

NATO and Ukraine escalate war against Russia

Johannes Stern
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The NATO war against Russia has reached a new stage. On Wednesday, Ukraine launched drone attacks in St. Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city. Black clouds of smoke rose over the St. Petersburg Oil Terminal as the International Economic Forum opened in the city. According to reports, the Kronstadt naval base and other military targets were also attacked.

The attack is part of a series of evermore and far-reaching Ukrainian drone and missile strikes on Russian energy facilities, airfields, arms factories, command centers and military infrastructure—some of them hundreds of kilometers behind the front.

Ukraine is not carrying out these attacks alone. They are politically covered, militarily enabled, technologically supported and strategically coordinated by the NATO powers, particularly Germany.

The latest attacks implement what Berlin and Kiev have publicly agreed to in recent weeks. When Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was received with military honors in Berlin in mid-April, the two governments signed a "strategic partnership" that codifies a deepening of war cooperation.

In mid-May, Defence Minister Boris Pistorius announced during a visit to Kiev that Germany and Ukraine intended jointly to develop and produce drones and other unmanned weapons systems with ranges of up to 1,500 kilometres, making possible attacks deep inside Russia.

Pistorius made no secret of the fact that Berlin regards Ukraine not only as a recipient of German weapons, but as a laboratory for future German and European warfare. Germany could benefit from Ukraine's experience on the battlefield, he declared. That is, the Bundeswehr is learning in Ukraine how a high-tech war against a nuclear power is conducted.

The attack on St. Petersburg underscore that the NATO powers are crossing every red line. Russia has repeatedly warned that attacks with Western weapons on Russian territory could lead to countermeasures, including outside Ukraine. As early as April, the Russian Defence Ministry

published the addresses of German arms companies after Berlin announced that it would develop long-range weapons and drones together with Ukraine for attacks on Russia.

The imperialist powers respond to every Russian warning with absolute recklessness, risking nuclear war. They are not only consciously accepting that the conflict could turn into a direct war between NATO and Russia, they are working toward it. Through evermore far-reaching attacks on Russian territory, maneuvers on Russia's borders, additional NATO troops in Eastern Europe and the expansion of Europe's war potential, Moscow is to be provoked into a response that could then serve as a pretext for NATO's official entry into the war.

None of this has anything to do with the defence of "democracy," "freedom" or "human rights." The war in Ukraine is the result of decades of NATO's eastward expansion, the systematic transformation of Ukraine into a military outpost against Russia and the right-wing coup in Kiev in 2014 supported by Washington and Berlin. Since the Russian invasion in February 2022, the NATO powers have continuously expanded the war.

It is about imperialist interests: the control of Ukraine, rich in raw materials and geostrategically positioned; the weakening and ultimately the dismemberment of Russia; access to the raw materials and markets of the Eurasian landmass; and the redivision of the world among the major imperialist powers.

For Germany, Ukraine has special historical significance. Already in the First World War, control over Ukraine was among the war aims of German imperialism. In the Second World War, the Wehrmacht occupied it in the war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, which claimed the lives of more than 27 million Soviet citizens. Almost 85 years after the beginning of Operation Barbarossa, the German ruling class is once again reaching toward the East.

The European powers treat the Ukrainian people as cannon fodder for their own imperialist interests. At the same time, the massive military expenditures, including a German military budget that will explode to more than €200 billion

per year in the coming years, will be paid for through brutal attacks on the working class: Social cuts, pension cuts, wage reductions, job cuts, the destruction of public services and the militarization of schools, universities and workplaces.

The fight against the madness of war also requires the rejection of the reactionary policies of the Putin regime. The Russian invasion of Ukraine was not a progressive or anti-imperialist response to the decades-long encirclement of Russia by NATO. It was the desperate and reactionary response of a capitalist oligarchic regime that emerged out of the Stalinist destruction of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism. Putin's policy has suffered a complete shipwreck. His entire strategy has been an attempt to win the Russian oligarchy a recognized place within the world capitalist order through an accommodation with imperialism.

The International Committee of the Fourth International has sought to unify the workers of Ukraine and Russia in opposition to war from the beginning. In its first statement immediately after the start of the war, the ICFI explicitly denounced "the Russian military intervention in Ukraine" and stated, "Despite the provocations and threats by the US and NATO powers, Russia's invasion of Ukraine must be opposed by socialists and class-conscious workers." The statement declared:

The catastrophe that was set in motion by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 cannot be averted on the basis of Russian nationalism, a thoroughly reactionary ideology that serves the interests of the capitalist ruling class represented by Vladimir Putin... The invasion of Ukraine, whatever the justifications given by the Putin regime, will serve only to divide the Russian and Ukrainian working class and, moreover, serve the interests of US and European imperialism.

This analysis has been fully confirmed. Putin initiated the war with a furious attack on the October Revolution and on Lenin. In his speech before the invasion, he attacked the Bolsheviks for recognizing Ukraine's national self-determination and founding the Soviet Union as a voluntary union of equal republics. In this way, he made clear that his regime completely rejects the revolutionary and internationalist traditions of 1917 and takes up the Great Russian chauvinism of Tsarism.

The devastating consequences of this policy are being borne by workers in Ukraine and Russia. Hundreds of thousands have been killed or wounded, entire cities and

regions destroyed, millions of people displaced. The Ukrainian working class is being used as cannon fodder by the Zelensky regime and its NATO sponsors for imperialist war aims. The Russian working class is being suppressed, forcibly recruited and sent into a war by the Putin regime that betrays its real social and democratic interests.

For precisely this reason, any support for either of the two war camps is reactionary. The NATO powers are pursuing the military subjugation of Russia and the redivision of the Eurasian landmass. The Putin regime is not defending the working class against imperialism, but the interests of the Russian oligarchy, whose wealth and power are based on the destruction of the achievements of the October Revolution.

Workers and young people in Germany, Europe, Russia, Ukraine and internationally must draw the necessary conclusion: The struggle against war requires the building of an international socialist anti-war movement of the working class directed against the cause of war—the capitalist profit system.

Workers in Ukraine and Russia have no interest in slaughtering one another for the interests of rival oligarchs and imperialist powers. Workers in Germany, France, Britain, the United States and throughout Europe have no interest in sacrificing their wages, pensions, schools, hospitals and ultimately their lives for the great-power plans of their ruling classes.

The slogan that must be counterposed to the war is not the defence of one or another nation-state, but socialist internationalism: For the unity of Russian and Ukrainian workers! Against NATO imperialism and against the Putin regime! For the building of an international socialist anti-war movement of the working class!



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