make "Binding commitments to support Ukraine in the case of a future armed attack by Russia," as well as plans to "deepen long-term defence cooperation with Ukraine."

As they issued these threats against Russia, however, seven European powers represented at the summit—Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and Denmark—also issued at "Joint Statement on Greenland." While the statement fawningly hailed Washington as an "essential partner" even as the Trump administration illegally invades Venezuela and threatens to rule the country and seize its oil, it was unmistakably aimed at US war threats against Denmark.

Recalling that "The Kingdom of Denmark—including Greenland—is part of NATO" and calling for "upholding the principles of the UN Charter, including sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders," the statement declared: "Greenland belongs to its people. It is for Denmark and Greenland, and them only, to decide on matters concerning Denmark and Greenland."

The statement is marred by one evident, fatal weakness. It relies on invocations of international law and NATO solidarity to deter Washington from seizing Greenland, but the Trump administration's invasion of Venezuela and its threats to use force against Denmark reveal its contempt for both international law and the NATO alliance.

Commentary after the Paris summit was however largely dominated by continued threats of military action against Russia. While the far-right Italian government issued a statement that it would not deploy troops to Ukraine, leaders of several other major European powers described their plans for potential future troop deployments against Russia should a ceasefire be reached.

"We will participate in the regeneration of the Ukrainian army," Macron said on the France2 TV evening news as the summit ended. "Thousands of soldiers could be deployed to keep the peace in Ukraine after a ceasefire," he said. "This will be in the context of our foreign military operations, and it will be organized," he declared—reiterating a pledge to send troops to Ukraine he has repeatedly made in the face of overwhelming popular opposition, in France and across Western Europe, ever since 2024.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer outlined even more detailed promises to station thousands of UK and French troops on Ukrainian soil, ready to fight Russia, once a ceasefire is reached.

"This is a declaration of intent to deploy forces to Ukraine in the event of a peace deal. This is a vital part of our iron cast commitment to stand with Ukraine for the long term," he said. "The signing of the declaration paves the way for the legal framework to be established for French and UK forces to operate on Ukrainian soil. ... Alongside our plans for a coordination cell, post-ceasefire the UK and France will also establish 'military hubs' across Ukraine to enable the deployment and build protected facilities for weapons and military equipment to support Ukraine's defensive needs."

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz told the press that Berlin's plans "could include, for example, deploying forces for Ukraine in neighboring NATO areas after a ceasefire." He added that the German government and parliament would decide on the extent of German military activity once the conditions of a hypothetical Russian-Ukrainian ceasefire were known. "We do not exclude anything in principle," Merz said.

Like the Greenland statement, this Russia policy is torn apart by staggering contradictions. No one in the

European ruling circles explains how or when a ceasefire could be negotiated for their plans to go into effect, or why Moscow's calls for Ukraine to be a neutral buffer state between it and the NATO powers are unacceptable.

They could say: "We pressed Ukraine to fight Russia, counting on a Ukrainian victory, which we hoped to use to rape and plunder Russia like Trump wants to rape and plunder Venezuela. Things didn't go according to plan, Ukraine suffered millions of casualties and is being defeated, but we found it easier to lie to you about it. Demonizing Moscow was a great excuse to cut social spending and rearm, and quite honestly, we didn't care how many Ukrainians died. Now somehow it turns out the United States may declare war on us, but trust us, we have more great ideas coming."

This would be too much honesty to expect from Europe's governments, however. They are pressing ahead with planning of military escalation against Russia and trying to keep Washington at the center of their war plans in Europe, despite explosive US-Europe tensions as Trump threatens to split the NATO alliance and take military action against European countries.

Stopping the war requires the political mobilization of the working class: building a movement against imperialist war among workers and youth, aiming to take power out of the hands of capitalist governments and the financial oligarchies they defend. This means fighting to unite workers in Europe, Ukraine, Russia, the Americas and beyond in a struggle for socialism.



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