

Authorizing strikes deep inside Russia, NATO powers seek to provoke escalation of war

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The authorization by the Biden administration for Ukraine to use US long-range weapons to strike deep inside Russian territory marks a new and dangerous escalation in the US-NATO war against Russia. The move, followed just two days later by Ukrainian attacks using the weapons, underscores the unrelenting drive by US and NATO powers to intensify the conflict, regardless of the catastrophic consequences.

On Tuesday, Ukraine attacked a military base in Bryansk, 110 miles inside the Russian border, using US-provided ATACMS missiles. There are conflicting reports about how many missiles were fired and how many of them were shot down by Russian defense systems.

The same day, the *Guardian* reported that the UK would follow the US in allowing its long-range missiles to be used to attack deep inside Russia. “We must double down on the support for Ukraine,” declared UK Defense Secretary John Healy. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said, outside of the G20 summit in Brazil, that the “irresponsible rhetoric coming from Russia ... is not going to deter our support for Ukraine.”

French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed the United States’ announcement, calling it “a good decision” and an appropriate response to the deployment of North Korean troops inside Russia. “Russia is the only power that made an escalatory decision ... it’s really this break that led to the US decision,” Macron said at the G20 summit.

In the European media, there is intense discussion on the imperative for European imperialism to take a more assertive and aggressive role in the war against Russia, if necessary independently of the United States.

The Biden administration and the NATO powers are well aware that the action to authorize Ukraine’s use of long-range weapons to target Russia will provoke a

retaliation from the Putin government. They are knowingly and deliberately crossing a “red line” that Putin had indicated would lead to a military response, including the potential use of nuclear weapons.

The move by the Biden administration to authorize Ukraine’s use of the long-range weapons came less than two weeks after the US presidential elections and just 60 days before the transfer of power to the incoming Trump administration.

On the part of Biden, there is no doubt an element of creating “facts on the ground” to push the situation as aggressively as possible. The White House had been planning to announce the strikes on Russia in September but ultimately decided to make the announcement after an anticipated victory by Vice President Kamala Harris, in a campaign that made no mention of the imminent plans for a massive escalation.

The election resulted in the victory of Donald Trump, who demagogically postured as a critic of the war in Ukraine. Last week, Biden and Trump met in the White House, with both men promising a “smooth transition,” and the behind-the-scenes discussions focused on Ukraine. It is noteworthy that Trump, who posts dozens of times per day on his social media platform, has said nothing at all about the ATACMS authorization or their use by Ukraine.

In September, in response to reports that the US would soon allow long-range strikes on Russian cities, Putin outlined proposed changes to Russia’s nuclear doctrine. The Russian president said that “aggression against Russia by any non-nuclear-weapon state, but with the participation or support of a nuclear-weapon state, should be considered as a joint attack on the Russian Federation.”

On Tuesday, following the Ukrainian strike on Bryansk, Putin signed into law the new nuclear strategy

document, which significantly lowers the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons by Russia in response to attacks on its territory, including attacks “using conventional arms, if such an aggression creates a critical threat for their sovereignty and/or territorial integrity.”

Under the terms of Putin’s prior statements and the new doctrine adopted by the Russian Federation, Russia could potentially respond to the NATO attack with an escalation in Ukraine, attacks on American bases in Europe or European military targets, other forms of “asymmetrical warfare” or even with the use of a nuclear weapon.

Whatever the response, the US and NATO powers are willing to risk the consequences. The tendency is for relentless escalation. The question must be asked: What is the next stage of escalation of the war? How soon will NATO weapons be raining down on Moscow? Will NATO troops be deployed?

On Monday, Estonia’s Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna told the *Financial Times* that he supports the European powers putting “boots on the ground” in Ukraine. While raised in the context of a possible “peace deal” engineered by Trump, the proposal for direct deployment of NATO into the conflict has been raised repeatedly, most significantly by French President Macron earlier this year.

The Biden administration, with the support of the European powers, is seeking to take a series of steps intensifying the war that makes further escalation all the more likely. And an incoming Trump administration, no less dedicated to the ruthless pursuit of US global hegemony, will be just as aggressive in waging wars all over the world.

The US-NATO war against Russia is itself a component part of an escalating global war, which includes the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the Israeli bombing of Lebanon and threats of war against Iran, and the developing conflict with China, which has been the central focus of Trump.

The escalation of war takes place amidst an intensifying political crisis in all the imperialist powers, the turn to dictatorial forms of rule, and the immense escalation of the assault on the working class. The oligarchs are determined to subordinate all of society to war. It is the international working class that must be mobilized, on the basis of a socialist program, to stop

the descent into World War III.



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