

# Biden gives go-ahead for NATO attacks on Russia: A new stage in the escalating imperialist world war

Jordan Shilton  
30 May 2024

US President Joe Biden has approved the firing of US missiles into Russia by the far-right Ukrainian regime, while French President Emmanuel Macron could announce the deployment of “military trainers” to the country as early as next week.

These developments underscore how the American and European imperialist powers are recklessly escalating the war with nuclear-armed Russia towards a global conflagration, which can be halted only through the political mobilization of the international working class.

“The president recently directed his team to ensure that Ukraine is able to use US weapons for counter-fire purposes in Kharkiv,” according to a US official. This revelation followed Monday’s meeting of NATO’s Parliamentary Assembly in the Bulgarian capital of Sofia at which the military alliance committed to inflicting a “strategic defeat” on Russia in Ukraine. These developments make clear that the leaders of American imperialism are rapidly escalating the war with Russia, a nuclear-armed state.

The apparent premise of Biden and his advisers is that Putin will not retaliate, and therefore they are free to attack Russia. This is an extraordinarily reckless assumption, all the more so because it all but compels Putin to prove them wrong. Moreover, Putin may just as well assume that NATO will not react to an attack by immediately resorting to nuclear weapons. Of course, Putin thereby places pressure on NATO to prove him wrong.

This is how the escalation to nuclear war proceeds. Each side is compelled to prove that the strategic calculations of its adversaries are wrong. They are placing themselves in a trap from which they cannot escape.

The European imperialists are major players in the escalating war. Germany, which has supplied more weaponry to Ukraine than any other country apart from the United States, announced a further €500 million in military equipment for Kiev Thursday. An anonymous diplomat speaking to Reuters about Macron’s impending decision to

send troops to Ukraine commented, “The arrangements are very advanced, and we could expect something next week.”

The imperialists are staking everything on war to achieve their global ambitions in trying to find a way out of their intractable domestic social and political crises. They have demonstrated the lengths to which they are prepared to go with their complicity in Israel’s genocide of the Palestinians.

As David North, chairman of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site*, wrote on X, “The Biden administration, having decided to authorize direct attacks on Russia, is all but daring and double daring Putin to strike back against NATO. It is likely that he will, and then it is only a matter of time before the conflict escalates to the use of nuclear weapons.”

North observed that the mood of “total recklessness” in Washington and Europe’s capitals is driven by the “delusional” belief that Putin’s reactionary nationalist regime will not retaliate if it is attacked by NATO. This is the latest in a series of disastrous miscalculations by Biden, German Chancellor Scholz, Macron and British Prime Minister Sunak since the outbreak of the war.

The sanctions adopted against Russia at the war’s outset were supposed to bring about the collapse of its economy, but they did not. The great Ukrainian “counter-offensive,” touted by the Western media as a turning point in the war, was a debacle. It made a major contribution to the estimated 500,000 Ukrainian lives sacrificed as cannon fodder by the imperialist powers.

Bret Stephens, who just this week wrote a *New York Times* column arguing that leaders are canonized if they achieve “morally compromised victories” in wars by removing all limits on their actions, wrote last year that the Ukrainian counter-offensive would be the “end game” for Russia, inflicting a “crushing and unmistakable defeat.”

The broad consensus for unbridled aggression and brutality in the war with Russia signifies a ruling class that has lost its head.

During the Cold War, American imperialism recognised certain limits on its actions to avoid triggering nuclear armageddon. Gen. Douglas MacArthur was fired during the Korean War for advocating the use of a nuclear bomb against Chinese troops. During the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, the desire of top military commanders to bomb Cuba was sidelined. But now, confronted with intersecting domestic and global crises for which it has no progressive answers, the capitalist class has decided to adopt a course that leads to all-out war.

Posing the decisive question, North continued, “Now comes the greatest and most catastrophic miscalculation of all: that NATO can launch attacks on Russian territory without being subjected to counterattacks. How will Biden, Scholz, Macron, Sunak or Starmer respond when they are proven wrong?”

None of the imperialist leaders in North America or Europe feel any obligation to tell the population how many more lives they are prepared to sacrifice for Wall Street, and the stock exchanges in Frankfurt, Paris, and London. In an extraordinary passage in a *New York Times* article published prior to Biden’s decision, David Sanger wrote:

But if Mr. Biden reverses course, officials concede he most likely will never announce it: Instead, American artillery shells and missiles will just start landing on Russian military targets.

The madness of the imperialists’ policy has very definite objective roots. Flowing from the historic bankruptcy of world capitalism, which is riven by contradictions for which the ruling elites have no solution, they are compelled to massively escalate the war with Russia as part of a global redivision of the world. In the 20th century, the imperialist madmen of the First and Second World Wars plunged humanity into unprecedented barbarism in a bid to overcome the conflict between the national economic and geostrategic interests of the ruling class of each country and the global character of economic life.

The same class interests that produced millions of dead in the trenches on the Western Front and the Nazis’ gas chambers during the Holocaust are today impelling the imperialist powers to risk the very survival of humanity in a nuclear conflict for the sake of their predatory global ambitions. These interests are subjugating Russia to the status of a semi-colony in order to plunder its natural resources, backing Israel’s “final solution” of the Palestinian question as part of preparations for a war against Iran, and setting the stage for war with China for control

over the Eurasian landmass.

The relentless escalation of the imperialist war against Russia must be averted through the fight for the independent political mobilisation of the working class against war and the capitalist profit system that produces it.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote at the beginning of the year:

The prospects for humanity would be bleak were it not for the historically verified fact that the contradictions that drive capitalism to destruction also set into motion the conditions for its overthrow and the reorganization of society on a new and progressive, i.e., socialist, foundation. The potential for this reorganization is rooted in the objective being of the working class. The class struggle is the means by which the objective possibility of socialist reorganization is realized in practice.

The correctness of this analysis has been demonstrated by the rapid growth of opposition to the Gaza genocide, including the ongoing strike by academic workers at the University of California to protest the police crackdown on anti-genocide protesters.

The urgent political task facing workers internationally is to fuse their struggles against capitalist austerity measures and attacks on their jobs, wages and conditions to pay for war with the burgeoning anti-war protests on university campuses and beyond.

It is the working class, which produces all of society’s wealth, that can and must stop the imperialist war machine in its tracks by shutting down arms production and unifying workers in all countries, including Russia and Ukraine, in a political struggle for the socialist transformation of society.

Everything now depends on building the International Committee of the Fourth International, the revolutionary socialist political leadership fighting to develop the growth of social opposition in the working class into a conscious movement for socialism.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**