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# **‘Washington is pushing Ukraine to attack Donbass’**

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Residents of Donbass have resisted Ukrainian military attacks since 2014.

*Remarks by Struggle-La Lucha co-editor Greg Butterfield during a special online briefing on the U.S./NATO war threats against Russia and Donbass, Jan. 29. [Watch the video here](#).*

For more than two months, there's been a steady drumbeat from the Biden administration and the U.S. corporate media: Russia is threatening to invade Ukraine. The threat is imminent. It's not a question of if, much less of why, only when.

It's presented as a bare statement of fact. No dissenting voices are allowed. The only

question up for debate is how strong the response should be. Should it be a direct military response? Is it enough to send weapons, money and advisers to Ukraine? What role should negotiations and sanctions play?

Right now 8,500 U.S.-based troops are on alert for deployment to Europe, in addition to the 64,000 already stationed there.

For those old enough to remember, it's eerily similar to the buildup to the Iraq War in 2002-2003.

And like the "Weapons of Mass Destruction" story used to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq, it's a complete lie.

The real threat of invasion is not by Russia against Ukraine. It is by Ukraine against the small, independent Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk on Russia's western border.

Let me repeat that: The threat of invasion is not coming from Russia. The threat is from U.S.-armed and -funded Ukraine. Right now, 125,000 Ukrainian troops, half of the country's military, are concentrated along the borders of the Donbass republics. Washington is pushing, pushing, pushing for Ukraine to attack Donetsk and Lugansk.

Why? Because the U.S. political establishment, the big banks, Big Oil and the military-industrial complex hope this will force a defensive response from Russia that can be used to justify war, harsher sanctions, more military expenditures and further expansion of the NATO military alliance on Russia's borders.

### **Only U.S. rulers want war**

The United States is the motor force of this crisis. Russia says it will not invade or start a war. The Donbass republics, which have suffered an eight-year economic

blockade and a long conflict with Ukraine that has cost 14,000 lives, don't want more war.

Ukraine's President Zelensky and the oligarchs of Ukraine hate Russia and want to conquer Donbass. But they are terrified of what will happen if the U.S. succeeds in pushing them into a war now. Ukraine's 2015 invasion of Donbass was roundly defeated by the local People's Militias and internationalist volunteers. The Ukrainian Army is better trained and armed now, thanks to NATO, but Zelensky knows they are no match for the combined forces of Donbass and Russia.

Germany, the European Union's biggest economic power, doesn't want war. Germany needs Russian gas and heating oil to keep flowing to fuel its economy. The German capitalists know that if there is a war, they will have no choice but to buy from U.S. oil companies at greatly inflated prices. The same is true for the rest of Western Europe.

All of these countries are pawns in a deadly game that only benefits U.S. imperialism. The U.S. rulers created this crisis and continue to pour fuel on the fire day by day.

Why now? The global capitalist system is in crisis. It was spiraling toward recession even before the pandemic struck. While some billionaires and sectors have profited handsomely from the COVID crisis, U.S. imperialism's overall profits and strategic dominance are threatened at every turn.

In particular, the oil industry - thoroughly entwined with the biggest U.S. banks and the military-industrial complex - has been in crisis for over a decade. Oil and gas prices never rebounded to the heights reached before the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009. That's why Obama, Trump and Biden have targeted oil producers like Venezuela, Iran, Syria and Iraq, and of course Russia, with blockades, sanctions and war to stem the flow of oil and gas.

U.S. capitalists are desperate to stop the nearly completed Nord Stream 2 pipeline project slated to bring Russian gas to Europe.

### **NATO arms Ukraine's fascists**

There is one other group that is eager for war. It's neo-Nazi groups like Right Sector, the Azov Battalion, Patriots of Ukraine and C14, that have run rampant since the U.S.-engineered coup overthrew the democratically elected government in 2014. These groups have been fully integrated into Ukraine's military and security apparatus.

According to officials and activists in Donbass, neo-Nazi battalions have been deployed to towns and villages on the ceasefire line separating Ukraine from Donetsk and Lugansk. These fascists speak of the residents of the region as "cattle" and "insects" and routinely call for genocide to recapture the region. In the event of a Ukrainian invasion, they will form the spearhead.

The U.S. is truly playing with fire. Even if, despite all the buildup of weapons and mobilization of troops, calmer heads prevail in the Pentagon and Biden gives the order to pull back or slow down, there is no guarantee that the neo-Nazis, now armed with NATO weapons and training, will obey. Likely they will feel that Biden has betrayed them, as they are now saying about Zelensky.

