

# NATO war summit prepares direct entry into Ukraine war

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At its summit this week in Washington, the NATO military alliance announced the creation of an office inside Ukraine and the establishment of a NATO command in Germany, led by a three-star general, to oversee the war against Russia.

These actions signify the shift to a new phase in the war, in which the NATO military alliance will openly take charge of arming, funding and directing the Ukrainian military, as a prelude to the deployment of NATO forces in the conflict.

The actions announced at the summit are provocative. The NATO alliance is declaring that it is stationing civilian officers in an active war zone. What will happen if these officers come under fire? Will NATO then invoke Article 5 of the NATO treaty to declare war against Russia?

Indeed, *Foreign Policy* quoted one NATO official as stating:

We're going to push the idea in Washington that all allies should commit to having some kind of national planning process that brings together both the military planning and civilian planning for Article 5.

Even as NATO floods Ukraine with weapons, the summit communique released yesterday condemned China as “a decisive enabler of Russia’s war against Ukraine” and demanded that it halt shipments of “weapons components” to Russia.

The *New York Times*’ David Sanger remarked that the language was “a major departure for NATO, which until 2019 never officially mentioned China as a concern, and then only in the blandest of language.” The communique states that China “cannot enable the largest war in Europe in recent history without this negatively impacting its interests and reputation.”

Beyond its breathtaking hypocrisy—coming from powers that are pouring fuel on the fire of “the largest war in Europe

in recent history”—the summit’s condemnation of China makes clear that NATO is preparing for war on a global scale.

The announcement that NATO will now play the leading role in organizing the Ukraine war refutes years of lying propaganda by the Biden administration, US think tanks, and the media, which have repeatedly asserted that NATO is not directly involved in the Ukraine war.

In reality, the imperialist powers have worked systematically for over a decade to provoke a war with Russia. Since 2014, NATO has been transforming Ukraine into a frontline military outpost, using the fact that Ukraine is not an official member state as a cover for arming it to the teeth.

Russia’s reactionary and bankrupt invasion of Ukraine was based on a series of disastrous political miscalculations. In launching the invasion, Putin, representing a faction of the Russian oligarchy, believed that a show of military strength would convince his “Western partners” to see “reason” and halt the expansion of NATO to Russia’s doorstep and the militarization of Eastern Europe.

But the US and its imperialist allies are not interested in peaceful solutions to the conflict. They have consistently sought to prevent any negotiated settlement of the war, regardless of the cost in Ukrainian lives.

The NATO powers have also made great miscalculations of their own. They believed that by funneling tens of billions of dollars in weapons to Ukraine they could quickly impose a “strategic defeat” on Russia, leading to the collapse of the Putin government and the destabilization and even dissolution of the country.

Last year’s NATO summit in Vilnius was intended as a “victors’ summit” to celebrate the triumphant “spring offensive” launched by Ukraine just weeks beforehand. But the offensive turned into a bloody debacle, with Ukrainian troops thrown against Russian lines without air cover and slaughtered by the thousands.

Now, with hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians killed, Kiev has largely run out of live bodies to use as cannon

fodder, despite the criminal bands of recruiters roaming every Ukrainian city and town, press-ganging men into war.

Even as they escalate the war, the various governments assembled in Washington are riven by deep internal crises and despised by their own populations. History demonstrates, however, that governments facing severe internal crises often seek in war a solution to their internal maladies.

The government of Emmanuel Macron in France just suffered a huge electoral defeat, the result of broad popular opposition to the war and the corresponding attack on pensions and other social programs.

In the UK, the Conservative Party government of Rishi Sunak was similarly overwhelmingly repudiated in elections held last week. It has been replaced, however, by a Labour Party government that has come to power despite a sharp fall in its own vote total. The new prime minister, Keir Starmer, is attending the NATO summit as his first official act, making clear that he will continue all the essential policies of his predecessor.

And the president of the United States, Biden, is trying to beat back growing calls within his own party to step down as the Democrats' presidential candidate in elections only four months out. Biden is hoping that a demonstration of bellicosity and warmongering at the NATO summit will counter concerns within the ruling class about the impact of his evidently declining mental capacities.

One factor in the deliberations within the American ruling class over Biden's fate is concern that an electoral defeat could have consequences for the war against Russia, given Trump's "transactional" approach to foreign policy. While Trump and the Republicans are no less committed to imperialist war than the Democrats, there are discussions in the media of the need to make NATO and the Ukraine war "Trump-proof" through a massive commitment of military and financial aid.

Amidst the various maneuvers and changes in personnel, the leaders of the imperialist countries are demonstrating that the war policies of the ruling class are completely impervious to popular opinion. "*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*"—or in this case, "The more things change, the more war escalates."

And every single one of the "dignitaries" assembled in Washington is dripping with blood, complicit in financing and politically justifying the genocide in Gaza that the British medical journal, *The Lancet*, estimates has led to the deaths of 186,000 Palestinians. One consequence of the genocide is the refutation for all time of the claim that imperialist foreign policy has anything to do with "democracy" and "human rights," in Ukraine or anywhere else.

These despised, criminal governments are launching a war on the working class alongside the escalation of war abroad. In an op-ed published Wednesday in the *New York Times*, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan boasted about the expansion of NATO's military spending:

In 2023, defense expenditures of NATO nations in Europe and Canada grew by 8 percent. This year, they are set to grow by 18 percent. ... In the next five years, our NATO allies will add over 650 fifth-generation F-35 aircraft, over 1,000 air defense systems, nearly 50 warships and submarines, 1,200 battle tanks, 11,300 combat vehicles, and nearly 2,000 artillery systems.

And how is all of this to be paid for? Through an all-out assault on the social position of the working class, which will only intensify class tensions all over the world.

The NATO summit confirms the critical importance of the July 24 rally against the genocide in Gaza called by the *World Socialist Web Site* and Socialist Equality Party in response to the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to address a joint session of Congress.

In a statement on the demonstration and meeting published yesterday, WSWS International Editorial Board Chairman David North explained that its aim is to "provide a strategic direction for the building of a mass movement to end the Gaza genocide, which is inextricably linked to the global eruption of imperialist militarism, the relentless escalation toward nuclear war against Russia and China, and the assault on the democratic and social rights of the working class."

This must be the response of workers and youth to the NATO war summit.

The WSWS urges all its readers to attend the rally and to sign up and help promote and build it by filling out the form below.



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