Why is the Biden administration collaborating with neo-Nazis?

You won't see it in any of the current media war propaganda. But over the past few years, several articles have documented how U.S. and European white supremacists have gone to Ukraine to train with these groups. Some have participated in the war on Donbass. The FBI even admitted that a group involved in the Charlottesville fascist riot where Heather Heyer was murdered had trained with Ukrainian nazis.

Ukraine was occupied by Nazi Germany during the Second World War. The

inspiration of the modern day fascists there is a creep named Stepan Bandera, who collaborated with the Nazis. Today's Ukrainian government recognizes Bandera as a national hero.

After the war, the United States nurtured Ukrainian Nazis as a weapon against the Soviet Union, just as Nazis were recruited for NATO and the U.S. war machine. It's a relationship that goes back decades. We should encourage people who voted for Biden as a rejection of Trump's white supremacist program to demand answers from him.

### **What we must do**

I want to say a little about what we must do to oppose the U.S. war drive.

At this moment, the most important thing we can do is show visible opposition to a U.S. war with Russia. We need people to go out in the streets with signs, banners and leaflets, organize car caravans, social media blasts, the more the better, while wearing masks and taking all necessary health precautions for the pandemic. Not just in Washington, D.C., or New York City, but all over the country, in cities and towns large and small.

That's why Struggle-La Lucha and the Socialist Unity Party are joining with other anti-war groups to call for [National Days of Action from February 4 through 12](#) to say "No War on Russia and Donbass! U.S.-NATO Out of Ukraine!" Baltimore, San Diego, New York, Detroit, Los Angeles, New Orleans and Minneapolis are among the places planning activities.

Wherever possible, we should encourage existing anti-war groups to endorse and we should join any actions they may announce. Those of us with experience in the U.S. movement are aware of the rivalries and sectarianism that exist among these groups, many of which have existed since the Iraq War era. These are long-term

issues that we need to work on as a movement. But right now, the most important thing is to make opposition to war with Russia visible.

The George Floyd uprising was just one-and-a-half years ago. The capitalist rulers have certainly not forgotten it. Taking to the streets is the best way to raise the specter of that uprising in their minds and give them pause on their drive toward war.

### **War danger and the working class**

Finally, let's address the problem of how we can reach out to poor and working people. How do we talk to our family members, co-workers and neighbors about this issue?

One big hurdle we have to overcome is that there is very little understanding among people in the U.S. about Eastern Europe and the former Soviet countries. Through no fault of their own, many people in the U.S. cannot identify Ukraine on a map, and most have probably not even heard of Donetsk and Lugansk.

If people have any impression of Russia, it's most often old Cold War anti-communist stereotypes. U.S. war propaganda plays off these stereotypes, despite the fact that socialism was overthrown and the Soviet Union broken up three decades ago.

Explaining what's actually happening with Ukraine, Russia and Donbass, and educating people about the role of the U.S. and NATO in Europe, is very necessary. But it may not immediately grab people's attention out on the street or get them to take a leaflet or consider joining a protest.

However, we can get people's attention by connecting the war danger to the urgent concerns of their daily lives and struggles. Right now, hundreds of thousands of families are facing eviction around the country as pandemic eviction moratoriums end. But the Biden administration's priority is a war with another nuclear armed

power on the other side of the world.

Congress can't manage to pass Build Back Better's modest social and infrastructure measures. But there was overwhelming bipartisan support for the Pentagon's \$768 billion annual budget passed last month.

Biden and Harris have not met any of their campaign promises to curb racist police brutality - in fact, they have been promising more money for cops. But they are collaborating with white supremacist movements abroad.

On social media, many people have made the point that huge shipments of U.S. weapons arrived in Ukraine before people even received their four meager home COVID tests by mail. This example really shines a spotlight on the skewed priorities of the U.S. government at a time when everyone can see the utter collapse of public health in this country.

We're working to develop attractive, easy-to-read flyers that talk about these issues and can be used for leafleting at actions in the coming weeks. We will make them available for download in the next few days. The articles on Struggle-La-Lucha.org also have a ton of helpful facts and information you can use.

Hold a picket line. Have a banner drop. Give out leaflets at your subway stop or school. Notify the local media. Participate in social media blasts. Take photos and videos and share them online and with us. Every action we take right now makes a difference.

